

Abstract

The purpose of this study is to investigate the clients subjective experience of change in client centred therapy- previous research studies have focussed on the efficacy of specific modalities of psychotherapy and particularly on therapist facilitated factors in change processes. Rennie (1985) stated, 'in the history of research in psychotherapy.....direct inquiry into the clients experience has seldom been undertaken'. The following study explores the change experiences of client-therapists. The aim is produce a 'snapshot' of client- therapists experiencing of change and how these participants explicitly and conceptually give meaning to this change.

Three trainee and qualified client-therapists were recruited to participate in semi structured interviews through advertisements in training venues and relevant publications. The information gathered was transcribed and analysed using interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA) to elucidate dominant and subordinate themes for further discussion.

The findings suggest that i) client- therapists definitions of change have altered as a result of undertaking their own/practicing their own therapy. ii) change experiences were characterised as discovery/learning, relaxation into or a 'return to self', acceptance and a shift in relating to self and others. iii) fear was highlighted as the main obstacle to change and iv) meanings of change were ascribed as 'letting go', a movement from individual change to pro social change, increased resilience, empowerment, autonomy and as positively impactful on practice as therapists.

The implications of these findings are discussed and possibilities for further investigation highlighted.