Integrating the transpersonal approach into counselling: A semi-structured phenomenological inquiry

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Abstract

This study investigated the benefits of integrating the transpersonal approach in counselling practice. Interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA) was used to examine the data gained through semi-structured interviews with four social worker-counsellors. Results suggested that the transpersonal approach may provide counsellors with the benefit of using spiritual variables to enrich their practice. Results further suggested authenticity was an essential factor towards spiritual competence, was a priority of spiritually informed counsellors, and was a significant nurturing element towards the therapeutic alliance. How counsellors' regular self-reflection can contribute to an improved level of awareness and encourage cultivation of spiritual beliefs and values is also discussed. Further research regarding the benefits of transpersonal education, as well as more accommodating research methods in supporting development of spiritual competency, are suggested.

Keywords: authenticity, awareness, spiritually competent counsellor, spiritual values, transpersonal approach to counselling

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Introduction

The transpersonal approach is dedicated to the exploration of the human capacity for integration of spiritual growth within the existential issues of everyday living (Hartelius, 2016). The transpersonal model attempts to broaden the boundaries of the traditional counselling processes to include the values related to nurturing the human character to its fullest potential (Boorstein, 1997; Daniels & McNutt, 1997; Kasprow & Scotton, 1999; Pargament & Saunders, 2007).

Historically, the major theories in counselling and psychotherapy have focused on removal of pathology rather than on fostering of spirituality and development of the transpersonal aspect of being (Kaminker & Lukoff, 2015; Powers, 2005; Wilber, 2000). Despite growing empirical support for the inclusion of personal spirituality within practice, awareness of the benefits of the transpersonal approach is still developing (Anderson, 2015; Hartelius et al., 2007). Additionally, the subjective interpretation of spiritual components makes the transpersonal element easier to explore than to be objectively defined (Friedman, 2015; Rowan, 2015); therefore, knowledge about the transpersonal approach is rarely formally included as a core component of counsellors' practice (Rowan, 2014).

The inclusion of spirituality remains a valid component of an integrated counselling approach (Anderson & Braud, 2011; Braud, 2006; Davis, 2009; Grof, 2012; Richards & Worthington, 2010). The transpersonal approach operates on the integrated understanding that the person is a living system that can be described and defined (Hartelius, 2016), as the focus of inquiry moves onto a subjective spiritual experience (Anderson, 2015; Hartelius, 2007). The transpersonal approach respects the value of spiritual traditions (Davis, 2009) and initiates a process of exploration into unitive states of existence (Wilber, 2000), supporting expansions of consciousness beyond the usual limits of ego realisation (Strohl, 1998).

An integral element of conscious living is the endeavour towards the preliminary development of qualities such as a peaceful and equipoised attitude, kindness, and

magnanimity (Anderson & Braud, 2011), as well as depth of understanding and a desire for spiritual growth (Clements, 2011). Such character predispositions support identification with the spirit rather than that of matter, allowing for discussion of topics that hold heart and meaning (Anderson, 2015; Le Gacy, 1998). This paper reviews how transpersonal discussions could help the development of a spirit-guided, mutually trusting space towards acceptance of a process of holistic transformation in relation to both one's self and that of others.

Transpersonal Therapeutic Relationship

Similarly to the fine attunement between partners in a successful relationship, the transpersonal therapeutic alliance brings a deep sense of rejuvenation (Boorstein, 1997) and working through the heart is one of the essential ingredients for this to occur (LeGacy, 1998). It is the transformative action of the heart that makes the choice for a "partnership with spirit" (Clements, 2015, pp. 131-2) and the transpersonal is "a topic that has heart and meaning and implicates the inquirer's expertise holistically" (Anderson, 2015, p. 165).

Ferrer (2011) viewed the transpersonal therapeutic relationship as a process of "co-creation" and explained it as a willingness of one spiritual being to participate in exchanges with another spiritual being. Due to the dynamic nature of the spirit-inclusive practice, the cultivation of a defined set of skills and attitudes in the transpersonal sphere is vital to the counsellors' capacity to co-create the therapeutic relationship. The benefits of such a co-created therapeutic alliance include deeper levels of empathy and establishment of a compassionate avoidance of judgement towards self.

Transpersonal Interventions

Choice of spiritual interventions in clinical practice is recognised as significant to clients' wellbeing (Hodge, 2011; Kaminer & Lukoff, 2007). Individually tailored interventions foster the development of the transpersonal relationship (Assagioli, 2012). Evidence-based literature empirically supports the use of transpersonal interventions (Anderson & Braud, 2011; Boorstein, 1997; Rowan, 2015), such as: selective

therapeutic writing and energy movement (Assagioli, 2012); transpersonal psychoeducation, including describing ways of knowing, experiencing, sensing, and intuiting (Braud, 2004); use of choice-imagination and visualisation for the purpose of internal connection (Lukoff, 2007); and individual meditation and prayer (Richards & Worthington, 2010; Washburn, 1995). Each of these is capable of moving the client toward states of higher experience, assisting alignment with individual beliefs towards personally preferred paths of spiritual engagement and being.

Spiritual Competence

Many consider spiritual competence to be an almost entirely "cultural aspect," a client's preference, or a form of tradition (Hodge, 2011); however, spiritual competence is an essential building block to the transpersonal therapeutic alliance (Grof, 2012; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2000) and in the skilled application of transpersonal interventions (Assagioli, 2012). Well-developed spiritual competence could foster motivation for personal growth (Cortright, 2015), development of a more stable, cohesive ego (Strohl, 1998; Washburn, 1995), and promotion of a holistic body-mind-spirit approach to life (Shapiro & Carlson, 2009; Rotan & Ospina-Kammerer, 2007; Wilber, 2000), both within the client and the therapist. Moreover, spiritual competence may be considered as the active element in keeping the flow of the transpersonal counselling process, conveying deeper understanding of spiritual diversity, and building structures for further integration (Kaminker & Lukoff, 2015).

Research Aims

The main aim of this research was to find out whether counsellors can benefit from transpersonal education, both personally and professionally.

Further to this, the study aimed to examine whether the transpersonal approach can enhance counsellors' therapeutic presence and whether the cultivation of spiritual competence can add to an improved therapeutic alliance.

Additionally, this research tried to determine if the transpersonal approach would stand amongst counsellors' preferences to personal and professional practice, should adequate training be provided.

Methodology

Research Design

This research employed in-depth semi-structured interviewing and interpretative phenomenological analysis (IPA). The multilayered structure of the research design was most suited to reflect the individual's perspective and their meaning-making process and encouraged open-ended communication (Shinebourne, 2011). The interpretative part of the answers was consistent with the transpersonal praxis in providing opportunity for new insights in relation to each inquiry.

Participants

The study used purposive snowball sampling (McLeod, 2015) via email or extension of a verbal invitation. Since this was a preliminary investigation of a novice researcher, the participants were formally not required to self-identify as "transpersonal counsellors". Rather, emphasis was placed on whether a strong "spiritual" element was a regular part of their practices.

Due to time limitations, the first four individuals who responded to the invitations were all recruited. Sarah, Sam, Tom and Ashley, all with over 20 years of experience, are currently practising social workers, who used extensive elements of counselling in their work.

Interviews

In-depth, semi-structured qualitative interviews were conducted with each participant, at a time and location of their choice. The interviews ranged in length from 60 minutes to 90 minutes and were digitally recorded. Each participant was asked to read a research information sheet and submit a completed consent form prior to the interview.

The interviews were informed by the following three inquiries:

1. As a spiritual person and a counsellor, do you think transpersonal education can bring any benefits to your practice?

2. Is there anything from the transpersonal approach that can help you build a better therapeutic alliance?

3. What type of transpersonal training would you find beneficial to your practice?

The participants were free to subjectively explore their experiences. The interviewer companioned participants as their discussions took them on a range of more personal trajectories. The interview recordings were transcribed and both the recordings and the interview transcripts formed the data for this study.

Data Analysis

The data analysis involved a two-stage process. At Stage One, each recording was listened to three times and transcribed verbatim, prior to researcher noting points of significance during the recordings. This procedure saw emerging of the major themes of this research.

Stage Two saw development of further structure of the data gathered. Transcripts were analysed and coded for content, identifying clusters that were later explored and transformed into subthemes.

Results

Two major and five minor themes were identified in the data analysis and are presented in Table 1 and further explored below.

Table 1. Themes and Subthemes Identified in the Data Analysis

Major Themes	Subthemes
1. The transpersonal in personal practice	1.1. The transpersonal as a choice for knowing and being

	1.2. Authenticity as a gateway to spiritual competence
2. The transpersonal in professional practice	2.1. The transpersonal connectedness in the therapeutic alliance
	2.2. The transpersonal in the field of counsellor's education
	2.3. Conflicts in practising the transpersonal

The Transpersonal in Personal Practice

The Transpersonal as a Choice for Knowing and Being

As participants began to verbally explore their transpersonal understanding, they moved through a process of meaning-making in attempts to conceptualise their experiences. Ashley said,

> To me, transpersonal is largely based on intuition. Also, in this process, there is kindness. I think you need to have a bit of an awareness of yourself and you need to be open and welcoming of the other person that you're working with… embracing spirituality feels like a traditional approach.

Sam said, "At least we show people there is 'something' different, it is 'out there'. It is that spiritual factor that helps people… tribes, groups, planet, everything, to begin a sincere sort of exchange with each other." Sarah added, "Spiritual… in all levels of being… The transpersonal approach accepts the state you are in as a part of your journey of life so you can actually find yourself."

Following exploration of the transpersonal concept, participants were eager to discover more ways of integrating the transpersonal framework within their personal practice. For Sam, this meant,

> …looking at the transformation this approach brings, the symbols, the concepts, the impulses, perceptions, sensations, the huge intentional something. We've got an opportunity for another shift, to reach a place where there are things we can work with right in the moment.

Ashley said,

> This way of thinking takes the whole person, not just the physical, but also the spiritual person. Separation of body and mind… just doesn't fit here. The transpersonal way… that is probably the only way to achieve a really good depth and integrated outcome… to respect all parts of yourself.

There was a consensus across participants that transpersonal counselling lacks field-acceptable description and definition. Ashley said, "Transpersonal... that's not something you can define..." Sarah said, "Now that there is scientific research behind transpersonal... that's what helps people believe. But what language do we need to use to assist all counsellors being trained in this? Transpersonal still stands a bit 'out there'".

Finally, Ashley discussed how a potential discomfort with the concept of "spirituality" could divert practitioners into associating their views with less-charged terms such as "cultural practices":

I am not quite sure why but there tends to be lack of comfort when it comes down to spirituality because it is connected to religion... So we soften it, by calling it cultural and that makes us feel better about ourselves. We are being respectful of a culture rather than a spirituality... but many get a bit uncomfortable about it.

Authenticity as a Gateway to Spiritual Competence

Participants reflected on the significant role authenticity plays in improved spiritual competence. Sam said, "To me, being spiritual is more to do with being authentic, being genuine... with unique approaches to each person. Putting people in boxes and making them feel the same, just doesn't work". Similarly, Tom added, "Human being is a process from birth to death, and all is an experience...and I think the genuine, spiritual presence of the practitioner is most important to be able to address this process correctly". Sarah said, "You (the practitioner) have to be determined that you want to progress and move up. Everyone should have their own level of learning. You may even be vulnerable in your experience". For Ashley,

...this is more to do with being authentic, being genuine. This view offers you other unique approaches that lead into steps. This is not for everyone, but I think if someone has a connection and they are able to spend time with you on it, it would be very hard to block it...

The Transpersonal in Professional Practice

The Transpersonal Connectedness in the Therapeutic Alliance

The participants accorded transpersonal connectedness as a significant element in their practice. They felt that when two people relate to each other on a spiritual level, true connectedness can be established. The perception that use of the transpersonal approach can support an actual connectedness within the therapeutic alliance was a common thread. As Sarah described,

Transpersonal actually connects two people … being seen in the other and being heard as well. There is no judgement, just being... The transpersonal approach can help in a more human, a more equal way. It is more "heart" than "head" centred.

Similarly, Sam said,

In this approach, people don't see you as the expert and feel free to find what works for them, connect with the "deep" of what's going on for somebody, on the deeper level. That true connection only can offer the real support. Then you can find strategies that work.

For Ashley,

The transpersonal approach is taking a whole person… it is a real strength-based approach to clients, when you focus on the spiritual point, meaning that this person is of the same spirit as I am. Then a real respect sets in.

The Transpersonal in the Field of the Counsellor's Education

The participants discussed the need for the expansion of the transpersonal knowledge across the general counselling field, emphasising its mediating role in the production of mental peace, leading to a holistic healing process. Ashley said,

I think that a counsellor always needs to adjust their understanding, knowledge, and skills to include areas of some of the other ancient cultures… to see the bigger picture. As you know, most counsellors aren't working in a specific psychotherapy role, they tend to be eclectic, you know, take a bit from everything, whatever the situation calls for. If you're looking at broadening understanding and skills, you're actually having a real holistic approach…that's the essence of humanity really, to address our essence, human spirit… I think a transpersonal model of practice would be a great complement to a good behavioural therapist, for example.

Sam added, "This approach needs to be given the time it deserves so people can see what it does. It offers true support to the coping resources you have" .

Conflicts in Practising the Transpersonal

The participants discussed how practising the transpersonal approach sometimes produces conflict with their self-expression in professional practice. The participants expressed concern over counselling specialisations that omit taking spirit into account and discussed how this may likely produce further disinterest in the spiritual wellbeing as well as affect an individual's capacity for in-depth holistic functioning. Sam said,

I think the wrong approach grows fear… like: "what is wrong with me?", "everything is my fault"… but you need to get to experience the real person… who might have been '"fit in a box" by the medical model. You've got to look into where there is no fear… to begin building a true relationship in therapy.

Similarly, Sarah said,

The structures in society mostly create fear. Fear is instilled in everything… it is used by disintegrated people to disintegrate people. But when people hold fear that means that they are not ready to enter on transpersonal level… the idea is that when somebody is fearful and holds back, there is no healing. You must be determined that you want to progress, and you move up, then

only the fear can be addressed. My idea is training the counsellors in how can they practise this themselves as a level of personal growth and overcoming those fears.

Tom emphasised that the "…courage to accept the transpersonal comes from the genuine internal determination of the practitioner." Similarly, Ashley said, "I personally feel there's some levels of opening of the heart or levels of practise that actually take the person to the point that they can have no fear in being who they are in the transpersonal realm…".

Personal Reflexivity Awareness

Analysis of interviewer's observations of increased expressive indications of positive wellbeing states, recorded at the end of Stages One and Two of the data analysis mirrored counsellor's descriptions of how liminal and spiritual experiences can be utilised for personal growth. The topic of transpersonal discussion generated positive energy during the interview process and the author was moved by the sincerity and depth of the participants' responses. Through the process of exploring the topic, the researcher has been positively affected by how genuinely engaging a conversation on the transpersonal could be. The openness and enthusiasm of the participants have encouraged her to explore future research opportunities within the area.

Discussion

The participants discussed the advantages of gradual exploration of sources of spiritual knowledge and understanding and considered an assessment of own gaps to understanding a priority. The benefit of the progressive education in *knowing and being* were previously explored by Cortright (1997), who examined three major divisions of transpersonal approaches to psychotherapy—the impersonal, the personal, and a blended version that regulated the practice of the primary two. The impersonal stage was referred to the path of the searching spirit, one that is rooted in awareness of "the big picture," featureless and devoid of potency, all-encompassing, universal whole.

Incorporating the concept of such space in psychotherapy supports peacefulness, reduces agitation, invokes authenticity, and aids the essential awakening of the "here and now" state. The personal stage reflects the state of dedication and absorption, a personal connection with divine aspect of self in a mood of prayer and surrender. This stage brings about the revelation of deeply unique qualities of one's cherished characteristics such as determination, joy, hope, and profound surrender in pursuit of desired goal, or *bhakti* (Cortright, 1997, p.134-135). From those combined stages crystallises the transpersonal structure of both contemplation and action, guided solely from the depths of the newly discovered inner source of inspiration: the soul.

Mindful meditation could serve as a prominent aspect within the impersonal suggestion outline, serving as a method of initial focus on spirit (Rowan, 2015). Mindfulness appealed to participants as the most natural and easy-to-apply method in support of initial growth of spiritual awareness and intention development (Shapiro & Carlson, 2009). The participants considered the glimpse of authentic self gained through mindfulness to be in a relationship with intuition and creativity (Rowan, 2015), in continued pursuit of spiritual development. This reflects Cortright's notion of the personal approach. Overall, the participants' responses pointed toward the blended form of both the personal and impersonal frameworks, as they discussed the benefits of incorporating counsellors' spiritual pursuits to a set of regulative behavioural practices in accordance with the individuals' choice and preferences.

The participants assessed spirituality as an integral component of the core of human choices for being. They agreed that spirituality can be explored through various experientially conducted and mutually agreed upon spiritual activities to encourage development of internal contemplation (Richards & Worthington, 2010). Transpersonal methods uniquely blend with refined human qualities such as altruism and genuine compassion toward self and others (Anderson, 2015; Braud, 2004; Clements, 2011). In line with this, participants evaluated that the development in the knowledge of holistic self-care and use of self-regulating practices is essential in enhancing the progress of individual practices (Cortright, 1997).

The participants highlighted the importance of the factor of authenticity in their personal practices. They suggested addressing blockages to further cultivation of authenticity and examining obstacles to accepting their deeper truths, in a manner similar to Strohl's (1998) integrated proposal for counsellors' transpersonal growth: "A core transpersonal belief is one in which it is imperative that the transpersonal counsellor be open to self-examination… Self-acceptance is the essential element… courage to risk exploration is demanded of the counsellor…" (p. 402).

Further to Strohl's notion, participants considered that the transpersonal interventions could successfully blend with both monistic (inner nature perspective, humanistic) and dualistic (Jung's theory, relationship with the Divine) models of thought. Participants implied that development of spiritual competence can begin with one eclectic vision of such an integrated transformation and then expand, providing with opportunity to further explore virtuous human qualities.

Participants reflected the idea of a "unifying" structure to be a developmental necessity for every therapist (Hartelius et al., 2007), encompassing an approach that embodies and yet goes beyond ego-based psychotherapy, holistic methods, and transformative approaches, leading to the rise of transcendental understanding imbued with a whole, complete, and conscious nature.

Additionally, the participants shared the notion that since our nature is spiritual, consciousness cannot be contained and analysed from such an "expert" point of view (Cortright, 1997), but rather attended to in a collaborative manner (Friedman, 2015).

All participants acknowledged the need for more holistic innovations to therapy in a manner of "expanding" as opposed to the "pathologising" approaches that limit and reduce the positive impact of spirit-inclusive approaches (Grof, 2012). They suggested that the superiority of the transpersonal healing process rather requires guidance from the client's inner experiences and not from the therapist's insight outcomes.

Maintaining practitioner's authenticity while exploring the transpersonal approach (Rowan, 2015) was seen as another essential part of the counsellors' spiritual competence, in the form of continuous emotional stability towards a positive state of

being (Davis, 2009). During the interviews, the participants assessed that the freedom of the adult ego was affirmed in its ability to accept such constructive choices to personal growth (Washburn, 1995).

The participants affirmed the fact that counsellor's openness to internal self-examination and self-acceptance during therapy (Strohl, 1998) may be of primary significance in the emergence of authenticity (Rowan, 2015). Their conclusion was consistent with the literature, indicating a potential paradigm shift towards spiritually-inclusive practices (Anderson, 2015; Anderson & Braud, 2011; Zinnbauer & Pargament, 2000).

The themes emerged rapidly and spontaneously during the interview. The experience resembled a conversation between friends. Due to feeling close to the nature of the topics, the participants identified a sense of an inspiration during the interviews. The subtle positive energy exchanged during the deliberation on transpersonal topics produced further feelings of connectedness, participants noticed. In the state of perceived internal enlivening, the participants shared epiphany-like statements conveying that no true integrative approach to therapy can be fully made until and unless a transpersonal approach is used.

The presence of what Ferrer (2011) called an "intrapersonal co-creation" and "the collaborative participation of all human attributes—body, vital energy, heart, mind, and consciousness—in the enactment of spiritual phenomena" (p. 3) was reflected in the participants' responses as they exhibited a strong preference toward a spirituality-based model of thinking. This outcome resembled Rowan's (2015) notion of the ease with which the transpersonal approach is communicated between people of various belief backgrounds, establishing the transpersonal interventions as respectful and inclusive of all cultures (Vaughn, 2015).

The potential benefits of the transpersonal approach in the education field held significant importance within the participants' responses. This requirement was extensively supported by a growing amount of recent research (Anderson 2015; Anderson & Braud, 2011; Ferrer, 2011; Rowan, 2015; Friedman, 2015; Hartelius et al.

2015). The participants described the scarce use of the transpersonal approach in mainstream counselling to be of depriving value to the counselling field. Their reflective responses emphasised the necessity of deepening self-understanding during personal practices as well as the advantages of undertaking professional development in the transpersonal field. Additionally, since the nature of transpersonal experiences is difficult to categorise (Davis, 2009) due to the non-material origin of transpersonal experiences, the participants inquired into a further need of scientific language adjustments (Friedman, 2015).

The participants elaborated on the idea that the transpersonal model was not given the attention it deserves in the field of humanistic psychology (Rowan, 2014). The participants expressed a desire to identify a wider scope of sources of knowledge about the transpersonal approach to practice. They further shared that they have been practising this framework and were not very familiar with its scope as an integrated model of therapy, reflecting Rowan's (2015) description:

> The transpersonal is very familiar to us already. If it were something strange and new, it would be hardly warrant being talked about except by the few who are interested in such things…. It would make much more sense to say that all practitioners could take an interest. (p. 11)

During the interview process, the participants discussed the limiting factor of time and expressed a hope for another opportunity to further detail their knowledge in exploration of the topics generated. Even though the presence of this factor established an interest in future reading and further conversing on the topic, the conclusions from this research present a limited data only.

When the participants discussed their desire to be more authentic in practice, they frequently touched on the difficulties caused by the general pathology-based approach to counselling as a major barrier to progress. They described a sense of discord when mentioning "spirituality" as part of their practice, identifying a form of oppressive presence. Participants could not identify the cause of this but compared it to

a form of "negative energy," followed by a dismissal from their organisational bodies of an unspecified oppressive presence. As Clements (2011) summarised it: "characteristics that would disrupt the integrity of this process include inflexibility, inauthenticity, hubris, and spiritual materialism" (p. 135). While the participants attempted to articulate how "spirituality works," they described the benefits of freedom to be themselves in social work settings, without the fear of judgement. The participants' discussion clearly reflected Strohl's (1998) statement that one of the main objects of the transpersonal approach is to assist the "development of a stable, cohesive ego and the exploration of the existential self" (p.400).

The participants established the necessity of personal integrity as a prerequisite to practising the transpersonal approach and shared increased confidence in choosing to incorporate the transpersonal model in their counselling practice.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Simply putting it as "educating 'the more' in holistic transpersonal higher education," Braud (2006) succinctly described the viability and interest in the field of transpersonal professional development. Exercising caution against ignoring the transpersonal (Rowan, 2014), while forming close alignment with transpersonal beliefs, places priority on professionals' spiritual values (Hodge & Horvath, 2011) and fosters the necessity of cultivation of more research methods in the field.

Intuitive inquiry or "the ways of the heart in human science research" (Anderson, 2011, p.15) would benefit counsellors who may wish to explore the pre-personal (or the intuitive, searching stage) before entering the personal stage of transpersonal development (Rowan, 2015). The intuitive process may alternatively prove effective in guiding practitioners into discovering the intricacies of viewing the counselling process via the three eyes of knowledge—the sensorium of the body and the introspective-rational inclusion of mind, and heart—while contemplating the presence of the essential link of the three: the inquisitive spirit (Cortright, 1997). Endeavours for union between structure and flexibility, reason and emotion, discernment and holism actively support

the emergence of the person's essence in therapy (Siegel, 2013). An initial intuitive inquiry may also help recognise the element of the transpersonal therapist's integrity as being to be just as important as their clinical training (Strohl, 1998). Further focus on client-defined spirituality (Kaminker & Lukoff, 2015) could ultimately effect long-lasting therapeutic outcomes.

Another under-researched perspective is the organic inquiry (Braud, 2004). This method considers the body, heart, and spirit of both client and therapist in the session, or how "the head of the work" may become "the heart in the work" (Le Gacy, 1998, p.140). This approach to study could benefit an encompassing, holistic transformation of heart and mind, simultaneously facilitating better communication with the person's intrinsic presence of spirit in sessions (Clements, 2011). This model suggests opening toward a more detailed understanding, unfolding liminal and spiritual experiences in both personal and professional practices (Braud, 2004). Since transpersonal exchanges require a base of a non-critical attitude to self and others (Anderson, 2015), high levels of clarity communicated from the platform of spirit-based therapeutic alliance (Louchakova & Lucas, 2007) may further assist in transcending the ego-ruled modes of being (Strohl, 1998) and establish a true spirit-inclusive approach to counselling.

Conclusion

Counsellors cognitive appreciation of the transpersonal development in theory and practice could bring a genuine integral counselling practice outcome and increase acceptance of the transpersonal approach to practice in the counselling field. Exploration of various modes of transpersonal knowing can help counsellor's personal as well as professional development, by encouraging focus to a continuous practice. Fostering authenticity acts in favour of discovering more precise methods of approach to both personal and professional areas of transpersonal development.

The transpersonal approach may introduce the concept of therapeutic connectedness in practice, contributing to an improved therapeutic alliance between the individual living spirits, both clients' and practitioners'.

Incorporation of the transpersonal approach to counselling may prove beneficial to counsellor's education. Transpersonal choices may increase counsellor's capacity to resolve conflicts in their professional environment. Ongoing research will serve to benefit the future development of the transpersonal approach to counselling and psychotherapy.

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