

Abstract. This study aims at examining how psychotherapists experience and cope with failure in their therapeutic practice. We have designed a questionnaire on coping with failure and by employing the ESK existential scale we explored the set of 100 psychoterapists, consisting of 55 females and 45 males, in total 48 psychologists, 29 physicians and 23 workers in helping professions, all between 25 - 64 years of age, of various psychoterapeutic approaches. We have focused on all 3 aspects of coping – emotional, cognitive and practicalbehavioral. At the same time we have examined situations that therapists perceive as a failure, significant failures they have experienced, and what helped them to cope with them and whether their beliefs, conviction or values help them in coping with emotional and mental stress, caused by failure. Our findings correspond to few papers on this issue, that is dropouts, therapists' feeling, stress and failure. Failure is an important emotional stress at the psychotherapist's practice. Typical failures are client's suicide, dropout, retirement from therapy, as well as deterioration of bodily symptoms, social relations and relations to oneself during the therapy. This perceived therapists' failure tends to be connected with intense negative feelings of anger, anxiety, sorrow, guilt, helplessness and self-doubt. We have also found out that therapists have developed coping resources and adopted coping strategies that enable them to manage and cope with such situations actively and productively (problem solving, problem restructuring, social support and constructive processing of emotions) and unlike other professions, to a smaller degree, they use defensive, escape strategies linked to social isolation. Their sex, age, education and psychoterapeutic approach do not significantly influence the feeling of failure and therapists' responsibility for therapy delivered. .