

Abstract

This qualitative heuristic study of the transpersonal dimension of the therapeutic relationship seeks to arrive at a deeper understanding of the therapist's experience in order to contribute to the practice and understanding of Integrative Psychotherapy. The terms 'transpersonal' and 'spiritual' are defined and the subject is placed in a historical and theoretical context. The researcher's experience of this dimension is fused with those of others through a process of absorption and creativity by means of the six stages of heuristic inquiry. Four experienced therapists who worked in a humanistic relational way were interviewed about working with the transpersonal in order to illuminate their experiences and the understanding underpinning their practice. The study focused on therapeutic relationships in which the therapist was spiritually aware but the client may not be and where the transpersonal dimension may not be explicit. The findings demonstrated that all participants experienced the transpersonal at work in their practice and reported the beneficial impact this had on the quality of the therapeutic encounter and potential for transformation of the client's connection with themselves and their sense of belonging. The implications for Integrative Psychotherapy include the importance of focusing attention on the potential of the spiritual dimension in the therapeutic relationship as a reality of the therapist and client experience.