ABSTRACT

This autoethnographic study qualitatively explores a trainee’s journey towards becoming a clinical psychologist in South Africa. Both the formal and informal processes for becoming a psychotherapist are explored. The formal processes governing the training and registration of a clinical psychologist in South Africa are outlined. A critical appraisal of the training program is covered. The informal processes of the journey of this trainee psychologist is contextualised within the life story of that same person. In so doing a seventeen-year long struggle and academic relationship with UNISA is highlighted, including the insatiable desire and life long dream of the writer in wanting to become a psychologist.

An autoethnographic study was done by using the researcher as the only research subject. The personal writings of the researcher and her family serve as the primary data for the study. An autoethnographic approach was employed in creating and collecting the data. The stories are presented in narrative form, and the data are analysed by employing narrative analysis for extracting and highlighting initial and inferred themes.

Key terms

clinical psychology training; psychotherapy training; supervision; autoethnography; mental health in S.A.; life stories; trainee development; trainer-trainee relationships; training universities; theory and practice of training.