

ABSTRACT

This research explores the meaning and quality of being a Chinese female humanistic psychotherapist. The exploration was conducted in the UK and adopted a reflexive approach and co-construction with three participants to focus on their stories and to develop a sense of their experiences. Through Moustakas' (1990) heuristic methodology, data was drawn from in-depth, one hour interviews in the home of each participant. All interviews were conducted in English, with a short series of open-ended questions, which were explored through a relational and developmental perspective.

From the findings, multiple themes arose and these themes were of shame, attachment, identity, filial duties, true self, false self and the energy for growth. The over-arching issue centred on the difference between Western and Chinese philosophical paradigms which represented two polar extremes.

Conclusions were drawn on the experiences and meanings of being a Chinese woman living in the UK and practicing as a psychotherapist. The findings of this study will have relevance for psychotherapists working with Chinese or bi-cultural clients where acculturation, cultural values and beliefs impact on the therapeutic space.