

Abstract

The research explores the impact of splitting-off anger during childhood, the reasons why that occurs and what impact it had on four female Integrative Psychotherapists. A qualitative heuristic method explores individual experiences in childhood and the subsequent effects on development and relationships. Semi-structured interviews were used to collect data and analyse each person's meaning (co-researcher) ascribed to their experience. The research captures the essence of individual experience and brings this together in a final depiction. The depth of the study adds to our understanding of the implications of unmet relational and developmental needs in childhood. The research offered a platform for four professionals to develop their understanding of splitting-off anger further and potentially finding words for their experience, contributing to their integration. The intricate ways co-researchers have adapted to defend against their anger is explored. The researcher casts the net wider than her own experience of the research area. The findings indicate that childhood experiences of emotional neglect, abandonment and dysregulation are key factors in subsequent defences against anger, leading to psychosomatic and shame responses. A final creative synthesis concludes by capturing the words of the women who took part in this research, aiming to represent and amplify the voice of their inner child.