



# Internal Family Systems (IFS) for Individual Client Work

**Skills to support individual clients increase affect tolerance and regulation.**

Internal Family Systems (IFS) therapy is one of the fastest-growing approaches to psychotherapy. It has developed over the past twenty years into a way of understanding and treating human problems that is empowering, effective, and non-pathologizing with an understanding that symptoms are actually the coping mechanism of Parts (sub-personalities/ego-states) trying to protect us from pain. IFS is a powerful model of therapy that enhances mindful awareness and self-compassion through getting to know our Parts in a methodical yet intimate way.

The IFS Model represents a synthesis of two already-existing paradigms: systems thinking and multiplicity of the mind. A key aspect of the IFS Model is the belief that, in addition to working with Parts, everyone has at their core a Self-Energy containing many crucial leadership qualities such as perspective, confidence, compassion, and acceptance.

In this inner system, some Parts take on protective roles in response to relational injury in order to protect a vulnerable or injured Part (Exiles). Protective proactive Parts (Managers) focus on learning, functioning, and being prepared preventing Exiles from being triggered. Manager behaviours can include inner critics, controlling self/others/the environment, perfectionism, risk avoidance, caretaking, worrying, striving, pleasing, denial, displacement, projecting and intellectualising. The reactive protective Parts (Firefighters) get activated after an exile has been

triggered. They try to distract the client from pain. Examples of Firefighter behaviour include dissociation, fantasising, somatising, anger/rage, addictions, eating disorders, panic, obsessions, compulsions, hoarding, NSSI and suicidality.

IFS advances treatment by:

- Working with ambivalence and polarisations.
- Recognising how to work with 'resistance' productively.
- Regulating affect in a simple and effective way so clients are not overwhelmed during sessions.
- Supporting the development of mindful self-awareness and self-compassion.
- Encouraging clients to attend to Parts between session improving Self-leadership and self-efficacy.

### Learning objectives of this training:

1. Understand overall principles and concepts underpinning IFS as a therapeutic modality.
2. Learn to differentiate traditional therapeutic listening with the IFS focus on listening for Parts.
3. Recognise the roles Parts play in presenting issues from a non-pathologising perspective.
4. Access and explore protector Parts via the client's story, presenting issue &/or body awareness.
5. Develop IFS skills to help clients increase affect tolerance and regulation.
6. Explore integrating IFS into current practice.



**Leona Dawson** Leona Dawson is a counsellor, psychotherapist, hypnotherapist and supervisor who works in private practice. She has 3 decades working in adult education and group facilitation in a range of contexts as well as becoming a Focusing Trainer before discovering Internal Family Systems eight years ago. IFS has enabled Leona to work with curiosity and compassion, moment by moment, with her clients as they come back into relationship with themselves. She has found that the IFS way of working is energising for therapists. Leona has completed the three levels of training offered by the Centre for Self-Leadership in the United States and has

supported multiple international trainings. She offers IFS-oriented supervision and runs a MHPN peer group for IFS professionals. Leona has a Masters of Arts and a Master of Counselling & Applied Psychotherapy as well as Diplomas in Clinical Hypnotherapy and Transpersonal Art Therapy. She has also studied at the Milton H. Erickson Foundation and The Focusing Institute (New York).



Co-facilitator, **Jen Nield** is a family therapist working both in the community sector and in private practice. She is an experienced group facilitator and has written multiple group programs that are now being used widely throughout Victoria. Jen has worked extensively in the family violence sector providing individual, couple and family therapy to both people who have used violence and those who have been violated. Jen is now working in the Alcohol and Other Drug sector and providing IFS training to AOD workers. Jen has a history of working with adolescents both in psychiatric inpatient settings and in the broader community sector. Prior to becoming a therapist Jen worked in community theatre and won numerous awards for her work with young people who had experienced multiple adverse childhood experiences.

**This training may qualify for Focussed Psychological Strategies (FPS) CPD. Please refer to the Dept. of Health <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/mental-ba-focus#cpd> for more information.**

Our continuing professional development events meet the quality standard recognised by many relevant professional associations including psychology, social work, occupational therapy, mental health nursing, community work, counselling, psychotherapy and more.

*We recommend checking with your association for the correct calculation of points for this event.*

A certificate of attendance for 7 hours of face-to-face training is issued in the week following attendance at this event.

### **Morning Session**

Includes a short morning tea break.

Introduction to IFS theory (PPT)

Experiential Activity: Meeting your own Parts in different contexts

Introduction to 6 key steps in IFS Protocol (using video or demo depending on group size).

### **Afternoon Session**

Includes a short afternoon tea break.

Experiential Activity: Triad practice - Using 6 key IFS steps

Debrief + short pair work experiential activity: Meeting your therapist Parts

Review key principles and applications of IFS in practice

Where to from here?

Evaluation and Closing.

***“All parts are welcome.” - when we look within ourselves, putting those words into practice, we open the way to deep inner transformation as ‘Parts’ come to realise they are not stuck in their roles and can choose to support us in a different ways. IFS unlocks that ability.”*** Leona Dawson

### **How will you benefit from attending this training?**

- Introduction to key principles of IFS and possibilities for integration with your current practice
- Recognising and working with Parts in presenting issues
- Recognising your own therapist Parts and accessing Self-Energy

### **Registration details:**

Registration fee: **\$298**

A current PDP ‘Student and New Graduate’ discount code may be applied to this standard registration fee. (Apply online)

This seminar provides 7 hours for CPD points.

Morning tea, lunch and afternoon tea included.

We accept payment by Visa, Mastercard, Amex PayPal, cheque and EFT.

**Register at [www.PDPseminars.com.au](http://www.PDPseminars.com.au) or call us on 1300 887 622**

**This seminar has been designed to extend the clinical knowledge and applied skill of Counsellors, Psychotherapists, Coaches, Psychologists, Hypnotherapists, Social Workers, Community Workers, Mental Health Nurses and Psychiatrists.**

### **Feedback for Leona’s and Jen’s recent training presentations:**

*“I have attended training with Leona on several occasions and have been truly impressed with the experiential way she designs, delivers and facilitates learning. She is clear, concise and loads of fun! All participants were fully engaged in a dynamic learning experience which I would highly recommend.”*

*“Leona is an innovative and creative presenter who makes her material accessible to the novice mind. Her deep knowledge and love of IFS shines through and her generosity in sharing case studies and personal experiences makes the training come alive. I recommend this course to anyone interested in the workings of the human psyche.”*

*“Leona is a knowledgeable and engaging trainer who is able to hold the space for all levels of learning.”*

*“Jen’s warmth, intelligence, and creativeness inspires groups to trust each other and engage. Her sense of humour allows participants to relax, be themselves, and be in the moment.”*