

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this dissertation is to explore the necessary conditions needed in order to begin to heal shame within the therapeutic relationship.

I have lived and breathed shame without giving the dark place I felt I had inside, a name; my reason for choosing this topic is due to my own life experiences. My personal therapy, supervision and training have since facilitated powerful changes in me, in healing ruptures in the interpersonal bridge. Through this support, I have the reflexivity, the language and understanding of the feelings I have buried for a lifetime.

My dissertation shows my ethical considerations throughout, my understanding of significant theoretical concepts and my learning through independent research; and is presented in three parts. Part I, a Rationale for Practice indicating my personal and Humanistic philosophy and my rationale for integration. Part II, a Literature Review whereby I analyse and critique significant texts on shame; beginning with a historical context, an understanding of innate affect, shame as an experience, shame-proneness, protection from, working with and the healing of, shame. Part III utilises a Case Study methodology, based on 20 sessions of work. I conclude reflectively, and with an evaluation of my work. This dissertation shows my ability as a reflective, shame-based Humanistic Integrative practitioner, working with a shame-based client. It demonstrates that an internal sense of shame can be vastly diminished with awareness; a journey of healing is possible.

As stated by Tomkins, cited in Nathanson (1992), 'If distress is the affect of suffering, shame is the affect of indignity, of transgression and of alienation.

Though terror speaks to life and death and distress makes of the world a vale of tears, yet shame strikes deepest into the heart of man. While terror and

distress hurt, they are wounds inflicted from outside which penetrate the smooth surface of the ego; but shame is felt as an inner torment, a sickness of the soul.

It does not matter whether the humiliated one has been shamed by derisive

laughter or whether he mocks himself. In either event he feels himself naked,

defeated, alienated, lacking in dignity or worth. (1963, 118)'. (Nathanson, 1992;

146).