

Abstract

This dissertation explores shame the complex human emotion described as the 'master emotion' (Scheff and Retzinger 2000: 1). A literature review is presented and attempts to explore shame's etiology, evolution, and how shame is healed in relationship. The literature review attempts to fill a gap in the literature, approaching shame, specifically in the therapeutic relationship. A Case Study is presented in order to discuss shame's impact within the clinical and therapeutic process, how therapist and client shame experiences interrupts contact. Conclusions are drawn suggesting shame is essential in order to establish boundaries in relationship, however over-exposure to shame can cause interruptions to contact and lead to longer-term psychological affects. The therapeutic relationship is identified as the underlying vehicle that establishes connection and through relationship healing and change can occur.

WORDS: 130