

1. Abstract

This dissertation explores affective attunement from a humanistic and integrative perspective. The term refers to the way one person's affect is received and interpreted by another person, who vitally, returns a signal to the sender saying, 'I've got it'. This work presents a literature review that offers historical and current research into the topic from a counselling/psychotherapeutic perspective. The literature highlights links between affective attunement, attachment theories and human developmental theories, which are supported by recent neuroscientific studies into right-brain to right-brain connections. The review demonstrates professional and personal engagement with the subject and shares some therapeutic applications for counsellors/psychotherapists. My case study supports the hypothesis that when a secure and safe working alliance has developed, affective attunement offers opportunities for the creation and formation of new neural connections in the brain, enhancing development, growth and integration for the client, the therapist and the intersubjective relationship.

Keywords: humanistic integrative psychotherapy, affective attunement, attachment, developmental theories, neuroscience