

Abstract

Qualified and experienced integrative psychotherapists are motivated by personal and professional reasons to return to Masters' training where their existing qualification and experience enables them to enter training from year two onwards, thus joining an established training group. This study aimed to explore the experiences of four co-researchers who returned to integrative Masters' training and joined an established training group. Heuristic inquiry was used to analyse the data to understand what impact, if any, previous training and clinical experience had on the individual's sense of self when joining an established group. This showed that due to previous training, the co-researchers had a highly developed self-awareness and sense of self-agency. Most were able to manage difficult feelings that emerged before and after joining the established group. The study echoes some of the literature in the area of trainees' experiences within psychotherapy/counselling training groups, but contradicts some of the research findings about self-rated growth factors of post-graduate psychotherapists. Further research from the perspective of trainers/facilitators of integrative psychotherapy training groups is recommended to understand their experiences and what training organisations can do to support returning students. Additional recommendations are to extend the research to include marginalised voices that could add valuable understanding in this area.