

# Brexit and the Counsellor: identity shifts, social responsibility and the therapeutic relationship

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**SUMMARY:** In this article, we (three colleagues at the University of East London) are reflecting on what Brexit is instigating in us and in our work as practitioners and counselling educators.

**KEY WORDS:** Brexit, splitting, othering, transference, social responsibility

Two years since the British referendum in June 2016, firing up the Brexit negotiations in Europe, we are still confronted by a maze of questions around the future – it has been called a ‘*Brexitistential crisis*’ (The Guardian, July 2016), raising issues of identity and self-definition for the UK, posed by a national split that has left everyone ‘in flux’. As therapists we are both called upon to position ourselves in relation to social changes and to witness their impact upon our clients. Politics is considered a complex topic when it appears in the counselling room and therapists usually resist it (Avisar, 2016). However, can we remain congruent to our role if we are not open to a ‘politically-conscious’ therapy?

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