

Abstract

This study set out to investigate how pop-culture could act as a source of or influence on Conditions of Worth, and to build a phenomenological description of individual experiences of pop-culture. Psychological research into pop-culture has suggested that it has an influence on our perceptions and behaviour. As Person-Centred theory holds that our experiences create Conditions of Worth that in turn affect our behaviour, it could be suggested that pop-culture would have an influence in their creation. As such, this research proposed to investigate the experiences of participants with regard to Conditions of Worth related to a single pop-culture example brought by the participant. Four trainee psychotherapists were recruited as participants based on an interest in pop-culture and its influences. Semi-structured interviews with the participants were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis. Analysis was undertaken using the Duquesne phenomenological method to create an 'exhaustive description' of the phenomena. Analysis of the interview data suggested that participants' experiences of pop-culture closely mirrored the descriptions of Conditions of Worth in the Person-Centred literature, along with some of the phenomena described in other research into pop-culture. There appeared to be an interplay between the examples themselves and relational factors such as group interactions and wider societal norms. Participants' accounts also showed similarities in terms of the process of the experience over time from initial contact to self-reflection and a changing of understanding. Implications of the findings for practice and training are considered.