

An investigation into the prevalence and phenomenology of synchronicity experiences in the clinical setting

Results:

A survey conducted with a random sample of psychologists, psychotherapists, and counsellors found that 44% ($N = 100$) of respondents had experienced synchronicity in the clinical setting, 67% ($N = 150$) of the sample felt that synchronicity events could be useful experiences in therapy, and 31% ($N = 51$) felt that they might be useful. Explanations that respondents gave for why synchronicity experiences occurred in therapy were significantly different according to professional group membership. For example, psychologists were significantly more likely than both counsellors ($F(1, 122) = 4.763, p = .031$) and psychotherapists ($F(1, 150) = 6.569, p = .011$) to agree that chance coincidence was an explanation for synchronicity, whereas, counsellors ($F(1, 118) = 8.258, p = .005$) and psychotherapists ($F(1, 151) = 11.589, p = .001$) were significantly more likely than psychologists to agree that a need for unconscious material to be expressed could be an explanation for synchronicity experiences in the clinical setting. This may have an impact on how practitioners respond to clients who report anomalous experiences. Interviews with a subsample of respondents identified three superordinate themes that illuminate how participants interpret and address synchronicity experiences in therapy: 'Sense of connectedness', 'Therapeutic process', and 'Professional issues'. Participants commented on how their experience of synchronicity in the clinical setting was a profound moment that facilitated growth in their clients and resulted in a stronger therapeutic relationship. Synchronicity experiences are perceived to be a useful 'tool' for the therapeutic process, which has important implications for training and supervision.

Published works:

Full papers in preparation:

- Roxburgh, E. C., & Ridgway, S. Meaningful coincidences and psychotherapy: A literature review and research agenda. (In preparation).
- Roxburgh, E. C., & Ridgway, S. Exploring the meaning in meaningful coincidences: An interpretative phenomenological analysis of synchronicity in therapy. (In preparation).
- Roxburgh, E., C., & Ridgway, S. Synchronicity in the clinical setting: A survey of mental health professionals. (In preparation).

Area(s) of interest:

Clinical parapsychology, counselling for anomalous/exceptional human experiences, psychology and phenomenology of anomalous/exceptional human experiences, spirituality, and healing.

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