Internal Family Systems (IFS)

Healing Extreme and Wounded Parts

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Opening Meditation

Learning Objectives

- Review key concepts from Part I of the two-part workshop
- Understanding system parts
  - Managers
  - Firefighters
  - Exiles
- Learn and utilize IFS skills in working with parts

Review - Basic Assumptions of the IFS Model

- The mind contains an indeterminate number of subpersonalities or parts
- Everyone has a Self
- Parts take on roles they don’t like due to trauma and attachment injuries
- The non-extreme intention of a part is something positive for the individual
- Through internal interactions, parts polarize or form alliances and hierarchies with other parts
- Changes in the internal system will affect changes in the external system, and vice versa

Review - Goals of IFS Therapy

- Liberate extreme part from their roles
- Restore trust in the Self as the leader
- Achieve balance, harmony, and wholeness within the system
- Bring more Self energy to the external systems

Review - Self energy

- How do you know Self-energy is present?
- Is the therapist holding Self-energy?
- Self-like parts

Self energy – 8 Cs

Calm

Connectedness

Compassion

Creativity

Curiosity

Clarity

Courage

Confidence

The burdened internal system

- Managers
  - Control behavior to prevent pain
- Firefighters
  - Soothe or escape distress by reacting quickly
- Exiles
  - Hold pain, fear, shame, and unmet needs

Working with Firefighters

Firefighters

- These are parts that behave reactively to minimize the activation of the exile
- They are fearful parts, but want to be hopeful
- Create a Self-to-part relationship to build trust
  - Acknowledge the part's intentions and how their role isn't working as intended
  - Help the part to release its extreme role
  - Offer the part hope (Hope Merchant)

Contracting with a firefighter

How does the part feel about getting to know it better?

- Contracting with a firefighter
  - Identify concerns
  - How does the Self feel toward this part
  - Is the part likely to be activated if the exile is contacted
  - Appreciate the part and address the fears

Getting to know a firefighter – 6 F’s

Find

Focus

Feel toward

Be**F**riend

Find out

Fears

Break

Addressing Protector Fears

What are some common protector fears?

Addressing protector fears

- Common fears
  - Overwhelm
  - Loss of the therapist
  - Therapist reaction
  - Dangerous behavior
  - Secrets revealed
  - Being hurt again
  - …

Marker for transition to an exile

- Client reports protector(s) is/are feeling…
  - Appreciated
  - Relaxed
  - Heard/understood
  - Some confidence/possibility in the client/self
- Emotion/pain behind the protector is coming through
- Sensation moves to a vulnerable area (e.g., gut, heart, Eyes)

Exiles

- Sensitive, vulnerable, innocent, rejected parts
- Can feel devalued, ashamed, or confused
- Are exiled by the protector(s) for survival
- Are burdened (self and/or legacy)
- Address the overwhelm of the exile
- Addressing the common fears

Why do parts get exiled?

The Healing Steps

- Witnessing
- Retrieval
- Unburdening
- Invitation
- Integration
- Follow-up

Video

Burdens

- Beliefs and/or emotions your parts/system hold
- Can be personal or legacy

Unburdening

- Identify the burden (legacy or personal)
- Ask if the part would like to unload the legacy burden that they inherited.
  - Ask parts if there is any reason they need to hold onto this burden?
- Address all parts fears and concern of unloading the burden

Questions

Closing Meditation