



Schema Therapy Information Sheet

General Introduction

Schema Therapy (ST) has been found to be helpful for various serious or chronic mental health problems. It helps people make sense of their needs, with a particular focus on feelings and instinctive ways of coping with what the world throws at them. It also helps in developing a greater understanding of how problems have come about, along with providing the consistent emotional support and security people need to be able to change their lives for the better. It is a flexible therapy that can be moulded to the needs of each individual.

The concepts involved

The main concepts in Schema Therapy are: **Core Needs**, **Early Maladaptive Schemas** and **Schema Modes**. We all have core emotional and physical needs. When these needs are not met, **maladaptive schemas** develop that lead to unhealthy life patterns. These schemas lead to certain coping styles which are ultimately self-defeating and which can keep repeating and generating negative feelings, unless we address them. **Schema modes** are the moment-to-moment emotional states, thoughts and responses that we all experience, reflecting our underlying schemas and coping styles. Maladaptive modes are triggered by situations that we are sensitive to (our "emotional buttons") and often lead us to over or under react, in ways that are ultimately unhelpful.

Aims and processes in ST

The goal of schema therapy is to help patients feel better through meeting their core needs better. Accomplishing this involve learning how to:

- attend to your own vulnerability in a caring compassionate way, particularly through a trusting relationship with your therapist
- recognise and modify maladaptive schema's and modes
- build or strengthen healthy schema's and modes