

## Abstract

This qualitative exploratory study is an investigation into the retrospective client accounts of the experience of unresolved rupture in the therapeutic relationship. Semi-structured in-depth interviews were conducted with four participants based on principles and methods as developed by Kathy Charmaz's (2014) 'Constructivist Grounded Theory'. The aim was to explore how the rupture and repair phenomenon can become an active ingredient in positive outcomes, by gaining a deeper understanding into the human processes involved. This was underpinned by the recognition that psychological treatment has the potential to heal and to harm, posing the question how to facilitate safe, ethical and effective healing opportunities within the client/therapist dyad. This study was designed to evaluate what research questions and approaches might support dialogue within, and beyond, the profession of counselling and psychotherapy in this regard.

The language used to conceptualise the therapeutic relationship is explored and the implications are discussed whilst the reader is invited to understand the rupture and repair phenomenon as an inseparable quality of the therapeutic relationship. The study concludes that the rupture and repair phenomena are key processes in the therapeutic relationship that require knowledge and skill and a willingness from the therapist to bring him/herself (their humanity) into the co-created space where the potential for healing lies.