



CFT for Psychosis series

Session 2 (May 15th 2023) – Developing a compassionate understanding / functional analysis

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with thanks to

Dr Chris Irons, Prof Paul Gilbert, Dr Eleanor Longden (clinical)
Prof Emmanuelle Peters, Prof Til Wykes, Prof Andrew Gumley (research)



DEVELOPING A COMPASSIONATE UNDERSTANDING – OUR BRAINS

*The nature of our
evolved tricky brains*

*...with its built-in
patterns, algorithms,
& emotions*

- Our brain has a natural threat bias (*better safe than sorry*)
- Our brain creates loops
- Our brain gets shaped by our motives and emotions

Human nature, human struggles...

*...we're all in the **same boat***

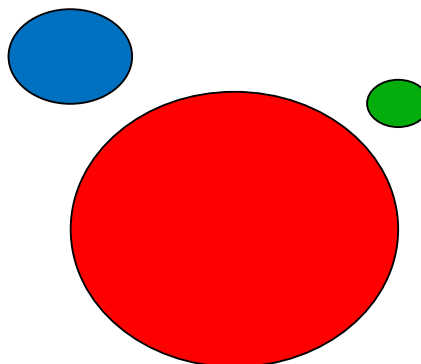


DEVELOPING A COMPASSIONATE UNDERSTANDING – OUR DIFFICULTIES

- **3 circles formulation**

How are they balanced?

- In daily life
- In certain situations / relationships
- Historically
- etc



- **Threat-based formulation**

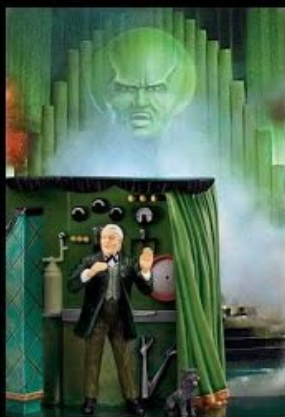
Discovering (threat-based) emotional roots of difficulties
– the parts needing compassion the most

- **Making sense of voices / functional analysis**

Looking what's *behind* the voice / delusion to discover the emotional meaning / need being communicated



DEVELOPING A COMPASSIONATE UNDERSTANDING – OUR VOICES



"Pay No Attention to the Man Behind the Curtain..."

From the MGM movie, the "Wizard of Oz"



VIDEO – BARNARDO'S LIFE STORY



“SYMPTOMS” -> “STRATEGIES”

The MH issue this person is struggling with:

- What is the emotion, memory, or part that is being avoided?
- What might the symptom/behaviour be protecting, dissociating, distracting the person away from?
- What is this belief helping this person with, or what was it helping with in the past?
- If they didn't have this belief, what would they be left with?
What is the fear?



GENERAL APPROACH TO UNDERSTANDING / FORMULATING

Avoid language of “thought challenging”, “cognitive distortions”, “dysfunctional”, “maladaptive”
(these can make clients think it’s all about them – shame)

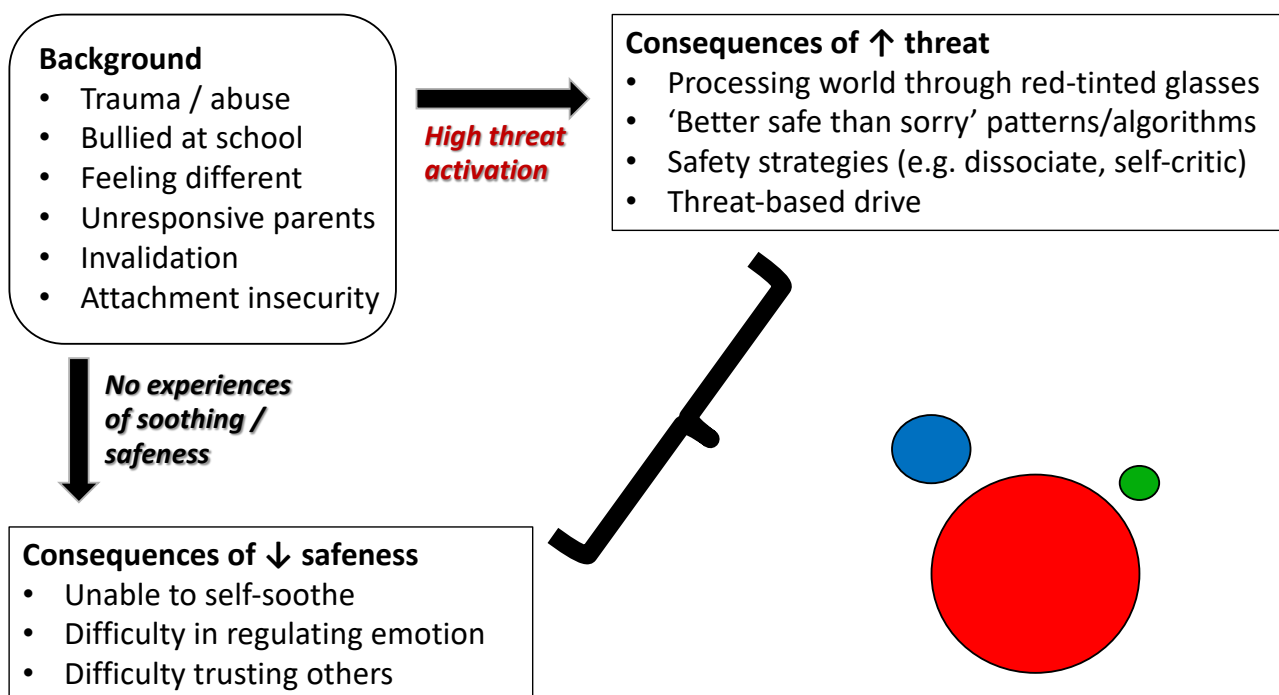
These are normal (common humanity) understandable strategies that are or have been *highly functional*

We’re not *challenging* these or taking these away

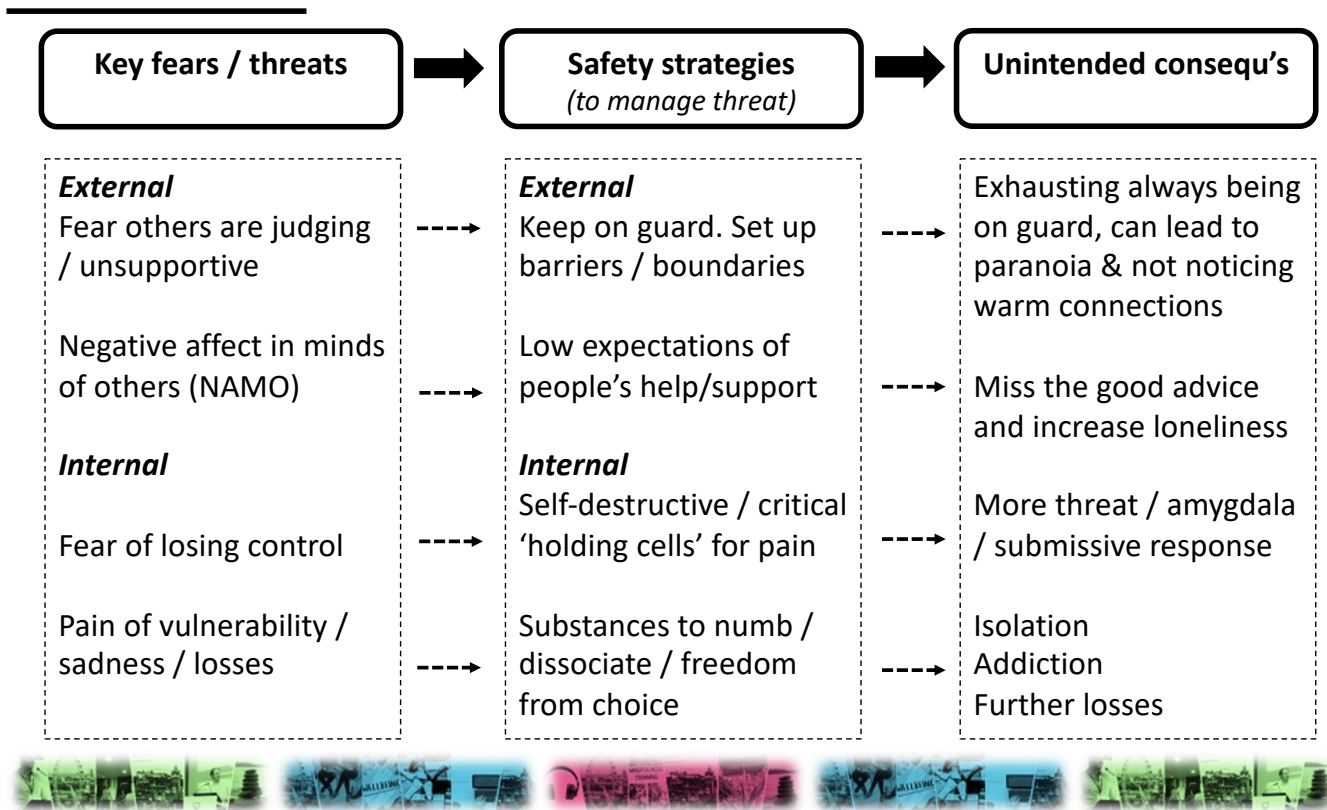
“If you don’t want to lose your self-critic, don’t. But we’re going to try this thing of being compassionate to yourself, and you can choose whether you like it or not”



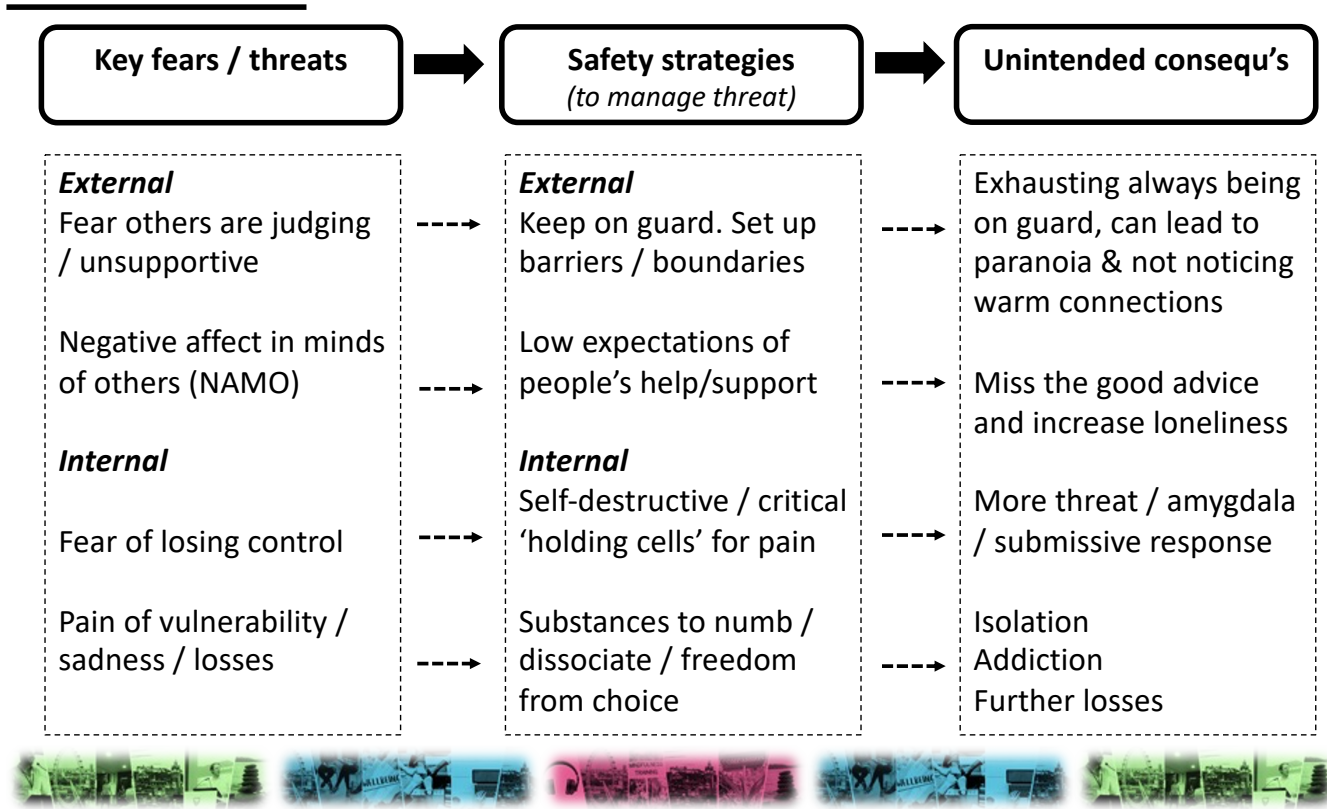
THREAT-BASED FORMULATION (DEVELOPMENT)



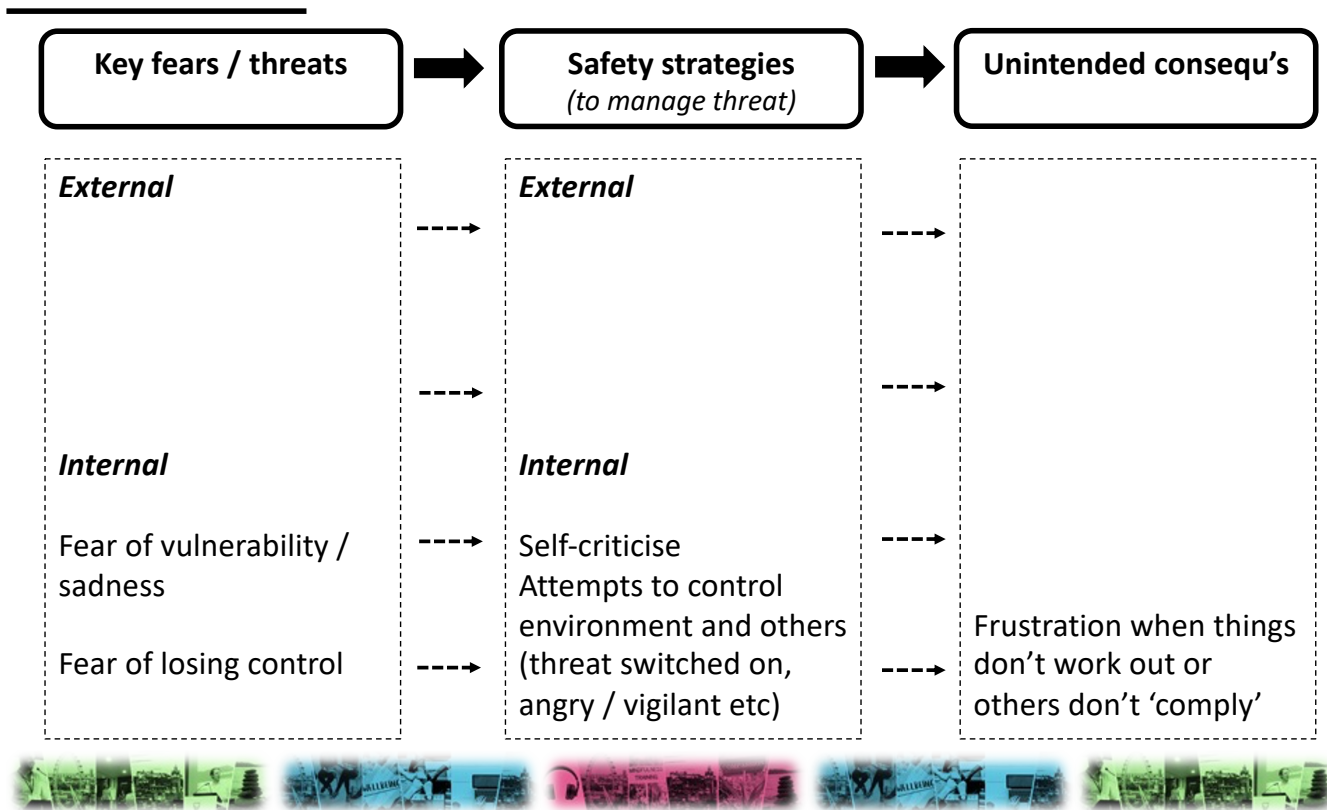
THREAT-BASED FORMULATION (MAINTENANCE) – EXAMPLE



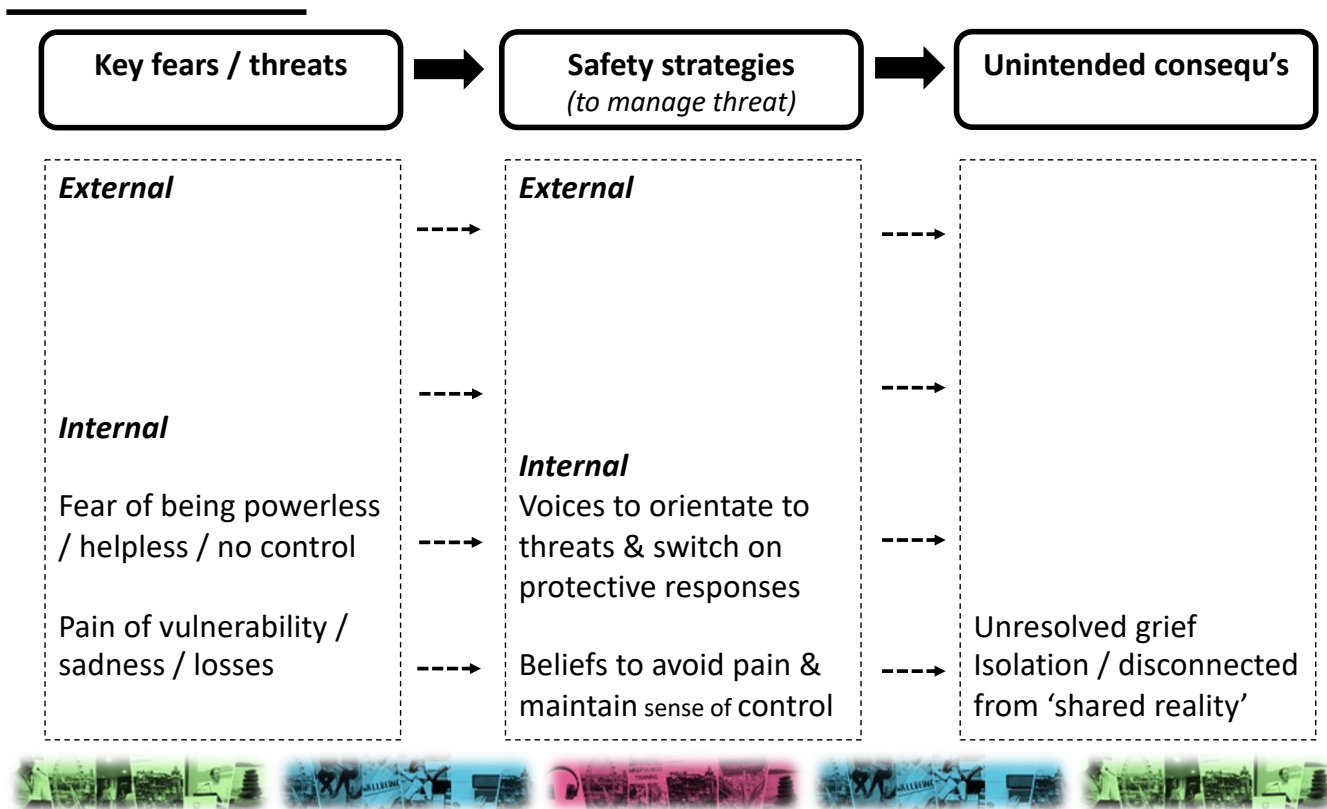
THREAT-BASED FORMULATION (MAINTENANCE) – EXAMPLE



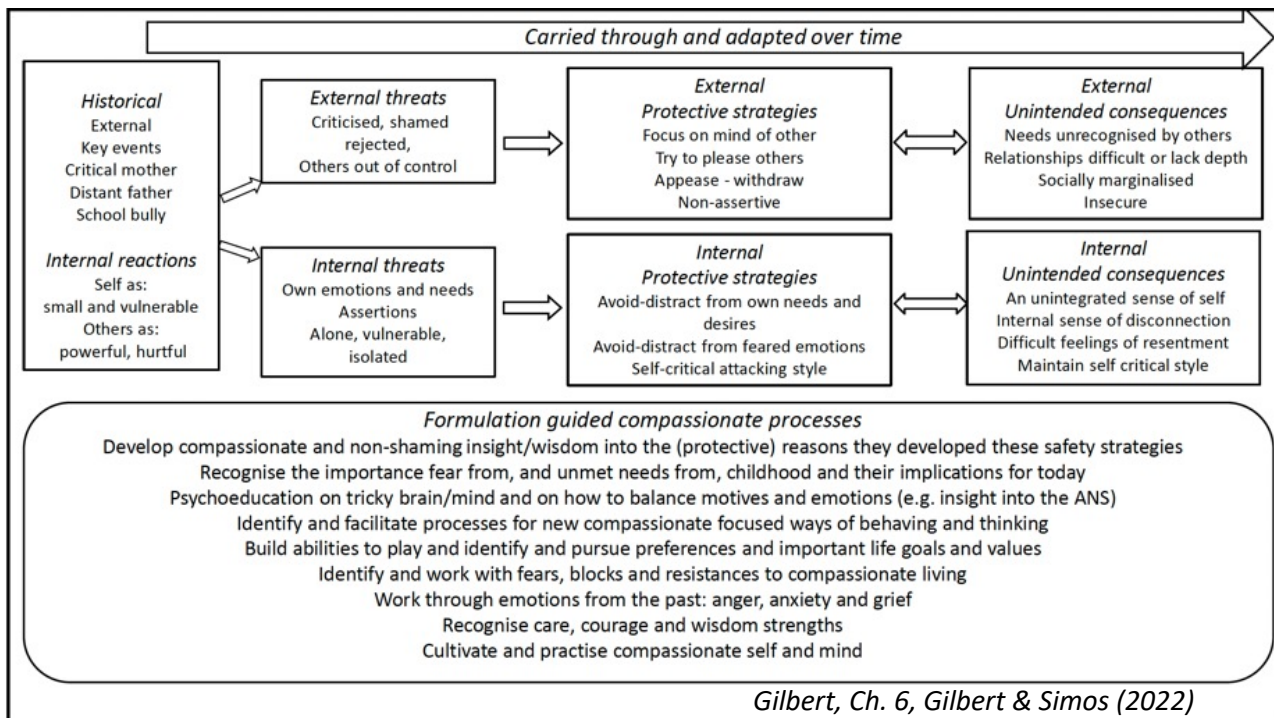
THREAT-BASED FORMULATION (MAINTENANCE) – CONTROLLING STRATEGIES



THREAT-BASED FORMULATION (MAINTENANCE) – PSYCHOTIC STRATEGIES



THREAT-BASED FORMULATION



THE IMPERATIVE TO AVOID RETRAUMATISATION

“Healing trauma requires the courage to recognize that ultimately, our lives are compromised not by the original traumatizing experiences themselves, but by the trauma worlds created by our own minds and bodies in response to those experiences. And we need to recognize this reality without blaming and judging ourselves; we need to understand that creating a trauma-world is what human beings do to survive. At the same time, we must take responsibility for moving beyond our trauma-worlds”

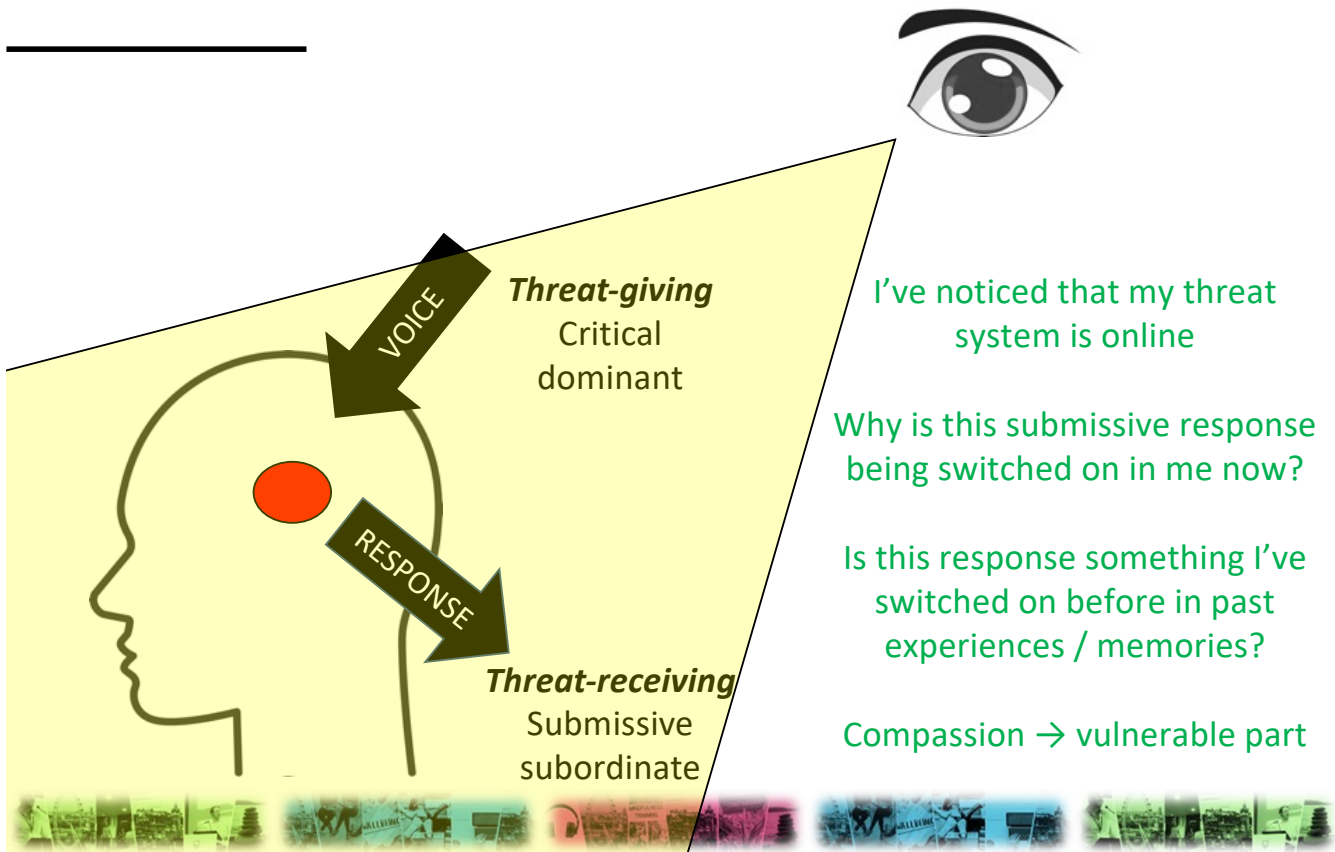
“to create lasting change, we must enter our emotional minds and bodies and develop an embodied consciousness of what we carry from the inside. That means opening to the original traumatizing pain and fear, learning how to tolerate its presence in both mind and body, and integrating it into our sense of who we are”

“It is only when we find ways of relating to the buried pain and fear that our lives are no longer organized around the imperative to avoid anything that might trigger these emotions”

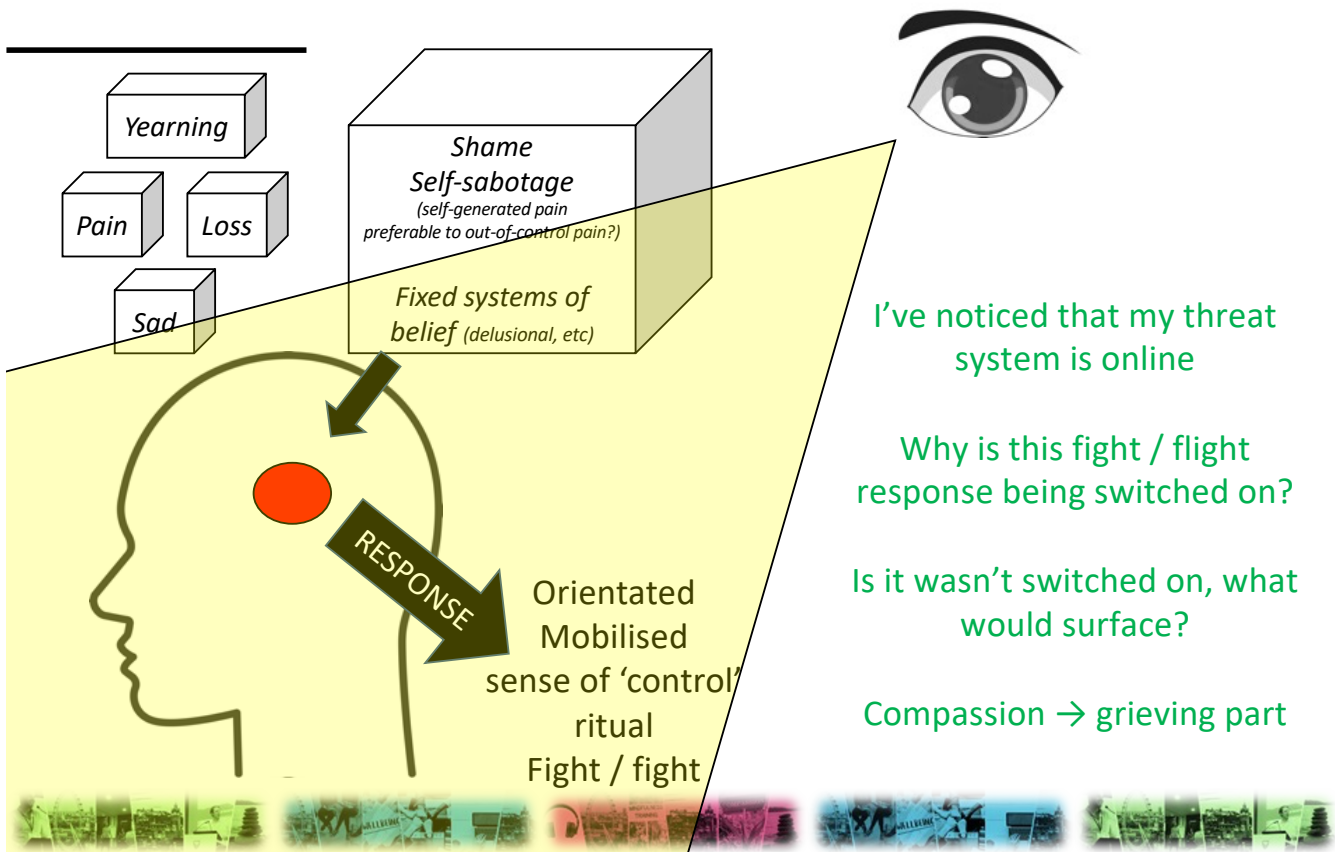
Daniela Sieff (2017)



VOICE-HEARING TO STIMULATE A SUBMISSIVE RESPONSE?



CREATE A 'HOLDING CELL' FOR UNRESOLVED GRIEVING?



VOICE-HEARING

Some types & functions
(from Heriot-Maitland & Longden, 2022)

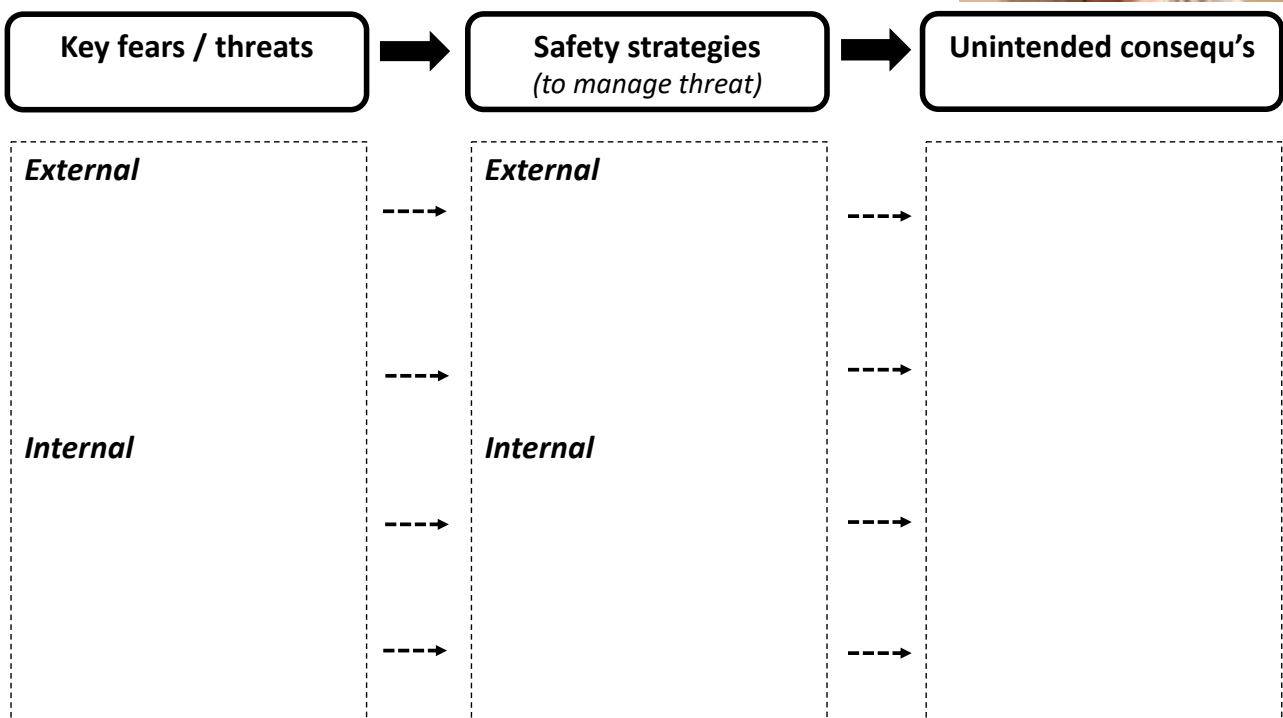
Compass.
self

Compassion to what's
behind the curtain

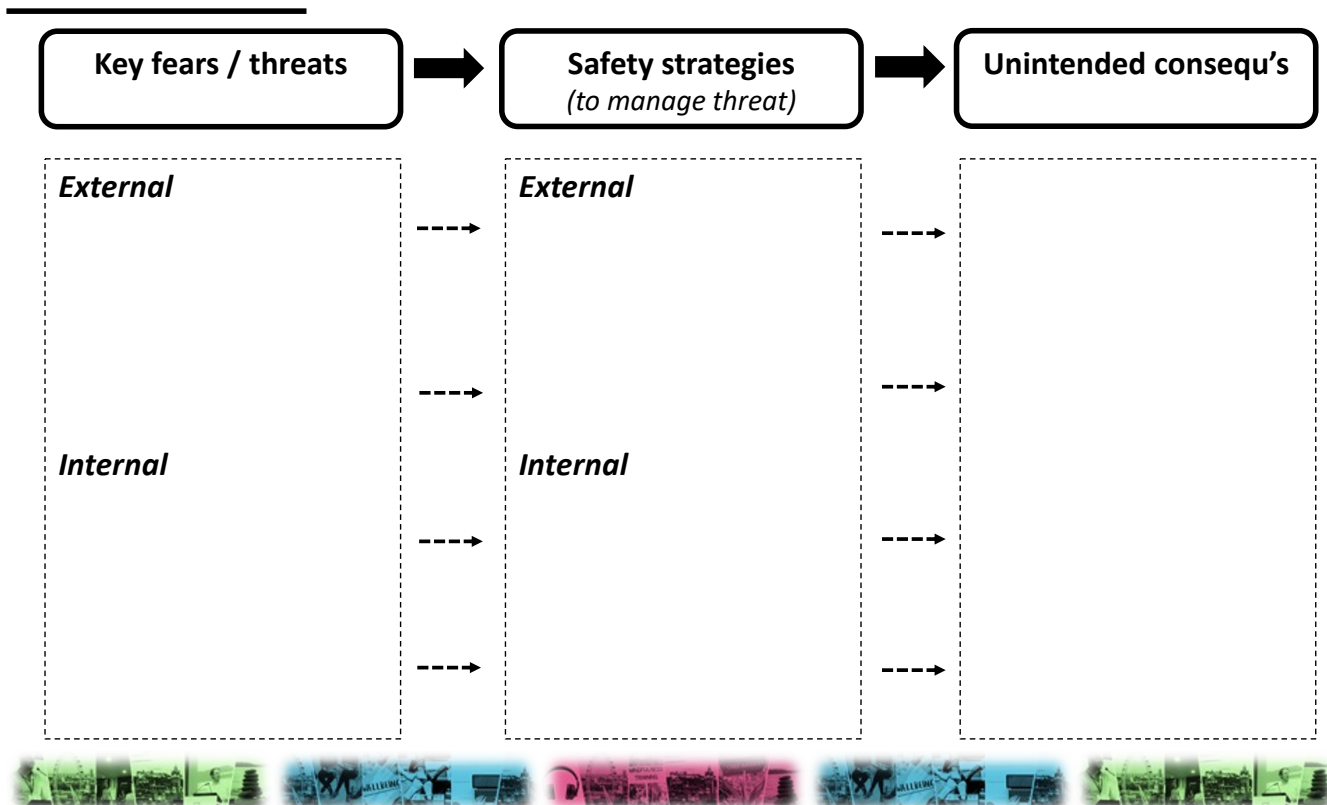
Type	Relationship style with voice-hearer	Possible function
Voices with a mind and opinion of their own	Suspicious voices "danger" "don't trust her", "he's going to hurt you"	
	Threatening/abusive voices "I'm going to hurt you/punish you/kill you"	
	Blaming/shaming voices "it's your fault" "you deserved it"	
	Commanding voices "do this job the way I tell you" "you should always listen to my advice"	
	Voices that create responses that are: - Submissive - Compliant - Appeasing "always put your friends' needs before your own", "don't ever contradict your boss"	
Voices linked to memories	Can be any of the above but more like a tape recorder on repeat	



EXERCISE – FORMULATION – THE PERSON IN THE VIDEO



EXERCISE – FORMULATION – A PERSON WE’RE WORKING WITH



FORMULATIONS TO GUIDE THE WHOLE TEAM

- Phrases we might commonly hear in team meetings about clients.

“Steve’s always late for his appointments. He’s not engaged/motivated? It’s rude”

- How might that change if we had a formulation / functional analysis?

Steven controls his arrival time to avoid the pain he would feel if one day he arrived for help and no-one was there

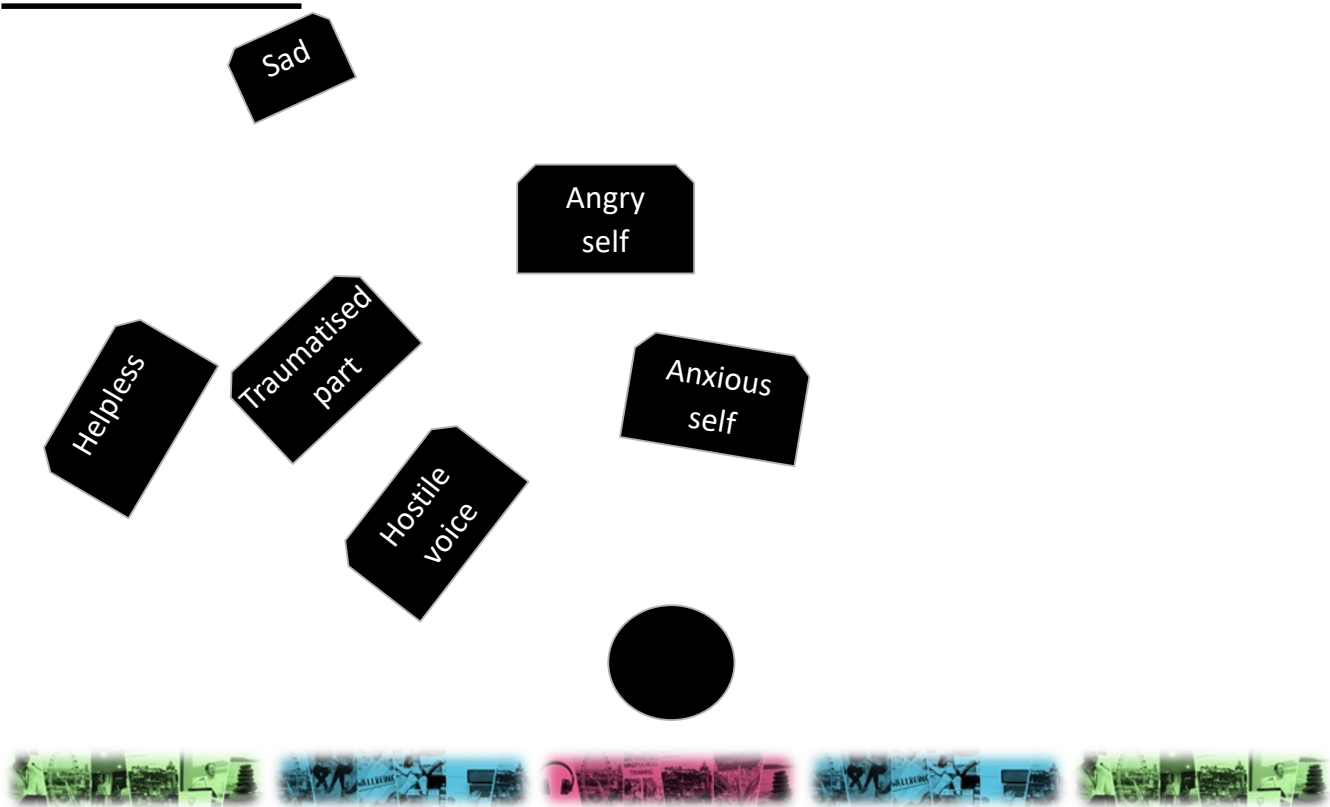
- How might that impact behaviour / relationship?

In our interactions, we’re holding in mind the fearful / vulnerable part (behind the curtain). We prepare our (team’s) compassionate mind to be with the hurt part

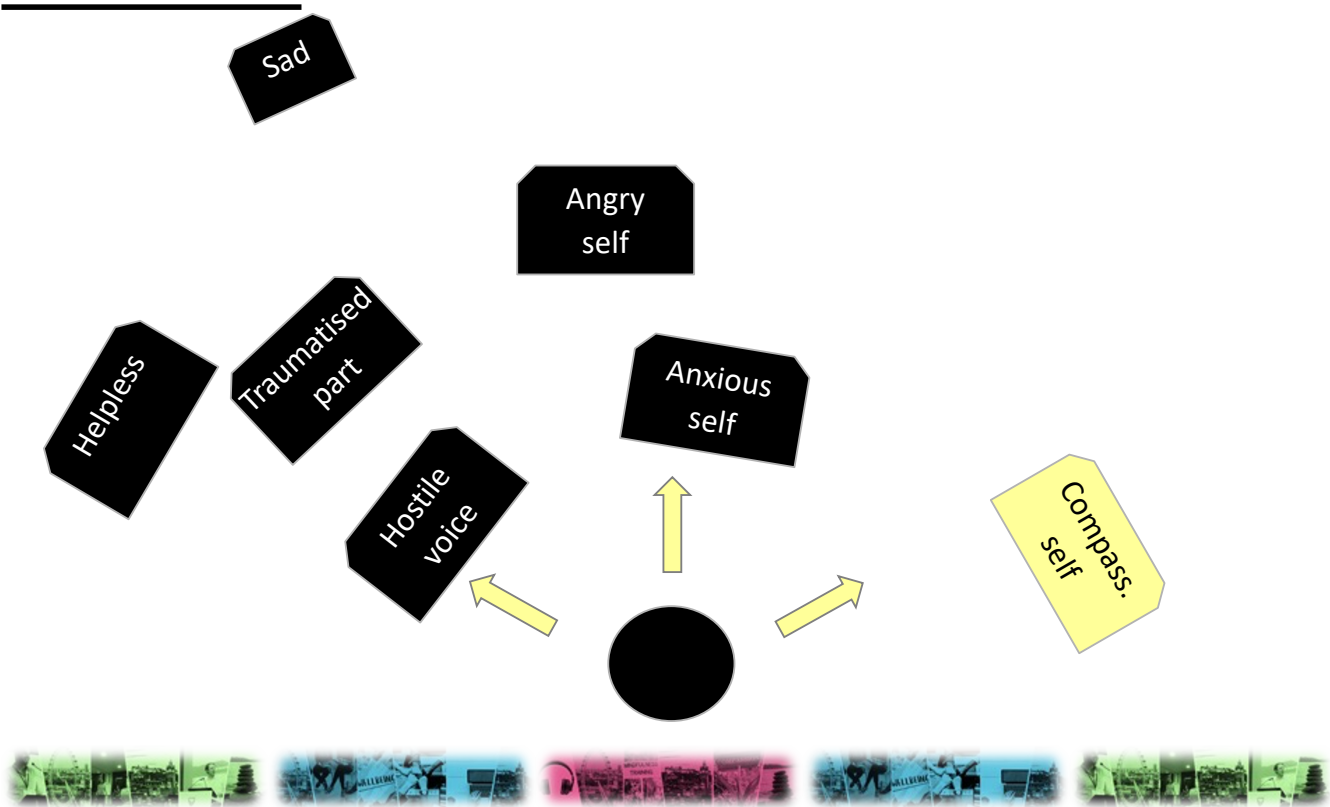
Your examples of phrases you’ve heard...



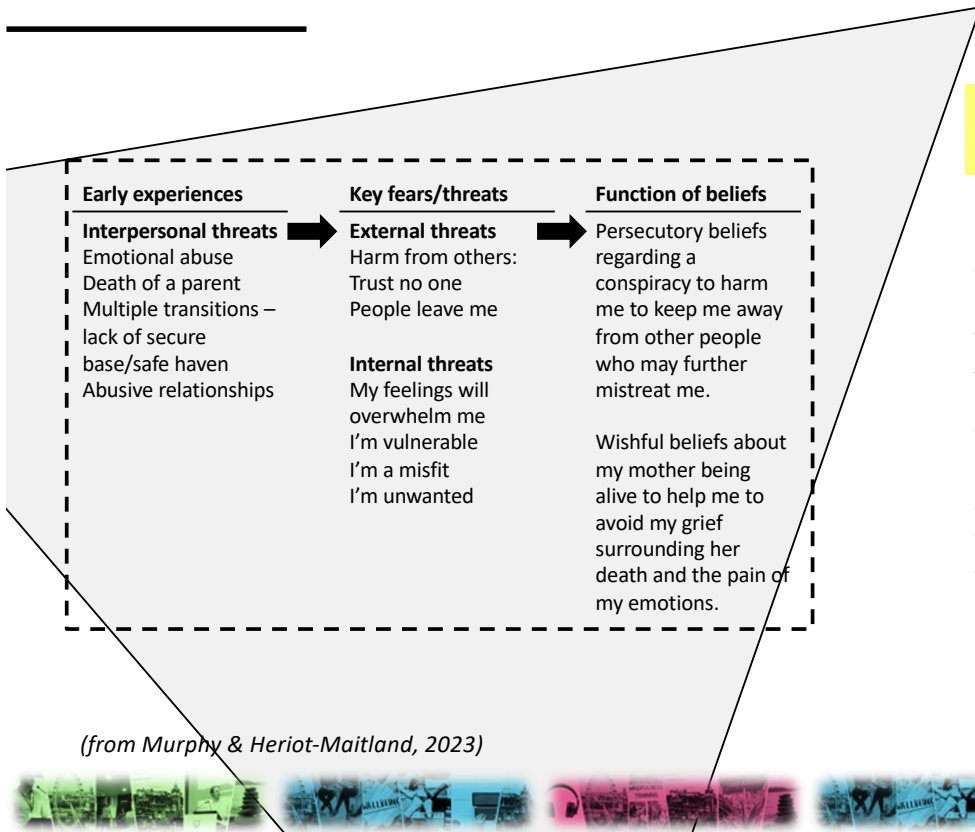
MAPPING OUT VOICES/PARTS, THEIR RELATIONSHIPS AND FUNCTIONS



SHOW UP FOR THESE RELATIONSHIPS AS OUR COMPASSIONATE SELF



COMPASSIONATE ENGAGEMENT WITH FORMULATION



Response from the 'Compassionate Self' to the part that holds the belief and its function

Engagement: 'Thank you for attempting to protect me from further harm. I can see that your intentions are good'
Action: 'I am learning to gently find ways to reach out to other people. This is a huge challenge for me however being alone is not working for me'.

Engagement: 'Thank you for holding this belief when I really needed to feel cared for and protected'.
Action: 'With support I am beginning to grieve the loss of my dear mother. I am learning to find other ways of feeling safe and supported in the world'.

(from Murphy & Heriot-Maitland, 2023)

WHERE THERE IS NO SPECIFIC / IDENTIFIED FUNCTION

Compass. self

Helping with the emotion detected in the voice	<p>"You sound frustrated. Is there anything I can do to help with this?"</p> <p>"I'm sorry you don't want us to leave the house; it's awful to feel afraid. I want to think of some ways to help us feel safer".</p> <p>"You seem very angry. Did something particular happen today to upset you?"</p> <p>"Is there anything you need from me right now?"</p>
Compassionate assertiveness/ boundary-setting with voice	<p>"It sounds like you have something to say that you feel is important. Now is not a good time as I'm about to go out, so how about we dedicate some time later at 7pm to really listen carefully to what is concerning you?"</p> <p>"I want to understand your perspective, but I can't do that when you shout at me. I'm going to take a moment to settle down myself, then let's try to discuss things more calmly."</p> <p>"I know you don't want me to go to this appointment but it's important I don't miss it. How about I describe what I expect is going to happen, then we can address any worries you might have."</p>
Helping with the emotion experienced within the voice-hearer	<p>"You know that feeling you have in your body when you are being insulted by the voice. Where is that? What does that feel like? I want to help you with that feeling. What does your body need right now?" (e.g. Strength? Grounding? A hug? And then, depending on what is identified, focusing on directing that towards yourself in order to meet that need).</p>
Helping with the relationship conflict	<p>"I can see you are in a conflict here and it's getting very heated. Let's just all slow down a minute and do one of our grounding practices. Let's just notice the body, our posture, and our breathing rhythm for a minute. Stay with that. . . . And when things are more settled, we can come back to this."</p>





Thank you!

Self-help book :

RELATING TO VOICES USING COMPASSION FOCUSED THERAPY

A Self-help Companion

CHARLIE HERIOT-MAITLAND
AND ELEANOR LONGDEN



Dr Charlie Heriot-Maitland
Balanced Minds, London/Edinburgh, UK



www.relatingtovoices.com

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