

ABSTRACT

This research study focuses on clients' experience of transgenerational shame; specifically, those clients who are both mothers and of South Asian origin. Seven trainee or graduate counsellors / psychotherapists of South Asian origin, all in regular therapy or with support networks in place, were asked questions related to this topic through semi-structured interviews. The participants shared their experiences of transgenerational shame and the data was then analysed using a Phenomenological Inquiry method. Each transcript was carefully analysed for meaning units and common descriptors to provide a rich description of the essence of experience of transgenerational shame for South Asian clients.

The findings revealed the importance of therapists to have cultural awareness, to understand subtle but distinct messages about shaming in South Asian communities and the importance of working with unconscious processes with South Asian clients who have experienced the transgenerational transmission of shame. This research study is relevant to the field of integrative psychotherapy but also to other theoretical perspectives due to its pluralistic approach to therapy. It provides a greater understanding of the South Asian clients' experience of cultural shame and can be used to inform therapeutic practice when working with this ethnic subgroup. It also gives insight to the relevance of exploring the transgenerational transmission of shame in therapy.