

Abstract

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Abstract Text:

Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) people, in the UK context, encounter multi-layered challenges in inclusive and equitable access to mental health care services and facilities. Central to these challenges are barriers in-between clients' and counsellors' felt experiences of being present with otherness. Through an autoethnographic research approach this paper reflects on the extent to which my intercultural sense of self, as a female first generation BAME migrant counsellor, contributes to a process of facilitating space for an empowering working alliance with diverse BAME clients. I draw on some memories (re)presented and (re)constructed through visual artefacts and autoethnographic vignettes related to my lived experience in the rural areas of Bihar and Uttarakhand (northern India) and my present work as a counsellor in a British mental health charity organisation. My autoethnographic narrative endeavours to gain reflexive insight into my motives, desires, fears and notions of my self-in- interaction with otherness influenced by my sense of alterity. I engage in this process by applying concepts of interculturalism, intersectionality and polyvocality in my autoethnographic narrative. This shapes my positionality and ways in which my stories of experiencing otherness are communicated. The findings of this study suggest means through which reflective insight can be developed about diverse ways in which experience of otherness may shape subjective intracultural processes, and location of self and others, in therapeutic work and contexts. This can contribute to reflexive processes for in-depth exploration of the counsellor's use of self, in the therapeutic relationship, to enhance inclusivity for practice with-in diversity.