

Internal Family Systems Therapy

**Month Three: 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 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