

Abstract

This dissertation sets out to explore via the heuristic method how integrative psychotherapists who carry intergenerational trauma arising from the enslavement of Africans or the Holocaust, respond to particular types of client. These clients will invoke either disturbed or empathic responses. The study was spurred by my own experiences of strong countertransference towards clients who present as 'perpetrator' or 'victim', and the conjecture that this might be related to my own intergenerational trauma that stems from the Holocaust. The study invited several respondents with relevant inherited trauma to record semi-structured interviews, which were then analysed according to the heuristic method. The findings are suggestive, rather than conclusive, but the introspection required by the heuristic method allowed unanticipated conclusions to be drawn about the unconscious processes involved in the act of research itself. The study also reveals potent areas for further investigation, particularly in the realm of a crisis which appears when a child is the same age at which its parent experienced a parallel crisis. It is suggested that this might be appropriate for the relational-developmental integrative psychotherapist to examine in the future.