

Abstract

The author of this study identifies the dichotomy of their professional relationship to the research question – as a Paramedic; and a Trainee Psychotherapist; and seeks to illuminate understanding of a phenomenon they have directly experienced.

This study aimed to explore and understand how Psychotherapists and Counsellors with an Integrative approach, work with clients who undertake challenging roles within the Emergency Services and Military.

Using a process of heuristic inquiry, the researcher obtained data by conducting interviews with four participants; analysis occurred using in vivo and concept coding; and a creative synthesis was generated from the findings.

The study found that the participants all utilised a relational developmental approach, and integrated various theories, interventions and strategies, into their work with this client group. The use of dissociation was found to be a necessary coping strategy, providing protection within the context of their unique roles – where there is exposure to a unique form of cumulative trauma. Recommendations are made for clinical practice, training and future studies.