

## **Abstract**

In the world of psychotherapy, regression is one of the most controversial, divisive topics, often associated with illness rather than cure (Bromberg, 1979). An abundance of literature, theoretical rhetoric and hypothesis as to the merit of regression and its effectiveness is undoubtedly debated and discussed, yet very little focus is placed on the client's voice and experience. The aim of this study therefore was to explore and capture the essence of the experience of regression within a relational field, from the *clients'* perspective.

Four developmental-relational psychotherapists participated, and qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore their subjective experiences. The heuristic research method enabled deep engagement with the participants and facilitated immersion in the data. The themes emerged within a framework which mirrored the dynamic process of regression; Perception, Experience, Relationship and Impact. Within this framework were the component parts which were essential for transformation; being 'in' themselves, which was the overarching experience and the essence of regression. Findings are discussed within the context of both historical and current literature and recommendations are proposed for future research and training. Implications for Integrative practice is also discussed in the light of these findings.