



## Schema Therapy

Schema Therapy aims to help people understand the blueprint of their lives. It explores the way a person has developed their 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 empty, distressed or overwhelmed.

## What is a schema?

A schema is like a category for a core belief. Thus a schema of Failure will incorporate a core belief of "I am a failure". While people can have adaptive and maladaptive schemas, schema therapy traditionally only focuses on the negative ones (because the good ones don't need to be changed).

## How do schemas develop?

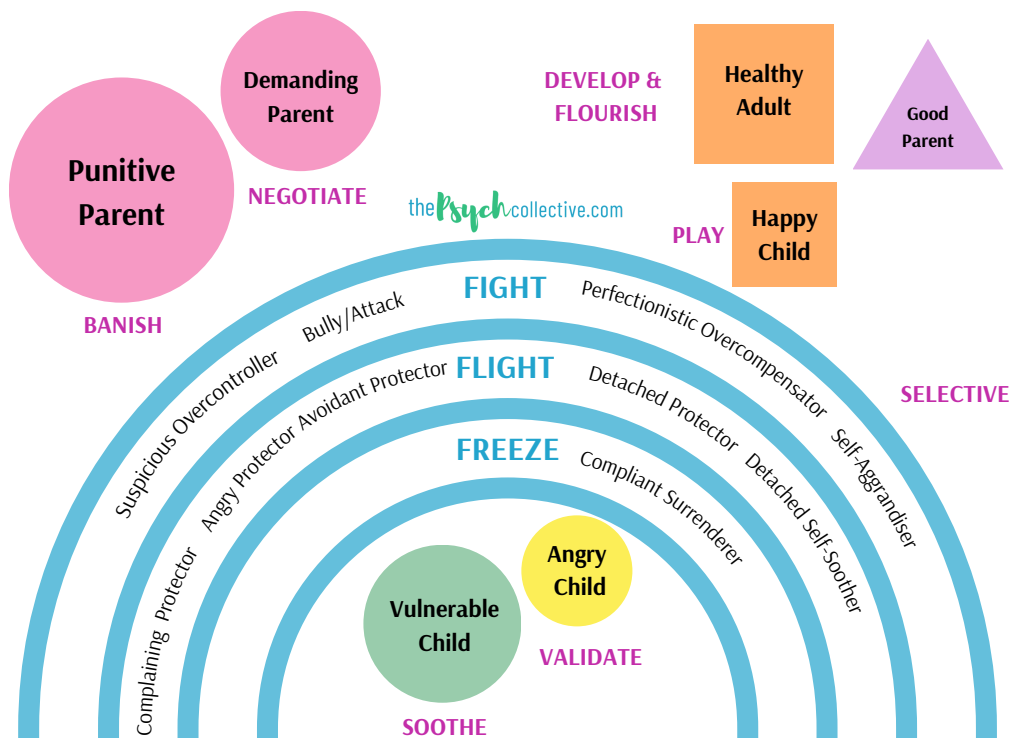
Maladaptive schemas develop when there were unmet childhood needs. Temperament also plays a role, as those with a hypersensitive temperament feel things more intensely and are more likely to internalise criticism and emotional invalidation.

## Schema Mode Therapy

(Farrell, Reiss, & Shaw, 2014)

Once a schema is activated, we often have specific ways of responding. These responses can be categorised as Modes, which include particular ways of thinking, feeling and behaving. 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. Schema Mode Therapy aims to change maladaptive schemas through cognitive, behavioural and experiential techniques.

## Schema Mode Therapy Overview



To understand how all of these modes interact, scan the QR code to watch the YouTube clip

## Schema Modes

**Vulnerable Child:** As children, we are inherently vulnerable. Our physical vulnerability may diminish as we become more adept at defending ourselves, but our emotional vulnerability never leaves us. This mode refers to our perpetual inner child that can always feel vulnerable. This mode is at the core of Schema Mode Therapy as the most important mode.

**Angry Child:** This mode is activated when we sense that the needs of our Vulnerable Child have not been met. The function of this mode is to gain attention from others to our unmet needs and uses anger to get noticed.

**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.

### Maladaptive Coping Modes: FIGHT

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

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

**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.

### Maladaptive Coping Modes: FLIGHT

**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.

**Angry Protector:** This mode uses displays of aggression to drive people away as a form of avoidance.

**Complaining Protector:** This mode attributes blame to everyone else so that we don't have to take responsibility for our own actions, and thus avoids feeling vulnerable because nothing is ever our fault.

**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.

### Maladaptive Coping Modes: FREEZE

**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.

### Dysfunctional 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 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

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

**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.

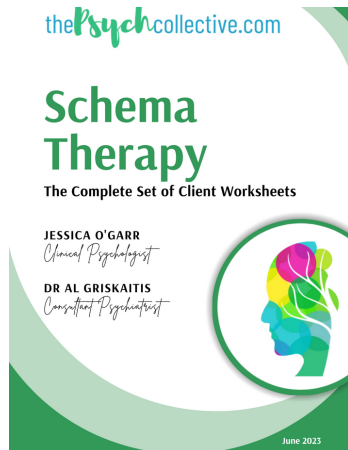
thePsychcollective.com

Developed by Jessica O'Garr and Dr Al Griskaitis  
Click on or scan the QR code to watch the video.

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

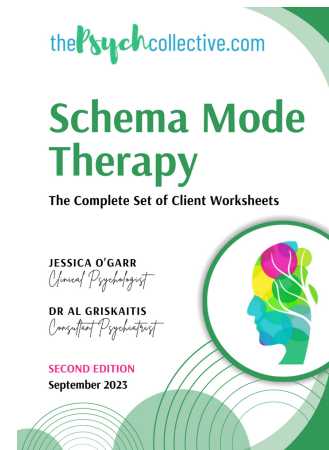


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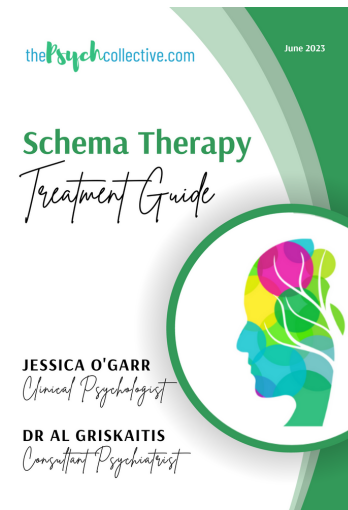
### SCHEMA THERAPY WORKBOOK

This 68 page PDF contains 20 worksheets for the maladaptive schemas, 14 worksheets for adaptive schemas and 5 worksheets for needs.



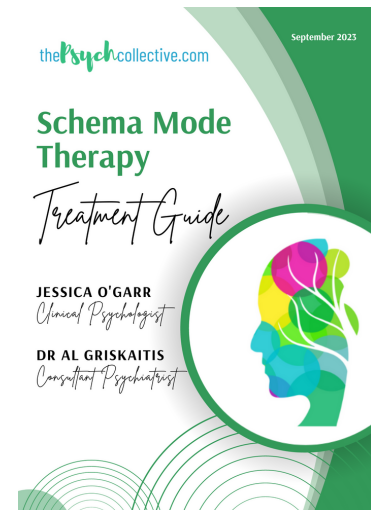
### SCHEMA MODE THERAPY WORKBOOK

This 60 page PDF contains 17 worksheets for every single mode we discuss in our Schema Videos, plus handouts for the list of schemas and needs.



### SCHEMA THERAPY TREATMENT GUIDE

An instructional guide for those undertaking Schema Therapy, including therapist scripts, extra worksheets and more details factsheets.



### SCHEMA MODE TREATMENT GUIDE

An instructional guide for those undertaking Schema Mode Therapy, including therapist scripts, extra worksheets and more details factsheets.



### SCHEMA CARDS

Contains 43 cards about Maladaptive Schemas, Adaptive Schemas & Needs



### SCHEMA MODE CARDS

Contains 50 cards about Schema Modes, Healthy Adult Skills & Schema Techniques