

ABSTRACT

The likelihood of psychotherapists encountering immigrant clientele is ever increasing. Integrative psychotherapists with a developmental-relational approach rely on developmental theory to understand how early relationships form and shape intrapsychic and interpsychic dynamics. Daniel Stern's (1998) research denotes four senses of self and domains of relatedness that are formed within childhood and continue to develop throughout the lifespan. However, there is limited research to understand how self continues to develop during the acculturation process following migration, and how the reworking of self-structures may be experienced by immigrant clients. Recognising that self-development and negotiation is a complex process, the aim of this study is to better understand how the self is experienced during acculturation for voluntary migrants. Utilising a heuristic method, four semi-structured interviews with psychotherapists who voluntarily migrated in adulthood were conducted and analysed alongside artifacts contributed by participants and the researcher's reflexive journal. The findings revealed five main themes that demonstrate the tensions and poles of experience of self in acculturation. An overarching theme of *in-between* was explicated, with the poles of *freedom and constraint*, *disoriented and reoriented*, *empowered and disempowered*, and *seeking home*. Limitations to this study and areas for future research were addressed. It was concluded that the more psychotherapists can deeply understand the profound internal and external challenges and dissonance experienced by clients, the more they can provide a sense of home.