

## **Abstract**

The focus of this dissertation is the impact of shame on the development of the self, and the defences employed to protect oneself from "the enemy within" (Hymans, 1994). Using a case study methodology I present my rationale for practice, a literature review and conclude with my case study. Central to this work is my belief that connection with attuned and regulating others is fundamental to the development and functioning of a psychologically healthy self. My literature review provides a theoretical basis for how shame develops when such attunement and regulation is not available in our primary relationships. My case study presents an in-depth exploration of my work with a client whose husband's death severed her connection with her secure base. I describe how through my emotional attunement she felt safe enough to push through her shame defences and allow herself to experience the pain of her grief and loss. I reflect on the impact of shame on my therapeutic way of being throughout and end by considering the next steps on my shame journey.