

IFS

INTERNAL FAMILY SYSTEMS THERAPY

ALEXIA ROTHMAN, PH.D.

© Alexia Rothman PhD 2022

1

What
is
IFS?

1

2

3

4

5

Non-pathologizing model for understanding the organization and operation of our psychological systems

Empirically validated psychotherapy

Simple, relatable

Comprehensive

Powerful

© Alexia Rothman PhD 2022

2

Developer of the
IFS Model

Richard C. Schwartz, Ph.D.



© Alexia Rothman PhD 2022

3

Do people have an
inner wisdom
that could become a
source of healing?

© Alexia Rothman PhD 2022

4

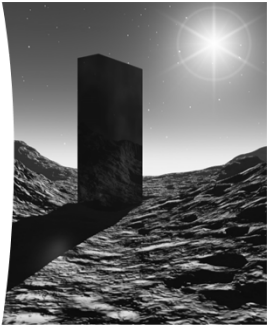


© Alexia Rothman PhD 2022

5

Multiplicity of the Mind

- Not a monolithic personality
- Our psyche is composed of **multiple "Parts"**
- We have not been taught to be aware of, pay attention to, extend compassion to, or work with these Parts



© Alexia Rothman PhD 2022

6

Parts

- Subpersonalities
- Can understand them as tiny people inside you.



© Alexia Rothman PhD 2022

7

Types of Parts

Exiles

- Parts that carry unresolved pain.
- Vulnerable
- Wounded

Protectors


- Parts that manage our interactions with the world and defend against underlying pain.
- Managers: PROACTIVE
- Firefighters: REACTIVE

© Alexia Rothman PhD 2022

8

Exiles

- Hold the feelings we never want to feel
 - Pain, shame, sadness, grief, loneliness, anxiety, fear, out-of-control, lost, unworthiness, guilt, humiliation, abandonment, panic, rejected, unloved
- Wounded Parts, very often young.
- Often frozen in time at original point of wounding, and experiencing trauma over and over
- Carry memories, sensations, and emotions of traumas/painful experiences




© Alexia Rothman PhD 2022

9

Protectors: Managers

- **PROACTIVE:** Work to prevent exile activation
- Run our day-to-day life
- Intention to create stability, functioning, improvement, to control environment to preserve safety
- Attempt to keep us in control of situations and relationships to protect parts from hurt/rejection and to protect system from their feelings/memories
- “Never again”



© Alexia Rothman PhD 2022

10



MANAGERS IN EXTREME ROLES	
Striving	Controlling
Perfectionism	Driving (taskmaster)
Criticizing	Obsessing
Seeking reassurance	Seeking approval
Evaluating	Caretaking
Organizing	Terrorizing
Restricting	Manipulating
Avoidance	Procrastination
Guardedness	Pessimism

© Alexia Rothman PhD 2022

11

Protectors: Firefighters

- **REACTIVE:** Take action when exiles are activated in an effort to **stifle** or **numb** us to their feelings or **distract** us from them
- In *preferred* roles, they seek to balance the system: rest, soothing, novelty, pleasure, fun



FIREFIGHTERS IN EXTREME ROLES

Drug/alcohol abuse, self-harm/mutilation, bingeing/purging, starvation, sex binges, overspending, video games/TV/internet, gambling, violence, suicide attempts, lashing out, fighting, hoarding, dissociating, procrastinating, oversleeping.

12

Burdens

- **Negative/extreme emotions, beliefs, or energies** that enter your system from some direct experience in your life or that are absorbed through the culture or family lineage.
 - Arise from **the meaning** parts make of external events.

13

Goals of IFS Therapy

- Progress toward achieving harmony and balance in clients' systems
- Liberate parts from the roles they've been forced into, so they can be who they're designed to be
 - Decrease the reactivity of the internal system (more choice to *respond*)
- Restore trust in the Self and Self-Leadership
- Help clients become more Self-led in their interactions with the world

14

SELF as Natural Leader of the System


- The Self is the natural leader of our systems and the occupant of the Seat of Consciousness when none of our parts have taken its place.

15

Technique: Unblending

- Recognize and acknowledge when you are blended with a Part
 - Notice how you're experiencing the blending, focus there
- Ask directly if the Part would separate from you and open some space for you to be WITH it
 - If it's flooding, ask it to draw most of its energy out of your body
- Used frequently with any type of part to increase access to Self-energy and open space for Self-to-Part connection

© Alexia Rothman PhD 2022



16

The Six "F'S"

Unblending

- Find
- Focus
- Flesh Out

Relationship Building

- Feel
- BeFriend
- Fears

© Alexia Rothman PhD 2022

17

The Steps of Healing

Differentiation

Develop Self-part relationship

Witnessing

Retrieval

Unburdening

Invitation

Integration

Appreciation

© Alexia Rothman PhD 2022

18

If you would like to access my other **IFS live and on-demand workshops** and **podcast episodes** or be included on my **e-mail list**, please subscribe on my website:

DrAlexiaRothman.com



© Alexia Rothman PhD 2022
