

Abstract

I considered the issue of identity and shame in the lives of people with mild to moderate learning disabilities with a focus upon the use and function of the therapeutic relationship with regards to these concerns.

Employing a qualitative, heuristic approach, I used my case study of therapy with a learning disabled man as my research data.

As an integral part of the research process, I conducted a reflective and self-reflective

review of relevant literature.

I concluded that identity and shame for people carrying the label 'learning disability' was a profound and fundamental sociological and psychological issue that we can only appreciate and understand from a perspective that incorporates the intra-psychic, inter-psychic and wider field.

My conclusions reaffirm the importance of contact and relationship in therapy, but acknowledge limitations upon the efficacy of humanistic therapy and counselling in the lives of people with learning disabilities. I argue that this is because of their common experience outside of the therapy room of dependency, discount and incomplete acceptance from other people with respect to their full human value.