

Abstract

Psychotherapy with a therapist of a different cultural background can pose a variety of challenges (Seeley, 2004), which have been largely unexplored in the field of developmental-relational and reparative psychotherapy. This study aimed to explore the client's experience of being reparented by an integrative psychotherapist of a different cultural background. Qualitative, semi-structured interviews were conducted with four integrative trainee psychotherapists who met the criteria. Interpretative phenomenological analysis highlighted four super-ordinate themes: "The process of connection", "Change within the self", "Choice of therapist" and "Power". Findings illustrated the client's adaptation to connect with the therapist, which presented a possible resemblance to the attachment process and the phases of protest, despair and detachment. Findings also illuminated the difficulty to challenge parental beliefs, when these were intertwined with cultural beliefs, and also the interruption of affect due to explanations of cultural norms and dynamics. All the above are discussed with reference to current literature and theories and recommendations are made for training institutions and future research.