

Internal Family Systems Therapy

Month Five: Working with Exiles

with Toni Herbine-Blank

Presence and healing

- **Working with exiles**

- Young
- Wounded
- Carry burdens
- Exiled for their own safety or the safety of the system
- Don't necessarily feel protected and long for



Burdens

- Burdens are uncomfortable feelings and negative beliefs
- Children make meaning from external events. Burdens are what grow out of that meaning
 - manifest in the form of beliefs, feelings, energies

The steps of healing in IFS

- Unblend: 6 Fs, create trust: Self to part of the client, Self to part of the therapist
- Witness the entire story of the exile
 - visual, in story, through the body
- Retrieval
- Unburdening ritual (unloading beliefs and burdens)
- Invitation
- Integration

1. Trust and relationship

- How do you feel toward him?
 - Can you extend self energy?
- How present can you be?
- Is the part aware of you?
- Parts concerned?
- What does he need to trust you?



2. Witnessing



- We ask the client if they are available to witness the entire story of the exile
- May need to be done in a scene from the past

- **helping the client say attuned and present supports healing**
 - Addressing the original wound or trauma
 - The internal focus reinforces adaptive self-regulation
 - And provides an internal emotionally corrective experience

Witnessing from Self provides inner attachment behaviors



empathic attunement
emotional sensing
focused attention
connection
making sense of experience
understanding beliefs and burdens

Deep healing occurs in these moments

3. Retrieval



When the young part feels known and understood
he is invited into the present

4. Unburdening ritual



- The client (from Self) helps the exile to let go of what he has been carrying

5. Invitation



6. Integration



7. Appreciation



Recognize, thank and honor the protectors
They too have stories and burdens
