

## **Abstract**

This qualitative heuristic research explores the connection between spirituality, the transpersonal, and therapeutic change. Its specific focus is transpersonal experience in therapeutic relationships, where both therapist and client are spiritually aware. From the humanistic integrative perspective, this study aims to examine the relational qualities that engender such experiences, and how they lead to client change. To obtain subjective descriptions of transpersonal experiences, five qualified experienced therapists were interviewed, who all drew on different theories to substantiate their reflections. The six-phase heuristic inquiry was applied in order to gain an in-depth data analysis and create a composite depiction. The findings suggest that the therapist's authenticity promotes a soul-to-soul encounter which encourages relational depth, and beyond. Different events may be triggers for transpersonal experience, but the participants' perceptions of the phenomena are very similar. In all cases, the participants' connection with the transcendent resulted in surrender, resolution and transformation. This in turn has a profound impact on their clinical practice. To summarise the findings, a hierarchy of emotional needs is proposed as a framework for therapists to track their level of engagement with clients. The implications for the practice of integrative psychotherapy are considered and recommendations made for future training and research.