

ABSTRACT

This phenomenological exploration of the integrative psychotherapist's experience of offering psychological educational material (PEM) to clients, has sought to understand this phenomenon by utilising qualitative research methodology and by examination and review of the relevant literature. A comparison and synthesis of the findings from the literature and the investigation is presented.

For this qualitative investigation, seven integrative practitioners, working within differing approaches to integration, were interviewed using a semi-structured format. The recorded interviews were transcribed and analysed using thematic analysis, a variant of interpretive phenomenological analysis, as described by Braun & Smith (2006)

Three overarching semantic themes and one overarching latent theme were identified. These four overarching themes were found to be: the material; how the material is thought to have effect within the therapeutic process and thus to have value; how the material is used by practitioners; factors influencing the practitioner's use of the material. The themes and sub-themes within each of these four overarching categories are presented and discussed.

Within discussion of the findings, their implications for integrative psychotherapy are identified and discussed. A critique of the study is undertaken and future research possibilities identified. The study concludes with personal reflections.

While this study demonstrates that the use of PEM has value as a specific intervention within an integrative framework, it also demonstrates that within the wider context of the ongoing psychotherapeutic debate around the therapeutic significance of specific ingredients and common factors it can and does contribute across all major elements of the therapeutic process.