

ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the understanding of person centred and experiential therapists' experience of silence which is insubstantially addressed within person centred literature. It develops a deeper understanding of the value and function of silence as part of a therapist's development and relating.

Silence is recognised within the literature as being a facet of talking therapy. However, much of the literature covers clients' perception and therapists' use of silence when silence means an absence of speaking, but very little covers our understanding of silence in its variety and complexities.

Using heuristic research methodology this qualitative study utilises descriptively rich narrative interviews and creative expressions to confront and explore the nature of and an understanding of silence.

The process shows that silence can be perceived as negative as well as positive. It argues that silence is an internal state not an absence of external sound or absence of speech. Silence can be transformational in our relationship with self and others and thus fundamental to therapy relationships.