

Abstract

This dissertation focusses on the concept of confluence in the therapeutic relationship within the context of humanistic and integrative counselling practice. It examines both healthy and unhealthy confluence, drawing parallels between the characteristics of healthy confluence and empathy. Added rigour and credibility is evidenced in the use of neuro-scientific research which demonstrates the essential nature of healthy confluence in the symbiotic relationship between mother and child, and, the ongoing and innate need, and disposition to healthy confluence throughout life for cerebral and psychological functioning.

Whilst unhealthy confluence needs careful attention from the therapist to avoid perpetuating the same unhealthy habits, draws to confluence by the client may help identify early relational needs and inform reparative approaches.

The work includes a case study methodology to demonstrate how the concepts drawn from the literature review and discussed in the philosophy relate to, and are evidenced in, clinical practice.

Broad conclusions suggest that views on confluence have become outdated, healthy confluence having been the understated antithesis of unhealthy confluence. Maybe now is the time to assert the benefits of confluence in a modern world; a world where there exists a growing sense of fragmentation and disunity.