

**CHRIST**(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)
BANGALORE | DELHI NCR | PUNE

Notice for the PhD Viva Voce Examination

Ms Meera Haran Alva, Registration Number: 2071029, PhD Scholar at the School of Psychological Sciences, CHRIST (Deemed to be University) will defend her PhD thesis at the public viva-voce examination on Thursday, 18 June 2026 at 02.00 pm in Room No. 044, Ground Floor, R&D Block, CHRIST (Deemed to be University), Bengaluru - 560029, Karnataka, India.

- Title of the Thesis** : **Use of Self in Therapy: An Exploratory Study among Indian Counsellors and Therapists**
- Discipline** : **Psychology**
- External Examiner - I** : **Dr Shanmukh V Kamble**
Professor
Department of Psychology
Karnatak University
Dharwad - 580003
Karnataka
- External Examiner - II** : **Dr Deepshikha Ray**
Professor
Department of Psychology
University of Calcutta
Kolkata - 700009
West Bengal
- Supervisor** : **Dr Sherin P Antony**
Associate Professor
School of Psychological Sciences
Bangalore Yeshwanthpur Campus
CHRIST (Deemed to be University)
Bengaluru - 560073
Karnataka

The members of the Research Advisory Committee of the Scholar, the faculty members of the Department and the School, interested experts and research scholars of all the branches of research are cordially invited to attend this open viva-voce examination.

Registrar (Academics)

Place: Bengaluru
Date: 12 June 2026

ABSTRACT

While psychotherapy literature in the West has largely examined the use of self as a tool in therapy, there has been limited exploration of the lived experiences of Indian counsellors and therapists in relation to it. This study aims to understand how therapists working in India experience the use of self in therapy. It further explores how Indian therapists make sense of this experience in the context of navigating value conflicts and moral dilemmas, engaging in the therapeutic process, and reflecting on how professional training informs their use of self. The study adopted a qualitative research design, with semi-structured interviews conducted with eight practising therapists. Data was analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) to explore participants' lived experiences and meaning-making around the use of self in therapy. Despite limited clarity, variations in training, and systemic challenges, Indian therapists engaged with their use of self through experiential and reflexive practices. Five Group Experiential Themes emerged from the analysis, highlighting: 'Modalities in the Use of Therapist Self', 'The Nuanced Practice of Therapist Self-Disclosure', 'Methods of Therapist Self-Reflexivity', 'Navigating Value Conflicts and Moral Dilemmas in Therapy', and 'Training Programmes and Support Systems that Aid the Use of Therapist Self'. This research addresses a critical gap in the use of therapist self in Indian literature by offering experienced, informed insights grounded in therapists' lived experiences. It further emphasises the need for structured training, supervision, and peer support for the ethical and intentional use of self in therapy.

Keywords: use of self, Indian therapists, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis, psychotherapy research

Publications:

1. **Alva, M. H.**, Antony, S. P., & Kataria, K. (2025). Exploring the Use of the Therapist's Self in Therapy: A Systematic Review. *Indian journal of psychological medicine*, 47(1), 17–24. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02537176241252363>
2. **Alva, M. H.**, Antony, S. P., & Kothari, A. (2025). Therapists as Researchers: Navigating Dilemmas from Research on Indian Therapists. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 25(4), e70057.