

Abstract

This heuristic study considers how clients understand and experience person-centred therapists' tears. The aim was to explore an under-researched phenomenon (Lutz, 2001) to help provide therapists with a deeper insight into how their emotions impact their clients within the therapeutic relationship.

The phenomenological aspect of tears as an unspoken language and as contributing to a transparent dialogical approach (Schmid, 2013a) emerged as a key factor in creating psychological contact and conveying Rogers' core conditions (Rogers, 1957).

Overall, therapists' tears as an involuntary act of self-disclosure (Nelson, 2005) were found to be a complex catalyst for change in moving the clients' process from incongruence to a more congruent relationship with themselves and their therapists (Rogers, 1958). In deepening the therapeutic relationship the challenge presented by the therapists' tears were also seen to create potential for mutuality and shared emotional healing.