

Abstract

This study explored the psychotherapy client's experience of intra-psychic (inner) growth unfolding through the therapeutic encounter, whilst processing cumulative relational trauma. This perspective bridged a shortfall within current research and presented the clients experience as a valid, effective measuring tool.

The investigation utilised a qualitative small-scale study of heuristic inquiry and drew upon the experiences of five subjects who participated in semi-structured interviews. Their experiences were audio-recorded, transcribed and data analysed.

The results evidenced successful outcomes. This included improvement in language development to express affectivity, sense of awareness, self-agency and self-soothing. This suggested sound clinical effectiveness of relational developmental psychotherapy toward treating the impact of cumulative relational trauma.

Key words: psychotherapy, relational trauma, growth, developmental, childhood.