



# INTRODUCTION TO INTERNAL FAMILY SYSTEMS THERAPY

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ADAPTED FROM IFS LEVEL 1 TRAINING MANUAL BY  
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# WHAT IS IFS?

## Brief History

Richard Schwartz's story

Simplified definition

Intention of this training to help you integrate aspects of the model to conceptualize client's issues and work with client's parts.

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# BEFORE WE GET STARTED....

- Just take a few seconds and check in with yourself.
  - What thoughts are you having?
  - What emotions are you experiencing?
  - What sensations are you feeling?
  - Are you having any memories pop up?
  - Are you hearing any inner voices? (The critic is often pretty loud)
  - Do you see any images as you close your eyes?
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## 6 BASIC ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE MODEL

1. It is the nature of the mind to contain an indeterminate number of sub-personalities or parts.
  2. Everyone has Self and the Self can and should lead the individual's internal system.
  3. Parts develop burdens and are forced into roles they don't like due to trauma and attachment injuries.
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# BASIC ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT THE MODEL

4. In the IFS model the non-extreme intention of each part is something positive for the individual. ***There are no "bad" parts***, and the goal of therapy is not to eliminate parts but instead to help them find their non-extreme roles.
  5. As we develop, our parts develop and form a complex system of interactions among themselves; therefore, systems theory can be applied to the internal system. When the system is reorganized, parts can change rapidly. (There are polarizations, alliances, and hierarchies)
  6. Changes in the internal system will affect changes in the external system and vice versa. The implication of this assumption is that both the internal and external levels of system should be assessed.
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# IFS THERAPY HAS FOUR

## GOALS:

- 1.To liberate parts from extreme roles
- 2.To restore trust in the self and in self-leadership.
- 3.To achieve balance, harmony, and wholeness. (Internally and externally)
- 4.To bring self energy to external systems



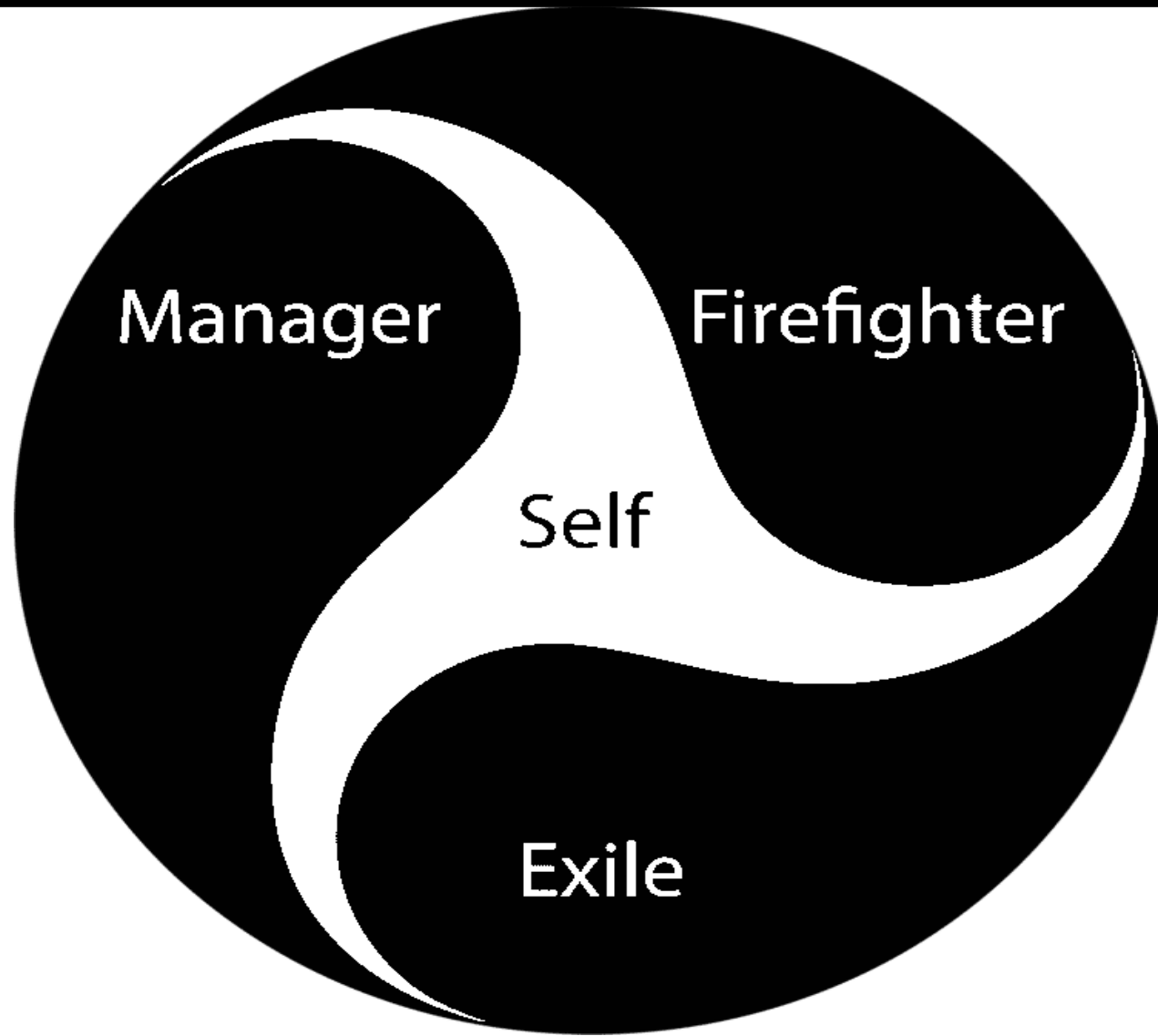


# UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

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# The Burdened Internal System

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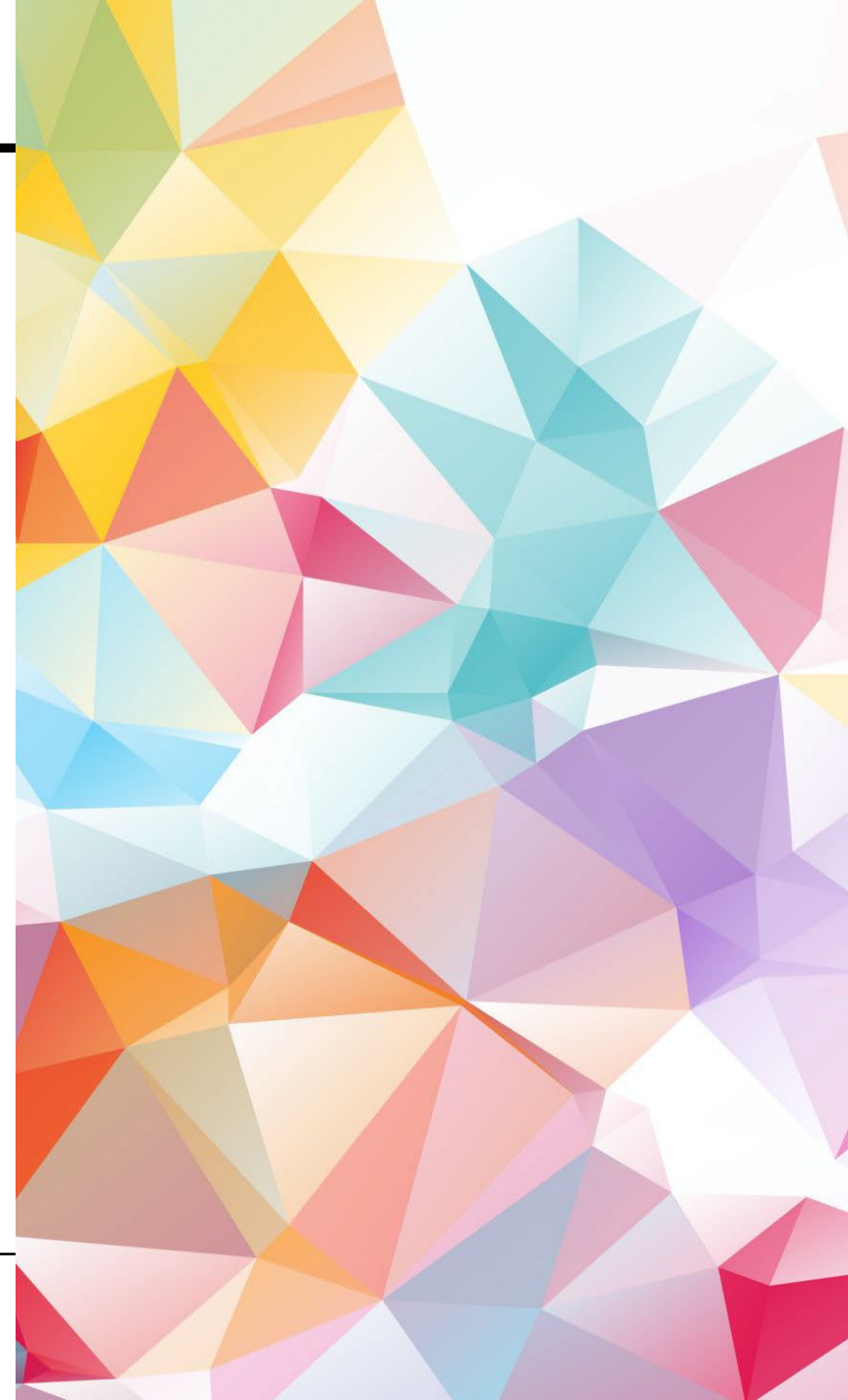




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# THE SELF

- Everyone is born with self
  - Self is never broken just blended with other parts
  - When differentiated Self acts as a wise, compassionate leader able to heal the and lead the system.
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# QUALITIES OF SELF



*Curiosity*



*Calm*



*Confidence*



*Compassion*



*Creativity*



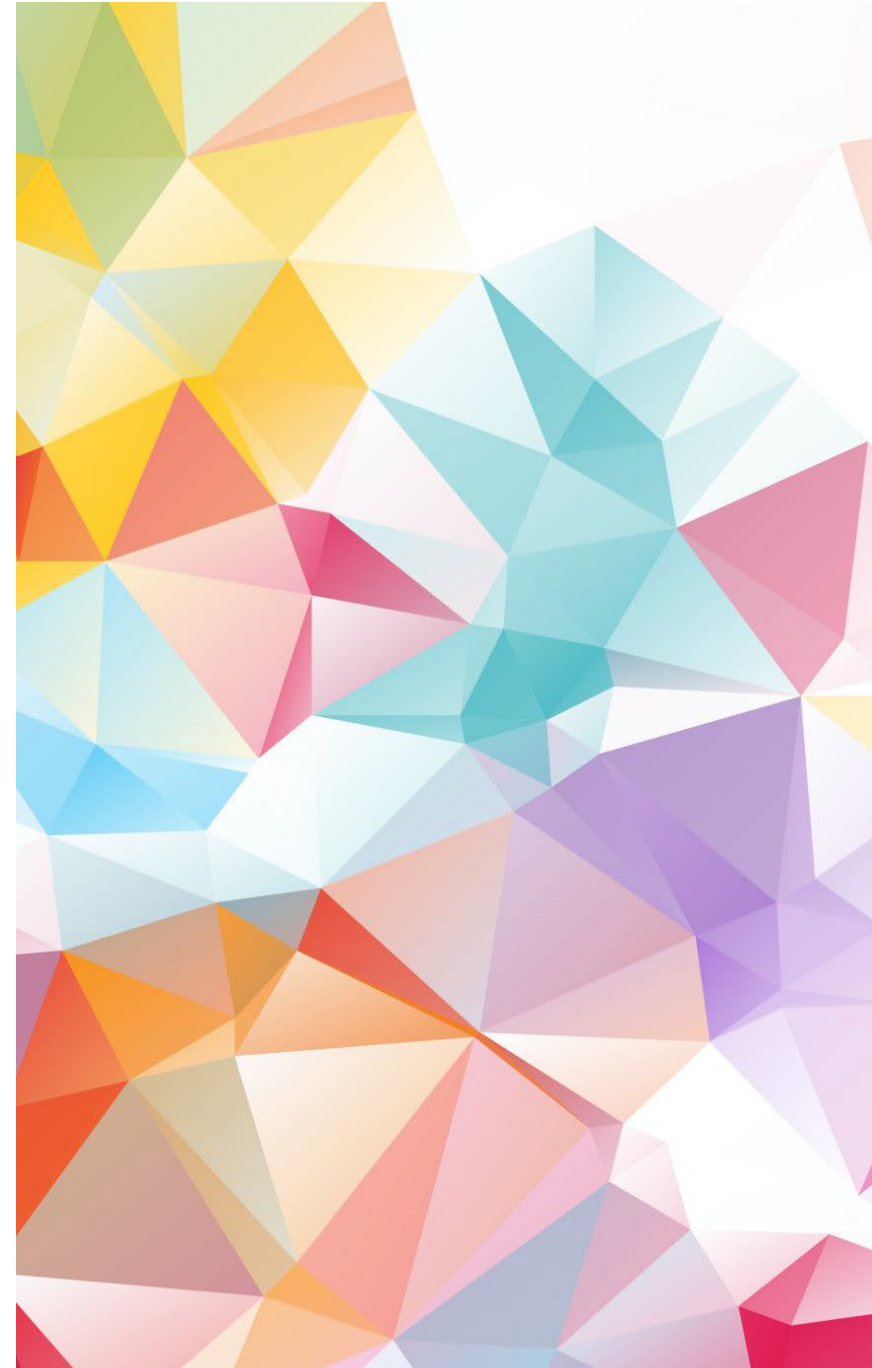
*Clarity*



*Courage*



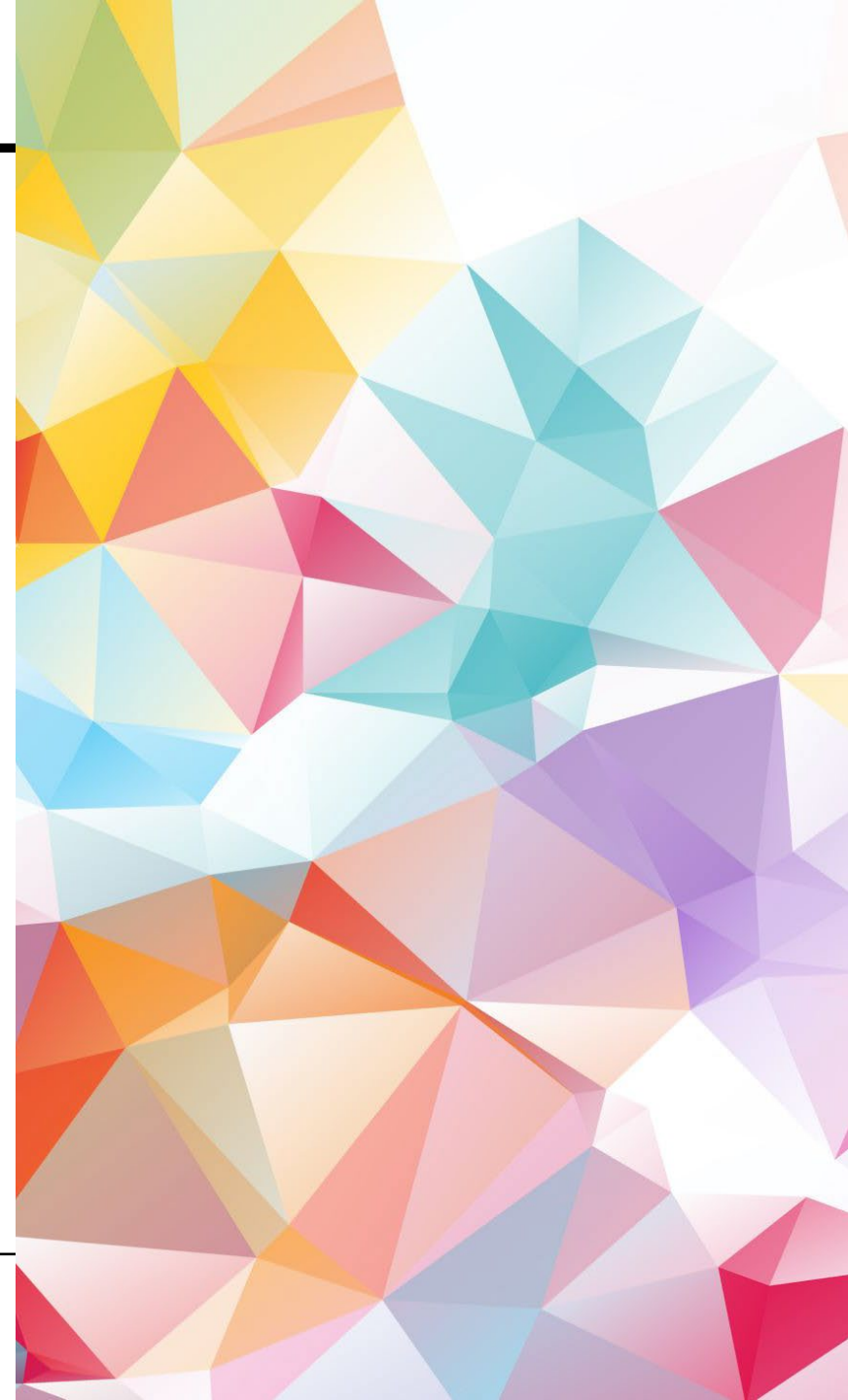
*Connectedness*



# PARTS

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- Parts want something positive for the person
  - Each part has a self-when unburdened they hold a quality like self-energy
  - Parts may have subparts
  - Parts are organized to protect self
  - Parts in extreme roles either take on protector roles or hold pain and vulnerability
  - Not all parts carry burdens
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# HOW DO PARTS BECOME EXTREME?

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- The impact of unsafe and negative experiences burdens parts with extreme emotions, memories, and sensations that get locked away, causing other parts to protect against reexperiencing these burdens.
  - We also carry parts inherited by family or absorbed from our culture or society called Legacy Burdens.
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# UNDERSTANDING PARTS

THINK OF PARTS AS DIFFERENT PEOPLE  
WITHIN THE SYSTEM

PARTS VIDEO

# HOW PARTS SHOW UP

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Thoughts



Feelings



Sensations



Memories



Inner Voices



Words



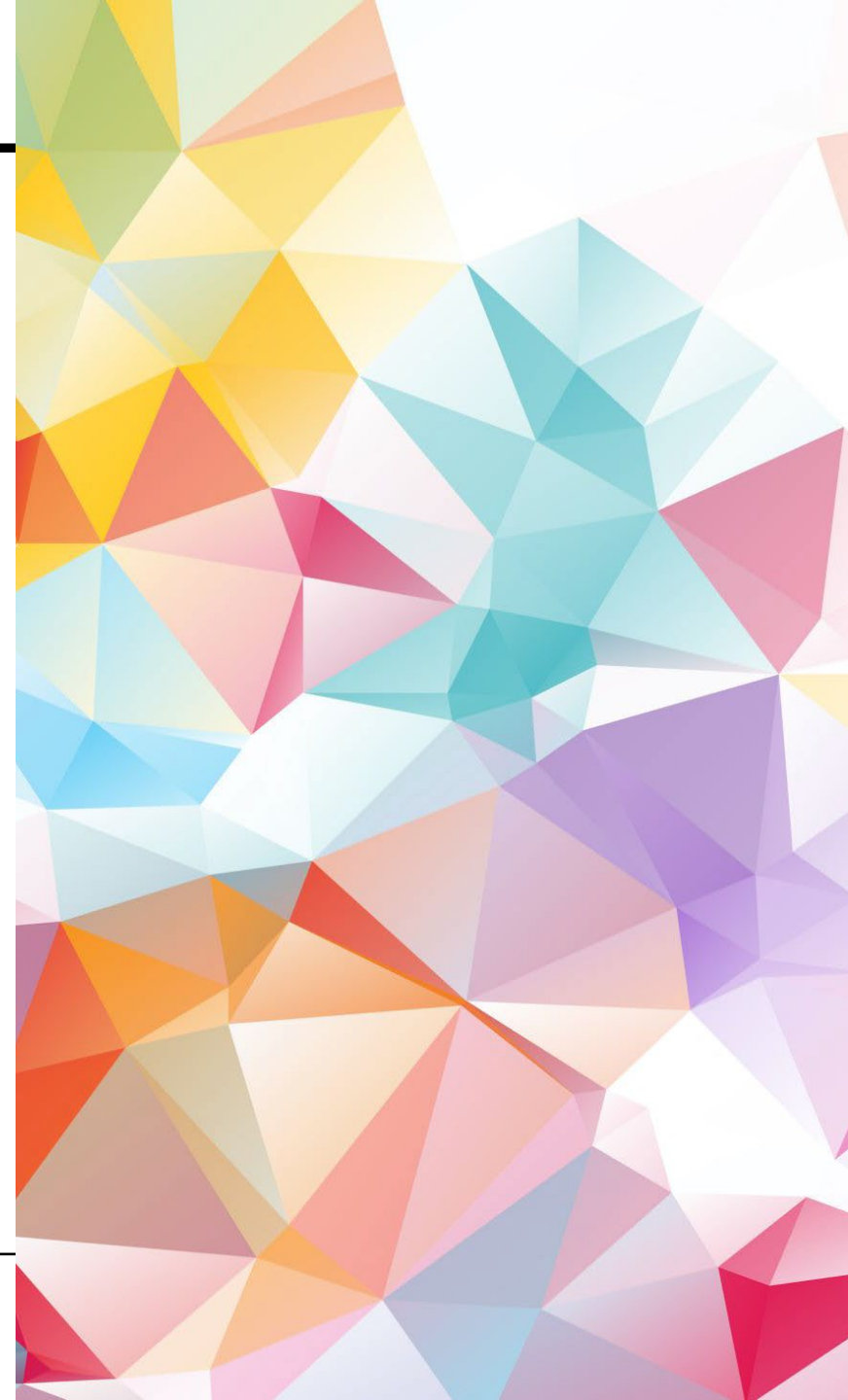
Images



# PARTS EXERCISE

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- Get in groups of 2 or 3
  - Have each person take turns talking about an experience (How they feel about training today, an upcoming event, anything)
  - The listener(s) write down all the parts they hear come up.
    - Questions to help find parts are:
      - When that happened what did you say to yourself?
      - What do/ did you feel?
      - What have you tried to deal with this?
      - Anything else you notice happening inside of you?
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# THREE ROLES OF PARTS

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- Protector Role
    - Managers
    - Firefighters
  - Protected Role
    - Exiles
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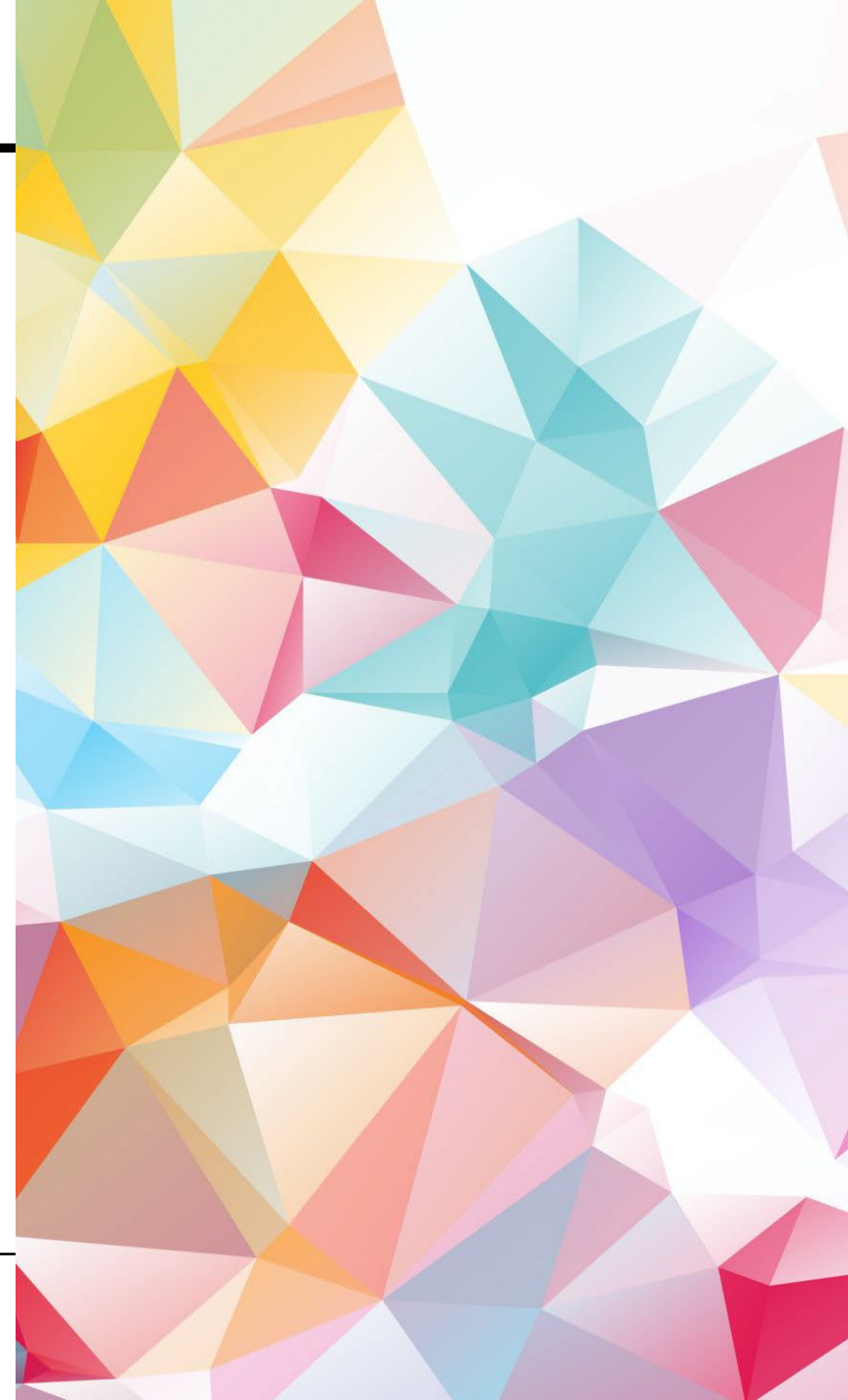




# PARTS HOLD BURDENS

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- Managers hold the burden of responsibility, guilt, anger, worry, anxiety, fatigue...
  - Firefighters hold the burden of stress, anger, shame, guilt, fatigue...
  - Exile hold the burden of deep shame, fear, helplessness, despair, worthlessness, trauma memories, sorrow, fragility, emptiness...
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# MANAGERS

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- Managers are *proactive* protectors.
  - They attempt to keep the person in control of every situation and relationship in order to protect from feeling hurt or rejected.
  - They help manage day-to-day life by helping a person fit in and feel valued.
  - They protect from anything that leads to vulnerability, pain, or instability.
  - They want to prevent the activation of exile parts' pain.

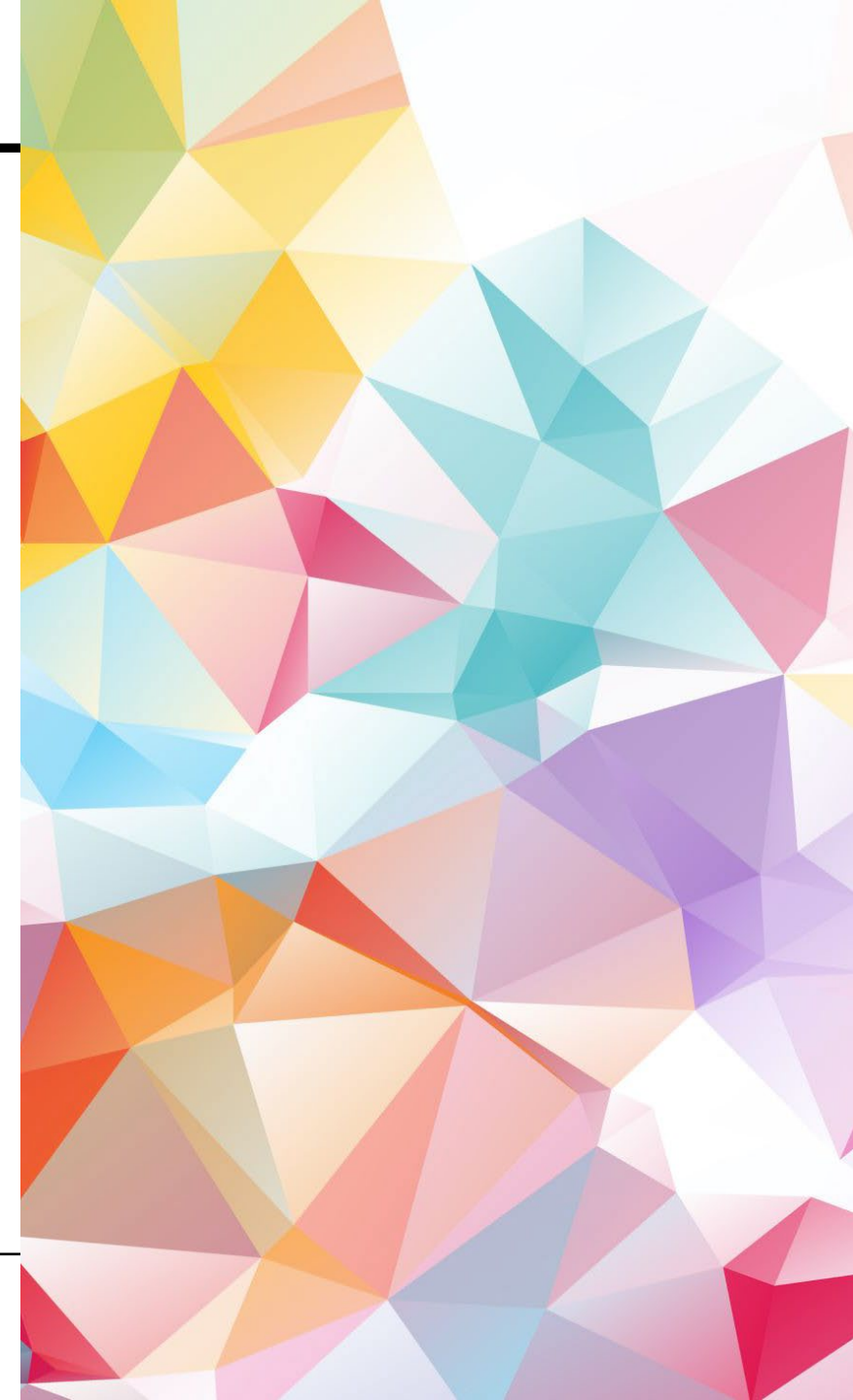
*“Never again!”* is their motto

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# COMMON MANAGER TRAITS

|   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| Controlling                                     | Striving<br>Overcompensating<br>Achieving         | Perfectionism                                |
| Risk Avoidance                                  | Judging<br>Criticizing<br>Evaluating<br>Analyzing | Caretaking                                   |
| Pleasing others                                 | Worrying  | Denying Problems                             |
| Passive pessimist<br>Avoiding<br>Disappointment | Blocking or<br>numbing                            | Rejecting parts<br>others reject or<br>shame |



# *MANAGERS*

Feel tired and old.

They come to believe they are responsible for the systems success and safety which makes it hard to give up their leadership to Self.

They are usually children that want to be nurtured and healed.

The more competent they become the more the system relies on them and the more they feel responsible

They feel they have to hide their vulnerabilities

# EXERCISE: INTERVIEW A MANAGER

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You can do this alone by journaling or with a partner.



Identify one of your managers and use curiosity (A Self characteristic) to learn more about it.



*Allow time for your part to be noticed, pay attention to any thoughts, words, sensations, memories, image, voices, etc. that you experience.*

- **Examples of questions you can ask:**

- What would you like me to know about you?
- What kinds of things do you say or do?
- How often are you around?
- What is your job?
- How are you trying to help me?
- What are you afraid would happen if you didn't do your job?
- How are you feeling?
- How long have you been doing your job?
- Do you know how you got your job?
- Are you tired?
- Would you like to do something else?

# FIREFIGHTERS

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- Firefighters are *reactive* parts that activate when vulnerability has been triggered.
  - They will do whatever it takes to take out the pain or the threat, no matter the cost.
  - They are judged for being destructive and selfish.
  - They soothe or distract from the pain
  - They rebel against the controlling parts

*IFS sees these as protectors and there are NO bad parts!*

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# COMMON FIREFIGHTER TRAITS

Impulsive

Self-absorbed

Distracting

Dissociating

Stifling

Soothing

Disinhibited

Shut-down

Use humor to avoid

Defensive  
Aggressive

Self-harming

Rebellious



# FIREFIGHTER BEHAVIORS

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## Addictions

- Sleep
- Shopping
- Sex
- Diet
- Exercise
- Video games
- Etc..

Binge eating

Suicidality

Self-harm

Violence

Disassociation

Distraction

Obsession

Compulsion

Fantasy

Rage



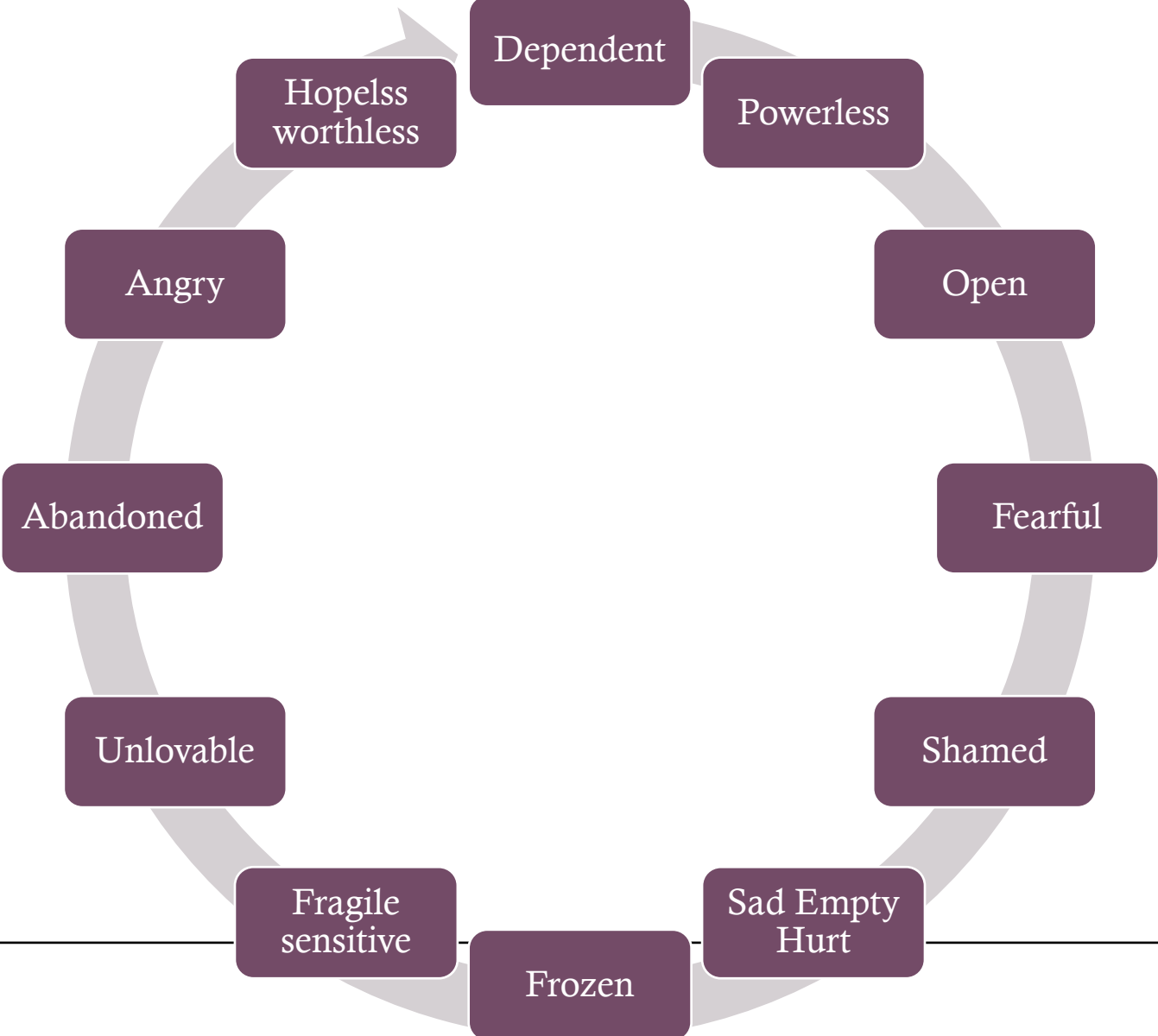
# EXILES

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- Exiles are our most sensitive parts that were rejected or made to feel worthless. They are left feeling ashamed and confused about themselves. Protectors feel they need to push these aside for self-preservation and survival.
  - They long to come out of hiding to be healed, valued and loved.
  - When these parts are banished also is the curiosity, spontaneity, courage, connectedness they hold.
  - Exiles hold the most painful burdens. By unburdening them protective parts can relax and trust self-leadership.
  - Exiles want redemption which makes protectors see them as threats.
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# COMMON EXILE TRAITS

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# TWO PARTS OF THE IFS MODEL

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Part I :Unblending

Part II: Unburdening (you will see this demonstrated in a video later)

[  
For the purpose of this training, we will focus on Part I only. The IFS institute suggest that you must have level one training before engaging in Part II.

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# THE IFS MODEL

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## Getting started

The Counselor needs to unblend and come to the session in self-energy.

When facilitating from self energy, the therapist embodies the 5 P's:

- Presence
  - Patience
  - Perspective
  - Persistence
  - Playfulness
- 



# IFS MODEL-THINGS TO BE AWARE OF:

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## Resistance=Protection

- It often takes time for a client to access a part.
  - Clients fear they won't be able to find a part of unblend.
  - You have to check for fears and concerns the system has regarding the part the client chooses to work on.
  - You have to get permission from protectors to move forward.
  - When first starting parts tend to appear like popcorn until they trust the process.
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# UNBLENDING: THE 6 F'S

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**1. Find**

**2. Focus**

**3. Feel**

**4. Befriend**

**5. Find out**

**6. Fears and concerns**

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# F1= FIND

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Find the part

- Ask the Client to identify a part in or around their body that needs attention (Check with other parts to see if there are any fears or concerns about getting to know the target part).

Questions to ask about the part:

- How does it show up for you?
  - How is it expressing itself?
  - Where do you notice it?
  - How is the part expressing itself...as a thought, image, sensation, memory, emotion...
  - What does the part want to be called?
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# F2=FOCUS

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- Focus on the part
  - What do you notice about it?
  - Does it have a shape, color, age, etc...
  - Does it have an entity for you?
  - How are you aware of the part?
  - How close are you to the part?
  - How is the part responding to you putting attention on it?
  - What do you notice about it?
  - Get to know it.
  - Look at it with curiosity.
  - Let it know your attention is to get to know it better.
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# F 3= FEEL

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- How do you feel toward the part ?
  - (Assess self-energy here)
  - If self-energy is not present (one of the 8 c's) that signifies there is another part is present and you will need to acknowledge it and its concern and ask it to step aside.
  - How open is your heart toward the part?
  - What is it like for the part to feel curiosity, compassion, etc...?
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# F4=BEFRIEND

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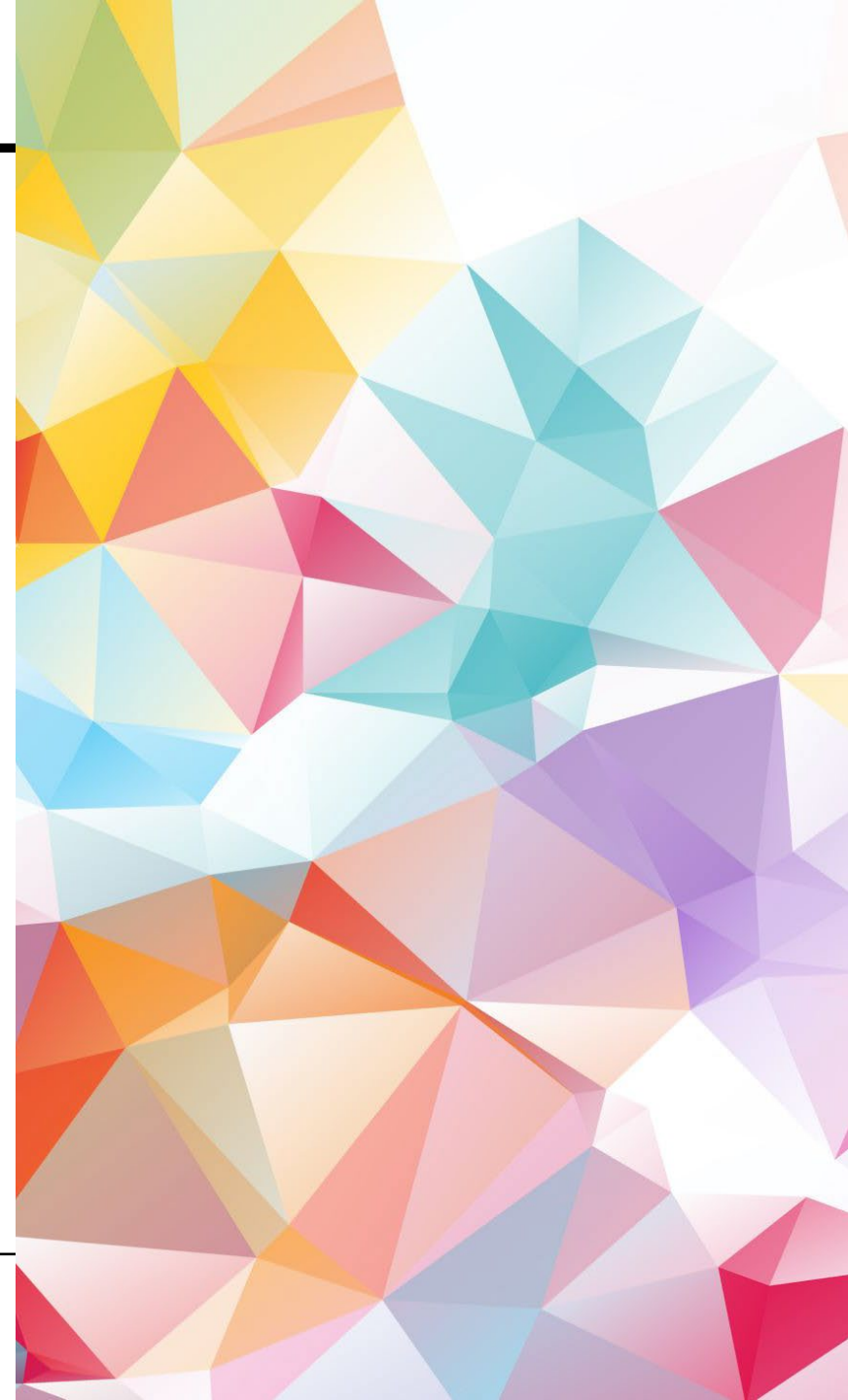
- Establish a relationship between self of client and part.
  - Extend your energy to the part.
  - Ask the part if it knows who you are.
  - Does it know how old you are?
  - If not update the part.
  - Does the part see you as another part?
  - Offer appreciation to the part for its positive intention.
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# F5=FIND OUT

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- What does it want you to know?
  - What is its intention for you?
  - What is its job?
  - What would it rather do?
  - What does it need?
  - Ask the part what it has to say?
  - Is there anything else it wants you to know?
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# F6=FEARS (EXPOSING THE EXILE)

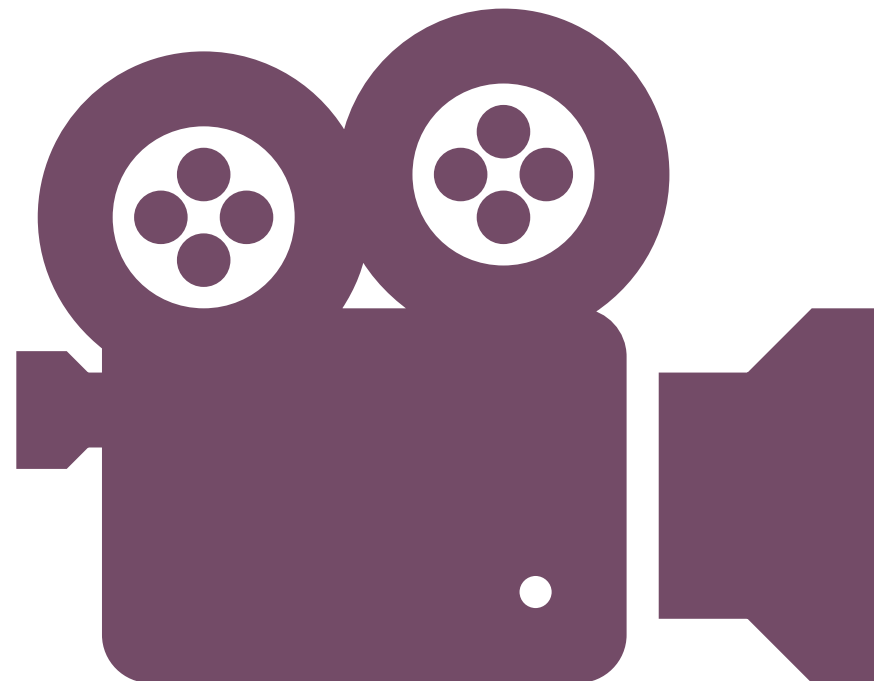
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- What are you afraid would happen if it did not do its job?
  - What is bad about that?
  - What would happen then?
  - What would that mean for you?
  - Are you willing to let me meet the part you protect and help them?
  - Give the part hope they call this being a hope merchant.
  - Does it protect parts that might be stuck in times that were (chaotic) or when things were (falling apart)?
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sample demo



**SAMPLE VIDEO  
OF THE MODEL**

# EXERCISE: EXPLORE THE 6 F'S

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Work in teams of 2 or 3



Have the client find a target part



Use the 6 F's to explore the part



Use the 6f's handout to help with your exploration