

Abstract

This study aimed to describe the lived experience of trainee person-centred therapists' experience of the impact of client work on their resonance with the person-centred approach and how this influences their practice. The literature review identified a gap in the available literature and research on therapist development. The research was conducted as a phenomenological inquiry and involved three participants, all trainee person-centred therapists who had been working with clients for between two and three years. The data from the semi-structured interviews was used to extract significant statements and four main themes emerged: engaging with theory; making sense of theory; am I being person-centred?; and developing professional identity. These themes were developed into a model depicting the developmental journey of the trainee therapists and an accompanying exhaustive description of the participants' phenomenological experience. Implications of these findings were discussed in relation to the relevant literature, future training and supervision of trainee person-centred therapists and recommendations for further research.