**What is Schema Therapy & who benefits from it?**

Schema Therapy is an evidence based treatment that works at a deeper level to solve ongoing problems. The approach combines gaining insight into difficulties, helping you manage negative emotions, reduce avoidance, change thinking, and develop better coping skills. Unlike other approaches, Schema Therapy goes beyond temporary symptom reduction and aims to improve your relationships, help you feel more empowered to live the life you want and ultimately improve your overall quality of life.

You may benefit from Schema Therapy if you have ongoing difficulties like long term anxiety and depression or have had painful or difficult childhood experiences. Schema Therapy may help if some relationships and situations trigger disproportionately large emotional reactions.

**What are Schemas?**

Schemas are negative beliefs that while false, feel true. Examples of Schemas include Defectiveness and Shame, Abandonment and Failure. Schemas create a filter that influences how we think about ourselves, what we expect from others and how we see the world. When our needs are met, Schemas lie dormant. When we experience stress, feel rejected or feel we are failing, Schemas may be triggered. For example, you might know rationally that you are loveable, but still feel *unlovable.* Schema Therapy is about not only knowing but feeling deep down that you are lovable, to help you to feel safer and able better able to trust others.

Schemas develop largely because of our early home environment and in part due to our temperament. Schemas develop in childhood when our core needs for nurture, autonomy, and reasonable limits are not met.

**What are Modes?**

Modes are the coping responses we have when the Schemas are triggered. These modes represent the different sides of us. For example, an individual with an Abandonment Schema may find themselves in an avoidant mode to numb themselves to the painful feelings of abandonment. The work in Schema Therapy is about being able to recognise and reduce unhelpful coping modes that become activated and to develop more constructive ways of coping meet your needs.

**What are the stages of Schema Therapy?**

In the initial stages of Schema Therapy, the aim is to become aware of and understand what your Schemas and Modes are and how they get triggered. We then work together to manage and reduce unhelpful modes such as avoidance that are contribute to distress. We work collaboratively to find more constructive ways of getting your needs met and begin to heal your more vulnerable sides. The aim is to help the healthy adult parts of you to run the show and reduce the unhelpful coping modes many of us default to in times of stress.

**How long is a course of Schema Therapy?**

Schema Therapy is a longer-term therapy of around 20+ sessions optimally. Those with a mental health care plan can access 10 sessions a calendar year. Therefore, some clients split their therapy across 2 calendar years. Alternatively, people also use their private health funds with extras to reduce therapy costs.

**How can I get the most out of Schema Therapy?**

The two most important things when undertaking Schema Therapy are to have an open mind and to create time and space to undertake practice between sessions. Like most things, it doesn’t change overnight but with the right approach and joint effort from client and therapist the rewards are very much worth it!

**How do I get started?** After initial assessment, the first step of Schema Therapy is to determine both your Schemas and how you cope with these when they become activated.

Please download the Young Schema Questionnaire and the SMI from my website. Once you are finished completing them, please email them to me ahead of our next session. Collectively, they will take one hour to complete. I will then present the results to you at your next session. We will use this information to plan your treatment.

Tena Davies

Clinical Psychologist