

## Therapists as Researchers: Navigating Dilemmas from Research on Indian Therapist

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### Abstract

This paper explores the journey of an Indian therapist-researcher as she delves into the complex realm of exploring the use of self by therapists in India. It examines the reflection of an experienced Indian therapist-researcher exploring the complex phenomenon of the use of self. Through the use of qualitative phenomenological interviews with therapists at four developmental levels- trainee, novice, senior and expert therapists, the present study explores the dilemmas that therapists as researchers face during the interview process. This paper draws from a research with eight participants on the topic 'Use of Self in Therapy: An Exploratory Study Among Indian Counsellors and Therapists' using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis. The dynamic interplay between researcher and participant identities underscores the necessity of carefully navigating boundaries, and tailoring the inquiry process to participant needs and research objectives. This research highlights the questions and dilemmas that come up in qualitative research alongside pathways of responding by transforming the interview process to a more participant-led conversation and using therapeutic skills to ethically navigate research interviews. As the researcher grapples with the question of whether the therapist self should be held back or freely expressed, the paper offers insights into the delicate balance between knowledge gathering as part of research and maintaining participant safety. Finally, this study underscores the importance of reflexivity in exploring the self of the therapist, particularly in the context of India's evolving therapy landscape.

### Keywords

Therapist-researcher journey, Use of self in therapy, Indian therapists, Research dilemmas.