

Abstract

My dissertation explores the crucial role of affect regulation within the therapeutic relationship. Specifically, I aim to investigate how therapists can facilitate co-regulation as a foundational step towards self-regulation for clients with developmental deficits and trauma. Through a humanistic and integrative approach, I employ various modalities to illuminate how early dysregulation in caretaking relationships affects both the physiological and psychological well-being of individuals. In my research, I draw upon the insights and theories of experts in affect regulation, such as Porges, Schore, Stern, and Cozolino, who have contributed to polyvagal theory, developmental psychology, affect attunement, and neuroscience. I also integrate the perspectives of influential relationship-oriented psychotherapists, including Rogers, Klein, Kohut, and Clarkson. Aligning these theories with my philosophy as a humanistic and integrative psychotherapist, I prioritise building an I-thou alliance as the foundation of the therapeutic relationship. This is a study on affect regulation in the therapeutic relationship, first introducing my rationale for practice, then a literature review and finally a case study showing the influences of both upon my clinical practice.