

Abstract

This research came about from my own personal, lived, experience as a person who was adopted as an infant and who sought integrative psychotherapy as an adult. It was also influenced by discussions I had with other adopted people about their experiences of counselling and psychotherapy. I am an integrative psychotherapist myself, so am uniquely positioned to view the results from both the perspective of the adopted person and the therapist.

This qualitative research study sought to understand more about the specific factors of integrative psychotherapy that are reparative for adopted people. The literature available in the area of healing in psychotherapy for adopted people was reviewed and gaps were discovered around the use of transference in integrative psychotherapy, the long term therapeutic relationship and working with the body.

The research data was collected by interviewing three adopted people who had received integrative psychotherapy and also by considering my own experiences. Data was extracted using the heuristic methodology. A single depiction was produced of the factors in integrative psychotherapy that are reparative for adopted people. Also, six key themes were identified that were common to all the participants in some way. Finally, a creative synthesis was produced that tried to capture the essences of both the common themes and the individual experiences.

It was concluded that there are several common factors of repair in integrative psychotherapy for adopted people that could be helpful for therapists working with

this group of people and for developing relevant training and services. The gaps in the literature around the use of transference in integrative psychotherapy, the long term therapeutic relationship and working with the body were also confirmed to some degree. Furthermore, the potential of reunion with biological family for repair to the adopted person's sense of identity was highlighted. An integrative psychotherapist has a key role to play in supporting the adopted person who wishes to search for biological family.

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