

“Those who are cradlers of secrets are granted a clarifying lens through which to view the world—a view with less distortion, denial, and illusion, a view of the way things really are”.

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Abstract

This dissertation is focused on ‘shame’ from a Humanistic and Integrative psychotherapeutic perspective. My personal experiences with shame prior to and throughout my studies inspired this choice in topic, alongside the incredible power of the therapeutic relationship in helping to heal and shine light on my shame.

My attention is centered on the historical context of shame and its development in early caregiving experiences. I explore how these experiences impact identity, the body, and relationships throughout life. I select relevant literature on shame theory and child development within the psychotherapeutic field, exploring the global experience of shame from an integrative perspective. Informed by clinical practice, my case study exemplifies how working with shame from a relational, developmental angle with compassion, becoming a “regulating other” (DeYoung, 2015), has the power to incite change and growth through the increased capacity to self-regulate, create new meaning, and build a more stable, positive self-image.