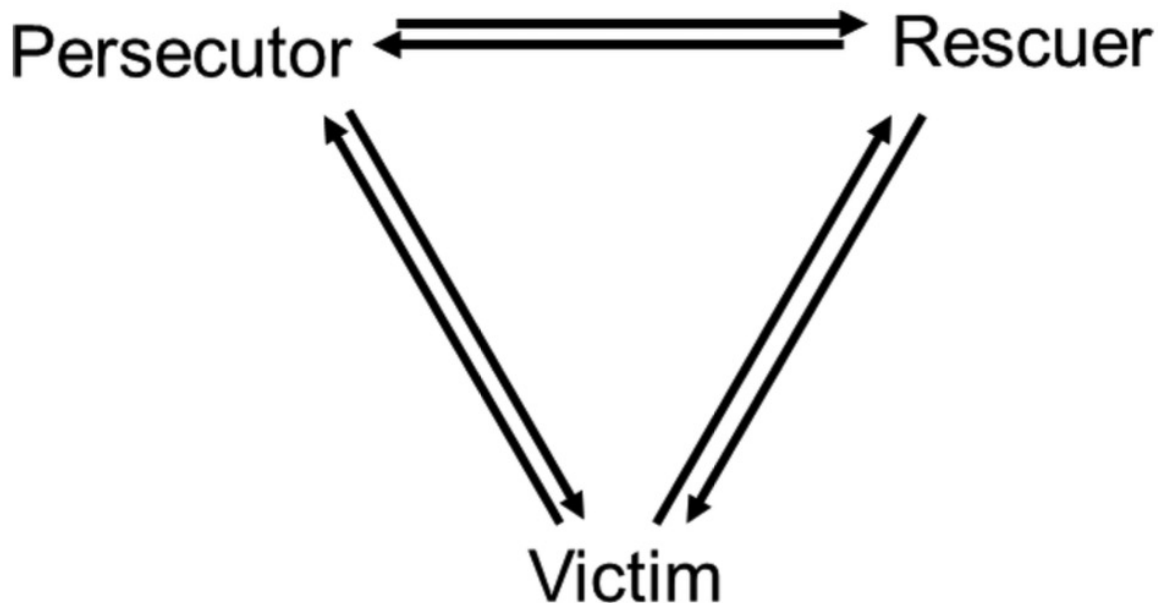


Transactional Analysis: Drama Triangle



One way of understanding unhelpful relationship patterns is by using the drama triangle. This concept was developed by Stephen Karpman, who identified that often people seem to take up one of three psychological roles: persecutor, rescuer or victim. These are psychological roles, and not ‘actual roles’;

for example, someone who jumps into a river to save someone who is drowning is an ‘actual rescuer’ and is not necessarily taking a psychological role of rescuer. The **victim** position is perhaps the easiest one to make sense of, because we have all come across people who seem to feel that they are powerless and want other people to take responsibility for them. Similarly, we have all come across people who act as though they can ‘save the day’, or who get caught into doing things for other people, often without even being asked (**rescuers**). We have all also been around someone who seems to criticise everything, or someone who suddenly becomes hostile when we feel it is unjustified (**persecutors**).

What is interesting about these roles is that people often switch positions and start from one role but end up in another completely different role.

It can be useful to think about how you take up each of these roles from time to time. Although it can be uncomfortable to think of ourselves in each role, by understanding how we occupy these positions we can identify when we are in them more easily and therefore move out of these roles.

