

INTERNAL PARTS THERAPY

Internal Parts Therapy is a therapeutic approach based on the principles of Internal Family Systems. It is based on the idea that the mind is naturally multiple, and we all have various "parts" or "sub-personalities" within us.

Internal Parts Therapy helps you identify the multiple sub-personalities or parts within your mental system to create internal harmony and integration. This involves helping you free your parts from their extreme roles as they learn to trust the Self in leading the system.

It is important to note that this is a non-pathologizing approach, viewing all parts as having positive intent, even if their methods or impacts might be problematic. This perspective can help reduce shame and promote self-compassion. This approach has been applied to treat various conditions, including trauma, anxiety, and depression. It's also been used in non-clinical settings to help individuals with personal growth and self-awareness.

Key Concepts

Parts

These are the sub-personalities within us. Everyone has them, and they each have their own perspectives, feelings, memories, goals, and motivations. They might manifest as the inner critic, the caretaker, the abandoned child, and so forth.

Parts are generally categorized into three types based on their primary role:*

1. **Managers (The Caretaker, The Inner Critic, The Perfectionist, The Planner):** These parts are proactive in managing day-to-day life by trying to keep you in control of situations, avoiding vulnerability and protecting you from pain.
2. **Firefighters (The Binge-Eater, The Binge-Drinker, The Workaholic, The Painkiller, The Risk Taker, The Daydreamer):** These parts immediately react to emotional pain/fear by impulsively dousing it, numbing it, or distracting away from it. The emotional pain occurs when exiles become activated (see exiles below).
3. **Exiles (The Abandoned Child, The Neglected Child, The Shame Bearer, The Neglected Teen):** These parts carry burdens of trauma, pain, and negative beliefs. They are often isolated by the managers and firefighters to prevent their painful emotions or memories from emerging.

***NOTE:** At the end of this document there are descriptions of common "parts".



The Self

The Self (with a capital 'S') represents the core or essence of an individual. It is the compassionate, confident, and calm center of the mind. The Self is the unification of the conscious and unconscious parts of the psyche. It's the realization of one's true nature and represents wholeness and integration.

The Therapeutic Process

STEPS	ONGOING
<p>1. Identifying and Mapping Parts</p> <p>Getting to know and understand your parts, identifying their different roles, feelings, fears, memories, and intentions. It is essential to approach each part with curiosity, respect, and compassion. Once a relationship with a part is established, you can begin the process of releasing it from its burdens.</p>	<p>Accessing the Self</p> <p>The therapist will support you in accessing this grounded, compassionate, and confident state of being. If there are parts preventing access to the Self (for instance, if a part is skeptical or fearful of the process), these concerns will need to be addressed.</p> <p>Working through Polarizations</p> <p>Sometimes, parts will be in conflict with one another (e.g., one part wants to assertively confront an issue while another part fears the consequences and wishes to avoid it).</p> <p>The therapist will guide you in understanding and resolving these polarizations, helping parts communicate and collaborate.</p>
<p>2. Unburdening</p> <p>Burdens are the painful emotions, negative beliefs, or traumas that a part of you carries. They often originate from past adverse experiences. The unburdening process might involve revisiting memories, but in the safe context of the therapeutic environment and with the Self present.</p>	
<p>3. Restoring Trust in the Self</p> <p>By approaching each part with curiosity, respect, and compassion, a trusting relationship between the Self (the core compassionate self) and your identified parts begins to build. As your parts release their burdens and trust in the Self grows, your parts can let go of their extreme roles and adopt new and healthier roles. Ultimately, the system becomes more harmonious, with parts relying on the leadership of the Self.</p>	
<p>4. Consolidation</p> <p>As parts change their roles and the internal system becomes more harmonious, you will experience more extended periods of being in the Self and you learn to turn to the Self for guidance, leading to more self-leadership in daily life.</p>	



Parts, Explained

Managers

These parts try to keep life on track and protect against any emotional pain. They are proactive and aim to prevent vulnerabilities.

- **The Perfectionist:** Strives for perfection to avoid criticism or feelings of inadequacy.
- **The Caretaker:** Always looks after others' needs, often neglecting their own.
- **The Planner:** Always needs to have a plan, likes to be prepared and in control.
- **The Inner Critic:** Constantly judges and criticizes (either the individual or others) in an attempt to maintain high standards and prevent failures.

Firefighters

These parts react when exiles become activated to distract from or extinguish their pain, often through impulsive behaviors.

- **The Binge Eater or Drinker:** Uses food or alcohol to numb pain or distress.
- **The Workaholic:** Immerses themselves in work to avoid dealing with personal issues.
- **The Risk-Taker:** Engages in risky behaviors to distract from pain or to feel alive.
- **The Daydreamer:** Retreats into fantasy or daydreams to escape unpleasant realities.

Managers and Firefighters function mainly to manage and protect the individual from the pain of the Exiles.

Managers proactively keep Exiles suppressed, ensuring that the individual remains in control and the Exiles' painful emotions or memories don't surface in daily life.

Firefighters react when Exiles do break through, often using impulsive or numbing behaviors to distract or soothe the individual, diverting attention away from the Exile's pain.

Exiles

Exiles often arise from traumatic experiences, painful emotions, or negative beliefs from childhood or other vulnerable times in an individual's life. They carry these burdens for the individual. Due to their pain and vulnerability, Exiles are often suppressed or pushed out of conscious awareness, hence the term "exile." Exiles are characterized by their vulnerability and pain.

They often carry burdens of shame, fear, loneliness, and feelings of rejection or worthlessness.

These parts may frequently attempt to make their pain known, trying to break into consciousness in hopes of being healed. This can manifest as intrusive memories, strong emotional reactions, or somatic sensations.



Remember, the goal isn't to keep Exiles permanently exiled but to access, unburden, and heal them. The process of recognizing, understanding, and healing these Exiles is central to healing.

- **The Abandoned Child:** Holds feelings of loneliness and beliefs of being unlovable.
- **The Shame Bearer:** Carries deep feelings of worthlessness or guilt.
- **The Frozen Teen:** Holds trauma from adolescent experiences, such as bullying or early heartbreak.
- **The Neglected Child:** Contains memories and feelings from times when basic needs weren't met.

Others

Beyond the main categories, other parts might emerge based on an individual's unique experiences and coping mechanisms.

- **The Pleaser:** Seeks to make everyone happy, often at the expense of their own desires.
- **The Rebel:** Resists authority and goes against the grain, often in defiance.
- **The Historian:** Holds onto past memories, often reminding the individual of past mistakes or traumas.
- **The Guardian:** A protector role that often seeks to shield the individual from harm, either from external threats or internal vulnerabilities.

