

Abstract

This dissertation explored how UK-based relational counsellors and psychotherapists experienced the integration of Internal Family Systems (IFS) into their relational philosophy of psychotherapy. Using a Constructivist Grounded Theory (CGT) methodology, seven semi-structured interviews were conducted with relational psychotherapists trained to at least Level 1 in IFS. The study revealed that therapists often encountered early disorientation, professional fragmentation, and a mismatch between IFS training and real-life application. Key categories included: IFS as a relational language, the significance of holding the IFS protocol lightly, and the influence of therapists' foundational training on their relational philosophy. The study also highlighted the underemphasis on the therapeutic relationship within IFS training and calls for the development of a more relationally attuned pedagogy. While limited by demographic homogeneity, the findings contribute to the discourse on theoretical integration within contemporary psychotherapy practice.