

Schema Therapy Journal

Identify and break schemas and modes, during
and after your therapy sessions.

Nienke Brouwer

Author: Nienke Brouwer
Cover Design: Nienke Brouwer
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Critical Voice

Schemas

**Voices from
the Past**

Past Situations

Schema Overview

Schemas are patterns of feelings, thoughts, and behavior that developed during a specific stage of life and continue to influence you later on.

Disconnection and Rejection

Emotional Deprivation

You expect that your core needs, such as support, nurturing, empathy, and protection, will not be met by others. This often leaves you feeling unseen, misunderstood, and lonely.*

Abandonment / Instability

You live with the constant fear that the people close to you will leave or abandon you. You experience relationships as unpredictable or unstable, which can make you feel anxious, sad, angry, or a mix of these emotions.*

Mistrust / Abuse

You anticipate that others will take advantage of you, hurt you, or let you down. As a result, you are always on your guard and find it difficult to truly trust anyone.*

Social Isolation / Alienation

You feel different from those around you and find it hard to feel like you fit in. This can make you feel isolated, lonely, and disconnected from the rest of the world.*

Defectiveness / Shame

You feel fundamentally flawed, unlovable, or less valuable than others. You carry a deep sense of shame and worry that if people truly get to know you, they will reject you.*

Impaired Autonomy and Performance

Failure

You feel like you are unable to achieve or perform as well as those around you. This creates a deep-seated belief that you are a failure and that you will always fall short compared to others.*

Vulnerability to Harm or Illness

You live with a constant sense of dread that something catastrophic is about to happen to you or your loved ones, such as a disaster, illness, or accident. This leaves you feeling anxious and powerless.*

Dependence / Incompetence

You feel unable to make daily decisions or properly take care of yourself without help. You rely heavily on others because you feel deeply dependent on them to manage your life*

Enmeshment / Undeveloped Self

You are overly entangled or emotionally dependent on one or more parent figures (or someone else close to you). This makes it difficult to develop your own unique identity, leaving you unsure of who you really are and what you truly want.*

Other-Directedness**Subjugation**

You suppress your own needs and desires, surrendering to the wishes of others in order to avoid conflict, anger, or punishment. *

Self-Sacrifice

You excessively focus on meeting the needs of others, especially those you perceive as vulnerable. You are prone to feeling deeply guilty whenever you try to prioritize your own well-being. *

Approval-Seeking / Recognition-Seeking

You go to great lengths to gain approval, admiration, or recognition from others. This comes at the expense of developing a true sense of yourself and respecting your own boundaries.*

Overvigilance and Inhibition**Negativity / Pessimism**

You tend to focus heavily on the negative aspects of life while minimizing or overlooking the positive things, constantly expecting that things will go wrong.*

Emotional Inhibition

You strictly control or suppress your spontaneous emotions and actions because you fear that expressing them will lead to shame, harm, or abandonment.*

Punitiveness

You believe that people, including yourself, should be harshly punished for making mistakes. You find it difficult to forgive errors and tend to be intolerant or angry when things go wrong.*

Unrelenting Standards / Hypercriticalness

You demand perfection from yourself and/or others, setting unrealistically high standards where nothing ever feels good enough. This constant pressure often comes at the expense of joy, relaxation, and healthy relationships.*

Impaired Limits

Entitlement / Grandiosity

You feel superior to those around you and believe you are entitled to special privileges or treatment, regardless of how it impacts others. This often leads to friction or conflict in your relationships.. *

Insufficient Self-Control / Self-Discipline

You struggle to regulate your impulses, emotions, and frustration. You find it hard to tolerate discomfort and often prioritize short-term gratification over your long-term goals.*

The schemas described above are sourced from the following references:

- Young, J. E., Klosko, J. S., & Weishaar, M. E. (2003). *Schema therapy: A practitioner's guide*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Schematherapie: Theorie, praktijk en onderzoek. In E. H. M. Eurelings-Bontekoe, R. Verheul, & W. M. Snellen (Eds.), *Handboek persoonlijkheidspathologie* (pp. 366–367). Houten: Bohn Stafleu van Loghum.

Space for Notes

Overview of Coping Styles and Modes

A mode is a temporary and shifting emotional state that you step into whenever one of your schemas is triggered.*

Child Modes

Child modes typically stem from unmet core needs during childhood and represent the intense, raw emotional experiences of a child.*

The Vulnerable Child

You feel anxious, sad, lonely, misunderstood, helpless, ashamed, and deeply vulnerable, carrying the expectation that no one will meet your needs. For many people, this is the absolute core mode.*

The Angry Child

You feel angry, furious, and impatient because your needs are being ignored or unmet. Beneath the surface, you may also feel abandoned, belittled, or betrayed. You express this frustration intensely, both verbally and non-verbally, much like a young child throwing a temper tantrum.*

The Enraged Child

You experience the same intense feelings as the Angry Child, but you completely lose control. This boiled-over rage manifests in hurtful, destructive, or damaging actions toward people or objects.*

The Impulsive Child

You demand the immediate gratification of your desires in a selfish manner. Because you struggle to restrain your impulses and emotions, you frequently find yourself doing reckless or unwise things.*

The Undisciplined Child

You have a very low tolerance for discomfort, boredom, or frustration. As a result, you find it incredibly difficult to motivate yourself to finish tedious or unpleasant tasks.*

Dysfunctional Coping Modes: Avoidance & Surrender

Detached Protector

You shield yourself from intense feelings because they feel dangerous or overwhelming. You withdraw, numb out, or suppress your emotions. You might also adopt a cynical attitude to keep others at a safe distance.*

Detached Self-Soother

You actively seek distractions to escape or dull painful emotions. This can manifest as excessive sleeping, substance use, overworking, gaming, or compulsive exercising.*

Compliant Surrender

You give in to the wishes and demands of others to avoid conflict or negative consequences. By burying your own needs, you hope to win approval and keep the peace through obedience.*

Dysfunctional Coping Modes: Overcompensation

Perfectionistic Overcontroller

You feel a powerful urge to make everything flawless. Driven by perfectionism, you perform rigid or repetitive checks to guarantee that absolutely no mistakes are made.*

Suspicious Overcontroller

You try to protect yourself from perceived threats by hyper-focusing on and controlling those around you. You constantly scan their behavior, question their intentions, and look for proof that validates your mistrust.*

Attention and Approval Seeker

You try to gain validation and attention from others in highly visible ways. This might involve exaggerated behavior, sexualizing interactions, or dramatic displays to ensure you are noticed*

Self-Aggrandizer

You project an air of superiority and believe that you deserve special privileges. You might boast, belittle others, or dismiss their feelings to artificially boost your own self-esteem.*

Bully and Attack

To protect yourself from being humiliated, controlled, or hurt, you proactively try to dominate or overpower others. You use bullying, intimidation, or verbal aggression to keep them on the defensive.*

Dysfunctional Parent Modes

Dysfunctional parent modes represent internalized, highly critical voices that stem from negative or demanding experiences with caregivers, parents, or authority figures during your childhood.*

The Demanding Parent

You believe you must hold yourself to strict rules and standards, forcing yourself to be excessively efficient. You constantly feel that what you do is never good enough and that you must try harder.*

The Punitive / Guilt-Inducing Parent

You are intolerant, aggressive, impatient, and unforgiving toward yourself. You feel deep shame for your mistakes and believe you should be harshly punished for them.*

Healthy and Functional Modes

The Healthy Adult

You hold balanced, positive, and nuanced perspectives about yourself and the world around you. You clearly recognize your own boundaries and core needs, and you know how to assert them effectively. This mode guides you to make choices that support your well-being, nurture healthy relationships, and engage in fulfilling activities.*

The Happy Child

You feel safe, loved, protected, and deeply valued, carrying a sense of trust in yourself and others. This mode allows you to easily connect with your spontaneous side, enabling you to be playful, lighthearted, and genuinely happy, just like a child.*

