

Playful Ways to Regulate the Nervous System (...using Parts!)



Ragan Snyder-Smith, LCSW, RPT-S

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

Learning Objectives

- 1) Participants will be introduced to the history of parts therapy approaches and Internal Family Systems theory, developed by Richard Schwartz, and how this can be applied in social work.
- 2) Participants will identify the relationship of parts therapy to neuropsychology and self-compassion.
- 3) Participants will articulate how creative techniques can be paired with IFS to help children in school social work.

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

Objective #1: Participants will be introduced to the history of parts therapy approaches and Internal Family Systems theory, developed by Richard Schwartz, and how this can be applied in play therapy.

History of Parts Therapy and IFS

- We all have parts
- The idea of multiplicity - not just pathology
- Easy for people to relate to



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

4

History of Parts Therapy and IFS

- There are lots of approaches to parts therapy
- Psychodynamic Psychotherapy, Jung, Perls, Assagioli, Berne, inner child, voice dialogue, etc.



McLeod, S. A. (2019, September 25). *Id, ego and superego*. Simply Psychology. <https://www.simplypsychology.org/psyche.html>

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

5

IFS and Parts Therapy

Richard Schwartz in 1980's

- Family Systems theory - homeostasis
- Started listening to clients who wouldn't change
- Began interacting with parts directly



<https://www.sheknows.com/parenting/articles/2166911/best-baby-mobiles-for-crib-amazon/>
Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

6



Internal Family Systems (IFS)

Components	Illustrative Examples	Role in the System	IFS Therapy Goals
Core Self	Core Self / Adults	Calm, Committed, Creative, Capable Self. In most polarized systems parts generally don't trust Core Self. Beliefs and values.	- Differentiate Core Self from other internal parts. - Improve Self leadership of the system. - Improve inner harmony and reduce polarization between parts.
Exiles	Stripped 7-year-old, Abused High Schooler	Held down and painful feelings and trauma memories. Muddy mind and inner pain.	- To be acknowledged, understood, reassured, and protected by Self. - To stop hijacking the system.
Protectors	Inner Critic, Anxious, The Worrywart	Suppress and contain Exiled parts. Protect the system and focus on daily living tasks.	- Let go of extreme rules. - Adjust role to present day needs and work under Core Self leadership. - Move. Reclaim of Core Self.
Fire Fighters	Drug Abuser, Suicidal Mom	Use extreme measures to distract, distract and numb the system when Exiles are triggered.	- No longer needed to perform their extreme roles.

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

Parts and Self

- Blending and unblending
- Self in IFS - the part that's not a part
- Relating to parts instead of from parts



The 8 C's of Self

Heal Your Inner Critic with the Internal Family Systems Model

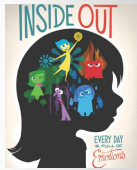


Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

10

How to Introduce IFS To Kids

- Introduce understanding of parts
- Help child understand everyone has parts
- Reassurance, Safety (Window of Tolerance), STRENGTHS!
- "Detective Duo" - Working Alliance
 - "Let's find out some stuff about that (feeling) part of you."
- Stay within window of tolerance



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

11

Finding and Befriending Parts



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

12



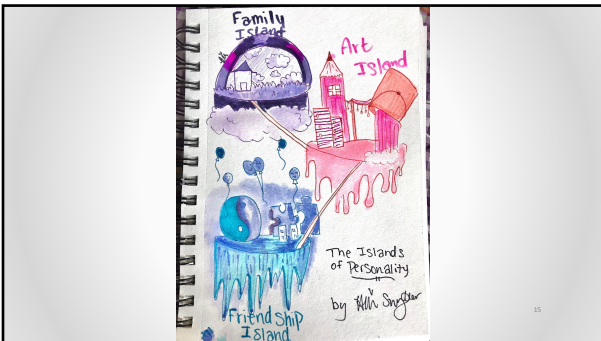
13

Island of Personality Clip



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

14



15

Island of Personality Mind Map

Examples

<http://creativityintherapy.com/2015/07/using-inside-out-to-explore-emotions/>

<https://www.burdtherapy.com/4-ways-help-kids-understand-emotions-within-side-out-disney Pixar/>

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

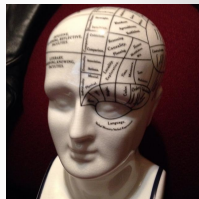
16

Objective #2: Participants will identify the relationship of parts therapy to neuropsychology and self-compassion.

17

Neuropsychology

- Idea of multiplicity reflected in parts of the brain that interact interact
 - Left brain/ right brain in therapy
 - Triune brain: thinking vs. emotional brain in therapy
- Neuropsychology gives us another way of talking to kids about parts
- Also gives us a way of understanding how parts therapy works



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

18

Teaching About the Brain

- Owl and Guard Dog - Cosmic Kids Yoga
- Puppets
- Hand Model of the Brain
- Brain Hats
- Mind Up Curriculum
- [Upstairs / Downstairs Brain](#) - Whole Brained Child

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

19

Neuroplasticity & Memory Reconsolidation

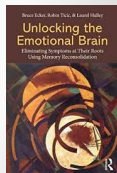
- Neuroplasticity means the brain changes as a result of experience
- Experience-dependent neuroplasticity: experience changes the brain
- Self-directed neuroplasticity: the mind changes the brain
- We can use part of the brain to change and heal other parts



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

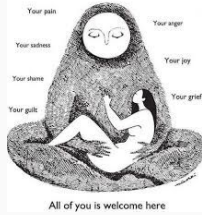
Memory Reconsolidation

- Memories can change each time they are recalled
- Allows updating with new information
- E.g., Therapy with trauma
- This is one value of self-compassion



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

IFS: All Parts are welcome



<https://asoulfulife.com/2019/05/21/all-of-you-is-welcome/>
Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2020

22

Self-Compassion

- Kristen Neff's research - it's good for what ails you
- 3 components of self-compassion
 - Mindfulness
 - Self-kindness
 - Common (shared) humanity

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

23

How to Talk to Kids about Self-Compassion

- Externalize
- How to Talk to a BFF
- Growth Mindset
- Model it
- Be Authentic

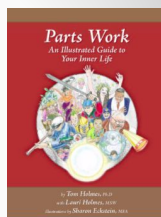
Kristen Neff Video (5 minutes)

<https://www.happilyfamily.com/taching-kids-self-compassion/>



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

3) Participants will articulate how creative techniques can be paired with IFS to help children heal in school social work.



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

IFS: All Parts Are Trying to Help



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

All Parts are Trying to Help

Identifying the **positive intent** (e.g., the worry monster)

1. Identify a "negative" part
2. See if you can identify the positive intent driving this part
3. Does recognizing the positive intent make you want to rename the "negative" part?



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

28

Working with Protectors

- Protectors - trying to help but can get in the way or make things worse



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

29

Example: Inner Critic

- Very common manager part
- Trying to help the person avoid pain
- Often exhausted

What does your inner critic have to say?



mentalhealthathome.org

30

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

Firefighters

- Willing to do damage to put out the fire
- Intent is positive
- May be willing to try a different way



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC
2021

31

Working with Protectors

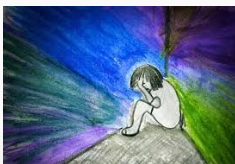
- Blending / unblending - curiosity, compassion, calm, etc.
- Getting to know protectors
 - Understanding positive intent
- Negotiating with protectors

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

32

Working with Exiles

- Wounded and traumatized Parts
- Exiles - carry pain from the past
 - Burdens - painful memories and beliefs that are carried



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

33

Working with Exiles

- How the process works: overview
 - Getting permission from protectors
 - Witnessing exiles - hear their story
 - Healing exiles - what do they need?
 - Unburdening exiles - opportunity to let go

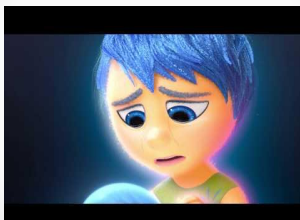


Healing Exiles (2): Self-compassion

- What is self-compassion?
- How is it different from self-esteem?
- Not self-pity or self-indulgence
- Be a caring witness to your own parts



“They Came to Help Because of Sadness”



Witnessing Exiles: “Hello Sadness” What do you Have to Say?

“Use the pictures you and your child created of her emotions or get pictures of the characters from *Inside Out* or order the [figurines](#).

Invite your child to have a conversation with the emotion that is present for him. For example, ask Sadness questions such as “What do you want me to know, Sadness?” or “What do you need right now, Sadness?” And listen to what Sadness wants to tell you. Thank Sadness for sharing. Then talk about or draw what Sadness has to say. Discuss. Be present and listen deeply, allowing your child to express whatever is there for him in the moment.”

Client examples

<http://kidsrelaxation.com/uncategorized/relaxing-and-regulating-from-the-inside-out/>

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

37

Combining School Social Work & IFS

1. Creating Safety, Introduce Parts
2. Materials in the Playroom
3. Therapist staying in Self
4. Parts that are naturally externalized in the play
5. Therapist helping with unblending
 - a. Invite child to pick object to symbolize feeling
 - b. Once picked, can unblend into the object & begin to use insight

<https://ifs-institute.com/resources/articles/child-counseling-intern-at-family-systems-therapy>

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

38

Unblending (1): Externalizing parts

- Blending
- Unblending
- Externalizing parts as a way of unblending

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

39

Externalizing Anxiety - Video

https://fb.watch/30fxR_63hx/

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

40

Externalizing in Art

[Dawid Planeta](#)

Toby Allen

<https://www.zestydoesthings.com/realmongsters>

Shawn Coss

<http://www.shawncossart.com/>



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

Ways to Externalize Parts

- Clay
- Toys
- Sandtray & Miniatures
- Legos
- Drawing
- Dolls
- Body Map
- Bibliotherapy
- Metaphor & Art
- Intervention: Parts Playlist



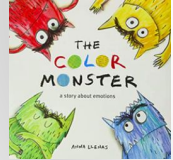
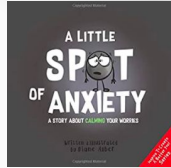
Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

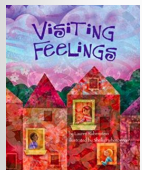
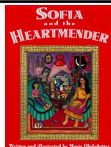
42

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2020



43

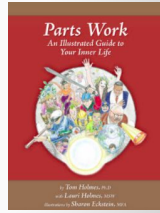




Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

45

Teens / Adults

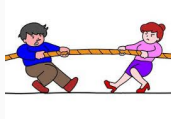


Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

46

Unblending (2): Depolarization Dialogue

- Polarization - two parts having an argument
 - Smoking, weight loss
- More one goes in one direction, more other goes the other way
- Need to give BOTH parts a voice, rather than take sides



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

47

Having more than 1 feeling at a time

<https://www.vox.com/2015/6/29/8860247/inside-out-emotions-graphic>

Z Case Example: Ragan

Hadleigh Case Example: Ragan

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

48



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

49

Self-Leadership

- What is the goal or result of this process?
- Unblending, healing, and increasing access to Self
- Developing Self-leadership



<https://medium.com/personal-growth/self-care-is-not-selfish-c1cf086901e2>
Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

50

What does this look like? Speaking FOR Parts instead of FROM parts



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

51



Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

52

Creative Techniques to teach about Parts

- 1) Color my Heart
- 2) Externalization activities
- 3) Island of Personality
- 4) Sandtray Parts
- 5) Bibliotherapy

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

53

IFS & Sandtray

Applying the following techniques in an IFS Informed Sand Tray.

- Explore techniques, flexibility and creativity by externalizing miniatures in the Sand Tray
- Open vs. a directed IFS Informed Sand Tray
- Focus on a target part
- Asking concerned parts to step back
- Getting parts to unblend
- Working with parts parts
- Getting to know parts of parts
- Checking in with parts of parts
- Legacy unburdenings
- Working with a dissociated part
- Utilizing direct access
- Finding exile parts
- Unburdening

-Peg Dawson
<https://ifssandtray.com/about>

Copyright Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC 2021

54

Inside Out Interventions

<http://www.innervativecards.com/working-with-blank-cards-1.html>

1. Island of Personality
2. Emotions Identification / Feelings Checkin
3. Using Movie Clips to Discuss (Links in Bibliography)
4. Size of Feelings
5. Zones of Regulation
6. [Card Game](#)
7. [16 Inside out Activities](#)

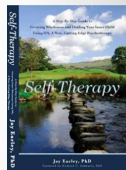
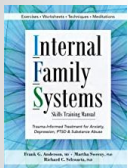


Inside Out Interventions

<http://www.innervativecards.com/working-with-blank-cards-1.html>

8. Externalizing Parts - Activities
9. [Discussing Complex Emotions - Polarization](#)
10. Body Map
11. [Using Inside Out to Discuss Grief](#)
12. [Emotional Intelligence](#)
13. [50 Ideas to Use with Inside Out](#)

Professional Books



Recorded Webinars

- [Play Therapy with LGBT+ Children and Teens](#)
- [Books and Board Games in Play Therapy](#)
- [Storytelling with Superheroes in Play Therapy](#)
- [Pop Culture and Play Therapy](#)
- [Lego Based Play Therapy](#)

58

Thank you for attending!

Ragan Snyder-Smith, LSCSW, RPT-S
ragansnyderlscsw@gmail.com

Follow us on FB for more events:
Ad Astra Play Therapy & Counseling, LLC
adastraplay.com