

Abstract

In this dissertation, I present my humanistic and integrative approach to counselling and psychotherapy, with an exploration of power in the therapeutic relationship from a feminist perspective.

Power wasn't the topic I originally planned to explore. Initially, I was drawn to areas of interest, including shame and anger, both of which felt relevant to my personal and professional life. After some reflection, I noticed that power dynamics in relationships were a common thread, and it became clear this was something I had often overlooked or struggled to articulate. I believed that exploring power would challenge me in meaningful ways, and the more I reflected on this, the more it represented a topic of study that could support my growth as a therapist and my understanding of myself in relationships with others.

I present my dissertation in three parts: My rationale for practice explores my humanistic philosophy and method of integration, including my ethical framework, the formation of self, psychological disturbance and change, and clinical setting. My literature review examines power dynamics from a feminist perspective, exploring professional power and unconscious processes, drawing relevance to these dynamics within humanistic and integrative psychotherapy.

My case study presents a piece of therapeutic work over 18 sessions and has now concluded. It demonstrates my ability to establish, maintain, and develop a therapeutic relationship in line with my therapeutic rationale and contract while showcasing my professionalism and ethical awareness. A critique of my work runs throughout and concludes with a reflection on my learning.