

SCHEMA MODES

An overview of schema therapy using a modes conceptualisation

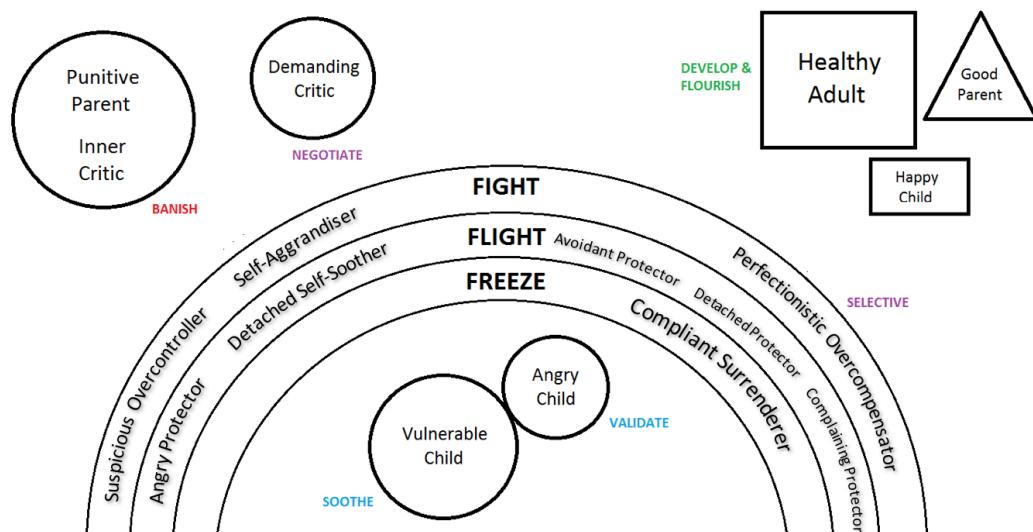
What is Schema Therapy?

Understanding how our early experiences shape our behaviour

Schema Therapy aims to help people to understand the blueprint of their lives. It explores the way a person has developed a sense of self and how they integrate information. Schema Therapy is very useful for people who have had early experiences of trauma or neglect or for those who often feel lonely, empty, distressed or overwhelmed.

Schema Mode Therapy (Farrell, Reiss, & Shaw, 2014)

Schema Modes are kind of like moods, except that they also include behaviours. We all have different facets to our personality, and schema modes explain how these different parts of us interact, almost like different characters within us.



1

CHILD

Vulnerability is at the core of who we are, and we never grow out of that.

2

COPING

Different ways of coping under pressure based on Fight/Flight/Freeze.

3

PARENT

The inner voice that can be demanding or critical that we often learnt from childhood.



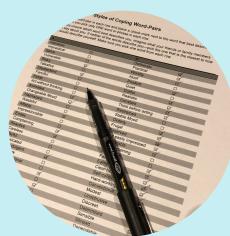
THE PSYCH COLLECTIVE

Check out our website for videos, curated content and more resources.



Watch our Video

Jess has made a video on this model for our YouTube channel.



OC-Assessment

Interested in your level of over-control? Check out the Styles of Coping Word Pairs at ThePsychCollective.com

Schema Modes

Child Modes

Vulnerable Child: This mode is at the core of who we are and is the centre of schema mode therapy. It is the source of our vulnerability, which makes us feel scared, lonely, fearful or disconnected, but also human.

Angry Child: This mode gets activated when we sense that the needs of our Vulnerable Child has not been met. The function of this mode is to draw attention to our unmet needs, and uses anger to get noticed.

Coping Modes

Fight Modes:

Perfectionistic Over-compensator: The desire to be perfect in everything so that we don't show our weaknesses to others. Based on the belief of "If I get everything right, then I can't fail and no one will see my vulnerability."

Suspicious Over-controller: Based on the belief that others cannot be trusted, so we are constantly looking for threats. This may mean hypervigilance, always contingency planning, making all the decisions or using rituals or repetitive behaviours to feel like we're coping (like checking or counting).

Self-Aggrandiser: The need to emphasise or exaggerate positive qualities or abilities to deflect attention away from the areas where we feel we are failing. This 'showing off' serves to hide feelings of shame and worthlessness.

Bully/Attack: A way of defending ourselves by lashing out at others, cutting them down so we look better in comparison or so they learn to leave us alone.

Flight Modes

Detached Protector: A form of psychological avoidance where we detach from our feelings and what is going on around us, so that we don't have to feel our vulnerability or distress.

Avoidant Protector: This is more of a behavioural avoidance where we will not show up to places, events or see people that we fear may trigger our distress or vulnerability.

Detached Self-Soother: When feelings of vulnerability are overwhelming, we do or use something to take the pain away or to try to feel something else. This may include drinking, drugs, eating, phone use, shopping, sex or self-harm.

Freeze Mode

Compliant Surrenderer: A sense of giving up or giving in to the thoughts that we are going to fail, so we stop trying, stop fighting and just go along with what others want.

Parent Modes

Demanding Parent: The voice in our head that is pushing us to do better, try harder, be perfect and never fail. It has a whip and a megaphone and it can be relentless in flogging us.

Punitive Parent: The critical voice that puts us down, berates us, and tells us we are worthless, unloveable or a failure. It is based on previous experiences of being criticised, abused, bullied or neglected. We hear it so often that it *feels true* even when there is evidence to the contrary.

Healthy Modes

Healthy Adult: The stage director for all of the modes who makes skilful coping choices, shuts down the parent modes, prioritises the child modes and promotes self-esteem.

Happy Child: The source of fun and spontaneity in our lives by making time for enjoyable activities.

REFERENCES

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Adapted from Farrell, J.M., Reiss, N., & Shaw, I.A. (2014) The Schema Therapy Clinician's Guide. John Wiley & Sons.

