IFS Institute
Level 1 Course
Session 1: Introduction to the Internal Family Systems Model

Instructional Methodology:
Lecture
Demonstration
Audio/visual
Experiential; practice of techniques
Large and small group discussions

Contact Hours: 18.00 hours

Description of Activity:
Session 1 includes a review of the history and development of the Internal Family Systems Model of therapy and the basic assumptions of the Model with regard to its non-pathological view of the mind's multiple sub-personalities known as "parts" and the concept of "Self". The goals of therapy using the IFS Model will be examined. The concept of unburdening the painful feelings and beliefs constraining parts will be applied as a strategy to restore harmony and balance to the inner system as a whole and transformation of parts. Differentiation of the 3 primary roles of "parts" from "Self" will be examined in the context of their specific sequential and relational patterns, commonly presenting in therapy. Discussions on how changes in the internal system can bring about changes in the external system of an individual, family or group will be fully explored. The core skills involved in gaining Self-led access to parts presenting in therapy are reviewed and examined. Strategies are identified for helping various personality parts transform to achieve therapeutic success.

Learning Objectives: By the end of Session 1, participants will be able to:

1. Describe the interpersonal matrix of the training group for the purpose of establishing safety and group norms
2. Cite the history and development of the Internal Family Systems Model of therapy
3. Describe the basic assumptions of IFS with regard to its non-pathological view of the mind's multiplicity and the concept of Self
4. Cite the key therapeutic goals of IFS therapy
5. Articulate the concept of releasing uncomfortable feelings and beliefs that burden the inner system, and the restoration of internal harmony and balance
6. Explain the concept of "unblending" and differentiating sub-personalities from Self in order to speak for, as opposed to from, reactive affective states
7. Describe the 3 common roles assumed by sub-personalities that most often present in therapy
8. Describe the relationship and sequence of interaction between the 3 common roles of parts of the personality
9. Cite the IFS concept of Self and explain its role as the most effective leader of the inner system
10. Identify and describe the 8 qualities of Self energy (curiosity, calmness, compassion, confidence, courage, clarity, creativity, connectedness)

11. Identify clinical techniques that allow the experience of and the identification of the difference between parts and Self
12. Explain how changes in the internal system will affect changes in the external system of an individual, family, or group
13. Identify differences in the role of the therapist in the IFS Model compared to other models of therapy
14. Practice skills introducing IFS concepts and using IFS language with clients
15. Utilize the Six Fs (find, focus, flesh out, feel toward, fears, befriend) as interventions for differentiating a sub-personality and developing its internal relationship with Self
16. Demonstrate an enhanced understanding of the Flow of the IFS Model

IFS Institute
Level 1 Course
Session 2: Working with the Protective System

Instructional Methodology:
Lecture / Demonstrations
Audio/visual
Experiential; practice of techniques
Large and small group discussion

Contact Hours: 18.00 hours

Description of Activity:
Session 2 is dedicated to working with the "parts" that serve to protect and defend the system from threats and pain. Techniques to identify the protective parts in "manager" or "firefighter" roles and to uncover their positive intentions will be explored and analyzed. The 9 most common protector fears will be examined with corresponding interventions to create internal and external safety for these sub-personalities. An emphasis on building trust between the protective parts and Self will be emphasized for therapeutic safety and success. The core skills involved in gaining Self-led access to protective parts that emerge in therapy will be reviewed and examined.   Strategies are identified for helping various personality parts transform to achieve therapeutic success.

Learning Objectives: By the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Review and provide needed clarification of material from Session 1
2. Identify aspects of the personality that interact in protective ways
3. Explain the IFS belief that all parts, even those that manifest with extreme behavior, carry a positive intention for the system
4. Describe how managers and firefighters are forced into their extreme roles in an attempt to protect and defend the system from pain
5. Identify at least 2 ways to create internal and external safety for protective parts, with examples
6. Differentiate parts in manager roles from firefighter roles
7. Cite the common traits and behaviors of parts in manager roles
8. Identify techniques that assist in identifying manager parts
9. Practice techniques of "unblending" protective parts to establish direct Self-to-part relationships and increase protectors' trust in Self leadership
10. Identify and discuss the 9 most common protector fears and how to effectively address each one
11. Explain the importance of working with protector fears to ensure therapeutic safety and success.
12. Use practice sessions to work with managers within a client system
13. Explain the role of firefighters in the system
14. Identify and describe one's own reactions in response to clients' firefighter activity
15. Identify at least 2 techniques that help clients establish a Self-to-part relationship with firefighters
16. Identify at least 2 effective techniques to negotiate with firefighters

17. Define the term "backlash" as it relates to the protective system and state the importance of working with protectors to minimize its occurrence and impact.
18. Explain and describe 2 fundamental techniques – "in-sight" and "direct access" and explain when a therapist might apply either intervention
19. Practice the core skills of "direct access" when working with protectors

IFS Institute
Level 1 Course
Session 3: Working with Exiles

Instructional Methodology:
Lecture / Demonstration
Audio/visual
Experiential; practice of techniques
Large and small group discussion

Contact Hours: 18.00 hours

Description of Activity:
Session 3 is dedicated to working with parts of the personality that become "exiled" and how this phenomenon occurs. Ways to identify "exiles" by their common traits and behaviors is examined with an emphasis on building a trusting relationship to Self. IFS techniques to negotiate with exiles and prevent affect overwhelm are practiced to increase trust therapeutically and within the client's system. The 8 primary steps to unburdening exiles are examined extensively. A focus will be on exiles' transformation and its positive impact on systemic harmony and balance. The core skills involved in gaining Self-led access to parts that emerge in therapy will be reviewed and examined.   Strategies are identified for helping various personality parts transform to achieve therapeutic success.

Learning Objectives: by the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1.   Summarize and provide needed clarification of material from Session 2
2.   Identify parts of the internal system that become exiled and how this phenomenon occurs
3.   Examine the qualities of exile parts and explain their role in the system
4.   Define and describe the relationship between protectors and exiles
5.   Role-play exercises that safely allow an experience of one's own internal system
6.   Describe at least 2 ways to identify exiles in the client system
7.   Describe the concept of "drive for redemption," and explain how it affects the exile's relationship with the external world
8.   Define personal, legacy, and cultural burdens and describe how they are held in the system
9.   Outline the 8 steps of unburdening exiles
10.   Identify at least 2 strategies of obtaining protector permission to access exiles
11.   Identify at least 2 direct access methods for working with exile parts
12.   Describe the practice of integrating changes, post-unburdening with exiles and protectors
13.   Explain when and how to check for willingness from exiled parts to "not overwhelm" the client's system
14.   Identify and examine parts of the therapist that often emerge when working with exiles

IFS Institute
Level 1 Course
Session 4: Dynamics of the Working with Internal Family Systems and the Body's Reaction

Instructional Methodology:
Lecture / Demonstration
Audio/visual
Experiential; practice of techniques
Large and small group discussion

Contact Hours: 18.00 hours

Description of Activity:
Session 4 focuses on the complex relationships parts have to each other with emphasis on polarizations, alliances and hierarchies in the internal system.   Ways to identify when a polarization is impeding the therapeutic process will be analyzed with techniques to mediate the conflict between parts through the client's Self leadership.   Common internal polarizations are described and their impact illustrated within the context of external relationships, including polarizations that may impact the therapeutic relationship.   The systemic impact of parts and Self energy on the body is explored. IFS concepts are integrated with body-centered techniques throughout the flow of the Model.   The core skills involved in gaining Self-led access to parts that emerge in therapy will be reviewed and examined.   Strategies are identified for helping various personality parts transform to achieve therapeutic success.

Learning Objectives: by the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1.   Summarize and provide needed clarification of material from Session 3
2.   Define and examine polarizations, alliances, and hierarchies in the internal system
3.   Describe the nature of polarizations and their protective role in the system
4.   Identify polarizations, alliances, and hierarchies in the internal system, with examples
5.   Identify at least 2 techniques that facilitate the client's Self as a mediator between polarized parts or groups of parts
6.   Identify techniques that externalize the relational dynamics of the internal system with sculpting or mapping
7.   Use small groups to role-play working with polarizations with a client
8.   Identify at least 2 issues related to parts of the therapist that emerge working with multiple parts during a therapy session
9.   Recognize how the IFS Model views the relationship between parts, Self, and the physical body
10. Describe skills in body-centered techniques that increase kinesthetic awareness in working with parts and accessing Self
11. Identify at least 2 ways to facilitate clients in identifying and being present to parts in or around their body
12. Role-play exercises that facilitate awareness of how parts may communicate through movement or sensation
13. Identify common "stuck points" in using the IFS Model and describe strategies for resolving these therapeutic issues

IFS Institute
Level 1 Course
Session 5: The Therapeutic Relational System

Instructional Methodology:
Lecture
Demonstration
Audio/visual
Experiential; practice of techniques
Large and small group discussion

Contact Hours: 18.00 hours

Description of Activity:
Session 5 closely examines the significance of the therapeutic relationship from the perspective of the IFS Model. The multiple levels of relationships between the client's internal system and the therapist's will be examined as they pertain to issues of transference, counter-transference, and projections. Therapist parts that commonly emerge in therapy are explored and analyzed in terms of effectiveness or interference. The Model's approach to therapeutic ruptures is discussed and analyzed. The 5 Ps (patience, perspective, presence, playfulness, persistence) of a Self-led therapist are discussed. Skills for maintaining Self leadership when working with clients are identified and practiced. The experiences of sympathy, empathy, and compassion are compared and contrasted relative to their impact on the therapeutic relationship. The core skills involved in gaining Self-led access to parts presenting in therapy will be reviewed and examined. Strategies are identified for helping various personality parts transform to achieve therapeutic success.

Learning Objectives: by the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1. Summarize and provide needed clarification of material from Session 4
2. Describe the significance of the therapeutic relationship existing on multiple levels
3. Describe the qualities of a Self-led therapist according to the IFS Model's 5 P's (patience, perspective, presence, playfulness, persistence)
4. Explain transference and counter-transference from the IFS Model's perspective
5. Differentiate between states of empathy, sympathy and compassion relative to the therapeutic relationship
6. Identify and describe common therapist parts that may emerge in session and their possible impact on the therapeutic process, especially with difficult client systems
7. Explain at least 2 ways to increase the presence of Self energy in therapy sessions, both for the therapist and for the client
8. Examine and explain unblending as it applies to the therapist during IFS therapy sessions
9. Use role-play to allow for greater self-understanding and self-compassion while working with clients
10. Cite at least 2 ways to detect and unblend one's own parts in relation to clients
11. Identify at least 2 qualities of Self-led relationships with clients, significant others, and in the training group
12. Identify common therapeutic ruptures and cite 2 ways to approach therapeutic repair with clients.

IFS Institute
Level 1 Course
Session 6: Integration and Completion

Instructional Methodology:
Lecture
Demonstration
Audio/visual
Experiential; practice of techniques
Large and small group discussion

Contact Hours: 18.00 hours

Description of Activity:
Session 6 focusses on steps of the session post-unburdening including the integration of transformed parts and ending a session. The challenges of ending an "incomplete" IFS process are discussed and strategies provided to allow safety and continuity between sessions. Circumstances under which burdens return to the client's system are analyzed from the Model's perspective. The Unburdened Internal System is discussed in view of the Model's assumptions that all parts can transform and offer positive contributions to the client. The parallels between ending the training program as it relates to treatment endings is explored. Difficult cases will be examined and strategies from the IFS Model reviewed.   The core skills involved in gaining Self-led access to parts presenting in therapy will be reviewed and examined.   Strategies are identified for helping various personality parts transform to achieve therapeutic success.

Learning Objectives: by the end of this session, participants will be able to:

1.   Summarize and provide needed clarification of material from Session 5
2.   Identify challenges for ending "incomplete" sessions and how these can be addressed
3.   Explain why burdens may "resurface" in clients after completing an IFS healing process and describe strategies that address these occurrences
4.   Identify concepts from the Unburdened Internal System for recognizing the gifts and strengths of Self-led parts
5.   Explain the completion process in IFS therapy and its relationship to ending the training program
6.   Use role-play exercise to work with those parts affected by treatment termination
7.   Identify at least 2 strategies for clients to practice between sessions to maintain gains achieved in therapy
8.   Describe the post-unburdening skills of Invitation and Integration for the purpose of achieving harmony and balance in the client's internal system
9.   List at least 2 common mistakes made by IFS therapists in ending an IFS healing process, with suggestions for resolution
10. Identify at least 3 difficult clinical situations
11. Use small groups to appraise, process and review the IFS Model of therapy
12. Identify post-training opportunities