

**IFS Institute: Level 1 Training**  
**6-Session Format**  
**(Four Sessions of 3 Days Each + Two Sessions of 1 Day Each)**

**Instructional Methodologies**

- Lecture
- Demonstration
- Audio/Visual
- Experientials
- Practice of techniques
- Large and small group discussions
- Role play

**Session 1: Introduction to Internal Family Systems (19.5 CE hours)**

This session includes a review of the history and development of the Internal Family Systems Model of therapy and the basic assumptions of the Model about 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 three 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**

- Cite the history and development of the Internal Family Systems Model of therapy.
- Describe the basic assumptions of IFS about its non-pathological view of the mind's multiplicity and the concept of Self.
- Describe the interpersonal matrix of the training group for the purpose of establishing safety and group norms.
- Cite the key therapeutic goals of IFS therapy.
- Identify techniques that externalize the relational dynamics of the internal system with sculpting or mapping.
- Articulate the concept of releasing uncomfortable feelings and beliefs that burden the inner system, and the restoration of internal harmony and balance.
- Explain the concept of "unblending" and differentiating sub-personalities from Self in order to speak for, as opposed to from, reactive affective states.

- Describe the three common roles assumed by sub-personalities that most often present in therapy.
- Describe the relationship and sequence of interaction between the three common roles of parts of the personality.
- Cite the IFS concept of Self and explain its role as the most effective leader of the inner system.
- Identify and describe the eight qualities of Self energy (curiosity, calmness, compassion, confidence, courage, clarity, creativity, connectedness).
- Identify clinical techniques that allow the experience of and the identification of the difference between parts and Self.
- Explain how changes in the internal system will affect changes in the external system of an individual, family, or group.
- Identify differences in the role of the therapist in the IFS Model compared to other models of therapy.
- 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.
- Demonstrate an enhanced understanding of the flow of the IFS Model.
- Identify aspects of the personality that interact in protective ways.
- Explain the IFS belief that all parts, even those that manifest with extreme behavior, carry a positive intention for the system.
- Describe how managers and firefighters are forced into their extreme roles in an attempt to protect and defend the system from pain.
- Identify at least two ways to create internal and external safety for protective parts, with examples.
- Practice techniques of “unblending” protective parts to establish direct Self-to-part relationships and increase protectors’ trust in Self leadership.
- Explain and describe two fundamental techniques— “in-sight” and “direct access”— and explain when a therapist might apply either intervention.

## **Session 2: Manager Parts (6.5 CE hours)**

This day 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 nine 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**

- Differentiate parts in manager roles from firefighter roles.
- Cite at least two of the common traits and behaviors of parts in manager roles.
- Identify techniques that assist in identifying manager parts.
- Identify and discuss the nine most common protector fears and how to effectively address each one.
- Explain the importance of working with protector fears to ensure therapeutic safety and success.
- Use practice sessions to work with managers within a client system.
- Identify and practice the key skills of introducing IFS concepts and using IFS language with clients.

### Session 3: Firefighters and Exiles Parts (19.5 CE hours)

This session is dedicated to working with firefighter parts and parts of the personality that become “exiled.” Techniques to identify the protective parts in firefighter roles and to uncover their positive intentions will be explored and analyzed. 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 eight 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:

- Explain the role of firefighters in the system.
- Identify and describe one’s own reactions in response to clients’ firefighter activity.
- Identify at least two techniques that help clients establish a Self-to-part relationship with firefighters.
- Identify at least two effective techniques to negotiate with firefighters.
- 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.
- Practice the core skills of “direct access” when working with protectors.
- Identify parts of the internal system that become exiled and how this phenomenon occurs.
- Identify the qualities of exile parts and explain their role in the system.
- Define and describe the relationship between protectors and exiles.
- Describe at least two ways to identify exiles in the client system.
- Describe the concept of “drive for redemption,” and explain how it affects the exile’s relationship with the external world.
- Define personal, legacy, and cultural burdens and describe how they are held in the system.
- Outline the eight steps of unburdening exiles.
- Identify at least two strategies of obtaining protector permission to access exiles.
- Identify at least two direct access methods for working with exile parts.
- Describe the practice of integrating changes, post-unburdening with exiles and protectors.
- Explain when and how to check for willingness from exiled parts to “not overwhelm” the client’s system.
- Identify and examine parts of the therapist that often emerge when working with exiles.

## **Session 4: Polarizations (6.5 CE hours)**

This day 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.

### **Learning Objectives**

- Define polarizations as relate to the IFS Model.
- Describe the nature of polarizations and their protective role in the system.
- Identify strategies for successfully working with polarizations with a client.
- Identify types of polarizations in the internal system, with examples.
- Identify at least two techniques that facilitate the client's Self as a mediator between polarized parts or groups of parts.

## **Session 5: Therapeutic Relationship (19.5 CE hours)**

This session 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, countertransference, 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 five 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**

- Recognize how the IFS Model views the relationship between parts, Self, and physical reactions
- Identify at least two ways to facilitate clients in identifying and being present to parts that communicate emotionally.
- Describe the qualities of a Self-led therapist according to the IFS Model's five Ps (patience, perspective, presence, playfulness, persistence).
- Explain transference and countertransference from the IFS Model's perspective.
- Differentiate between states of empathy, sympathy, and compassion relative to the therapeutic relationship.
- Identify and describe common therapist parts that may emerge in session and their possible impacts on the therapeutic process, especially with difficult client systems.
- Explain at least two ways to increase the presence of Self energy in therapy sessions, both for the therapist and for the client.
- Examine and explain unblending as it applies to the therapist during IFS therapy sessions.
- Cite at least two ways to detect and unblend one's own parts in relation to clients.
- Identify at least two qualities of Self-led relationships with clients, significant others, and in the training group.
- Identify common therapeutic ruptures and cite two ways to approach therapeutic repair with clients.
- Identify common "stuck points" in using the IFS Model and describe strategies for resolving these therapeutic issues.
- Identify at least two issues related to parts of the therapist that emerge working with multiple parts during a therapy session.

## **Session 6: Integration and Completion (19.5 CE hours)**

This session focusses on steps of 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**

- Identify challenges for ending “incomplete” sessions and how these can be addressed.
- Explain why burdens may “resurface” in clients after completing an IFS healing process and describe strategies that address these occurrences.
- Identify concepts from the Unburdened Internal System for recognizing the gifts and strengths of Self-led parts.
- Explain the completion process in IFS therapy and its relationship to ending the training program.
- Identify the parts commonly affected by treatment termination.
- Identify at least two strategies for clients to practice between sessions to maintain gains achieved in therapy.
- Describe the post-unburdening skills of Invitation and Integration for the purpose of achieving harmony and balance in the client’s internal system.
- List at least two common mistakes made by IFS therapists in ending an IFS healing process, with suggestions for resolution.
- Identify at least three difficult clinical situations.
- Identify post-training opportunities.