

## 1. Abstract

I explored the experience as an adult client when reconnecting with my child-self in psychotherapy, using an arts-based autoethnographic approach. Rooted in an Integrative Psychotherapy framework and grounded in relational-developmental and object relations theories, this research examined how regression, emotional resonance, and symbolic representation contribute to psychotherapeutic integration.

Guided by a social constructivist and post-qualitative epistemology, I engaged in five months of self-reflective journaling, creative compositions, and the use of composite characters to analyse significant therapeutic moments. These creative and reflexive methods enabled access to preverbal and dissociated material, offering insight(s) into the internal dynamics between different parts of self. In this process, previously inaccessible content surfaced, revealing unmet relational needs and opening pathways to integration through symbolic and narrative meaning-making.

This study contributes to integrative psychotherapy by highlighting the value of relational depth, client subjectivity, and creativity in therapeutic work. It affirms arts-based autoethnography as a valid and emotionally resonant method for exploring inner experience and deepening clinical understanding. Reconnecting with my child-self emerged not as a return to the past, but as a reorganisation of the present—where grief, symbol, and relational presence converge. The findings offer a practice-informed lens on integration, where emotional truth, aesthetic