

## Abstract

This study aims to illuminate the place of poetry and haiku in facilitating contact within the psychotherapeutic process. To do this, I have looked at contact in terms of the intrapsychic (connection with one's inner thoughts, feelings and behaviours), and the interpersonal contact between therapist and client. I highlighted the similarities between the poetic and psychotherapeutic processes and how they intertwine, leading to discussion on the use of poetry in the therapeutic setting.

For this dissertation I used a case study methodology. This offers a demonstration of how I have used haiku as a therapeutic tool, backed up by a literature review on the subject and a rationale for practice. This case study methodology provides insight into how I work as a counsellor, and how I justify my intent. In order to allow for a broader view, the case study concerns work undertaken with a client for a minimum of eighteen sessions. As such, it shows clear establishment, development and maintenance of a therapeutic relationship.

Findings from the dissertation show the impact that the use of haiku and poetry can have in the therapeutic setting, as part of a creative process. Contrary to what I expected, I found that there was reference to the use of poetry across many approaches and modalities, particularly gestalt, person-centred and psychodynamic ways of working. This holds significance in justifying a relational way of working, over any one theoretical preference.

As a result of this qualitative study, I propose that poetry and haiku are highly valued therapeutic tools for enhancing contact when used ethically at the right time. My findings support my relational approach, and as such highlight the need for poetry and haiku to be used as part of a strong and effective therapeutic relationship. Furthermore, it brings to light the need and potential for further research in an area that can offer significant opportunities to clinical work, regardless of theoretical perspective.