

Abstract

This study explored the extent to which clinical practice is experienced as therapeutic by the Person-Centred Psychotherapist. Using Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA), semi-structured interviews were conducted with five qualified psychotherapists working in a variety of counselling settings. All the participants described their theoretical orientation as Person-Centred.

Data was analysed and emergent themes were clustered and interpreted, until a set of super-ordinate and subordinate themes was identified.

Results indicated that clinical practice can have a therapeutic impact on the therapist, leading to greater self-awareness and congruence, and enhancing the therapist's quality of life. Participants felt empowered and energised by their work, sharing a deep sense of personal fulfilment and enrichment and citing the overall, positive impact on their wellbeing. This positive impact was shown to feed back into the therapeutic relationship. The specific characteristics of the Person-Centred therapeutic relationship (Rogers, 1957, p.221) were shown to facilitate therapeutic impact for the therapist.

The findings were discussed with reference to the literature reviewed.

Implications for practice, training and research were highlighted. Further research was suggested to increase knowledge regarding the impact of clinical practice on the Person-Centred psychotherapist.