Wholeness Counselling & Psychotherapy

Schema types

Practices and interventions

Schemas are deeply ingrained patterns of thought, behaviour, and emotions, known as "schemas." Here are the main schema types and corresponding interventions:

Common Schema Types:

1. Abandonment/Instability:

- Description: Fear of abandonment or instability in relationships.

- Interventions:

- Develop healthy attachment patterns through building trust in relationships.

- Use imagery exercises to visualize secure attachments.

2. Mistrust/Abuse:

- Description: Expectation that others will hurt, abuse, or take advantage.

- Interventions:

- Challenge cognitive distortions about others.

- Practice vulnerability in safe relationships to build trust.

3. Emotional Deprivation:

- Description: Belief that one’s emotional needs will not be met.

- Interventions:

- Engage in self-soothing techniques and mindfulness.

- Identify and express emotional needs in relationships.

4. Defectiveness/Shame:

- Description: Feeling flawed, unlovable, or unworthy.

- Interventions:

- Use cognitive restructuring to challenge negative self-beliefs.

- Practice self-compassion and self-acceptance exercises.

5. Social Isolation/Alienation:

- Description: Feeling disconnected from others or different.

- Interventions:

- Encourage participation in social activities or support groups.

- Work on building social skills and emotional intelligence.

6. Dependence/Incompetence:

- Description: Belief that one cannot handle everyday responsibilities.

- Interventions:

- Gradually increase responsibility through exposure tasks.

- Foster autonomy through skill-building exercises.

7. Vulnerability to Harm or Illness:

- Description: Belief that disaster or illness is imminent.

- Interventions:

- Use reality testing to challenge catastrophic thoughts.

- Implement stress-reduction techniques and coping strategies.

8. Enmeshment/Undeveloped Self:

- Description: Lack of individuality due to overly close relationships.

- Interventions:

- Encourage self-exploration and setting personal boundaries.

- Practice assertiveness in expressing individual needs.

9. Failure:

- Description: Belief that one will inevitably fail or is inadequate.

- Interventions:

- Set realistic and achievable goals to build confidence.

- Reframe failure as a learning opportunity rather than a reflection of self-worth.

General Interventions in Therapy:

1. Schema Identification:

- Identify specific schemas.

2. Cognitive Restructuring:

- Challenge and modify maladaptive beliefs associated with schemas.

3. Emotional Techniques:

- Encourage emotional expression and processing to help connect with feelings.

4. Behavioural Techniques:

- Implement behavioural experiments and role-playing to practice new behaviours.

5. Imagery Rescripting:

- Use guided imagery to reframe past experiences associated with schemas.

6. Limited Reparenting:

- Provide a supportive therapeutic relationship that addresses unmet needs and promotes self-soothing.

7. Mindfulness Practices:

- Incorporate mindfulness to increase awareness of schemas and reduce reactivity.

8. Homework Assignments:

- Encourage new skills practice and use of techniques outside of therapy sessions.

By identifying schemas and employing these interventions, we work towards healthier patterns of thought and behaviour, ultimately leading to improved emotional well-being and relationships.