EXTRA INFO Inner Child Work
(Items mentioned briefly in presentation)

HOW EFFECTIVE IS INNER CHILD WORK?

Many psychotherapeutic approaches invoke the concept of dividing the personality into parts or subsystems.

- ***Compassion-focused therapy, internal family systems therapy, voice dialogue, Gestalt therapy, ego-state therapy, and schema-focused therapy***, to name a few, divide the personality into separate structures or functional entities, also known as sub-selves or subpersonalities.
- Theories from Eric Berne, Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung are all often dismissed as pseudoscientific because they do not meet the **falsifiability criteria** [*more on next slide*] within Karl Popper's demarcation between science and pseudoscience.

HOW DOES INNER CHILD THERAPY WORK?

Many forms of therapy either directly incorporate inner-child work or utilize similar therapeutic processes to
explore how a person's inner child may affect their everyday lives.
CREATIVE ARTS THERAPIES: ART THERAPY, DRAMA THERAPY, PLAY THERAPY, MUSIC THERAPY and **SOMATIC THERAPIES**: HAKOMI THERAPY, SOMATIC EXPERIENCING (SE), EMOTIONAL FREEDOM TECHNIQUES (EFT) and **OTHERS**: ACCEPTANCE AND COMMITMENT THERAPY (ACT), DIALECTICAL BEHAVIOR THERAPY (DBT), COMPASSION-FOCUSED THERAPY, GESTALT THERAPY, EGO-STATE THERAPY, SCHEMA THERAPY, EYE MOVEMENT DESENSITIZATION AND REPROCESSING (EMDR), INTERNAL FAMILY SYSTEMS, TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS, PSYCHODYNAMIC THERAPY, EMOTION-FOCUSED THERAPY, HYPNOTHERAPY.

INNER CHILD WORK FROM VARIOUS PHILOSOPHIES

Understanding The Concepts Of The Inner Child In Psychotherapy via Various Philosophies

The Inner Child In Psychotherapy

The psychologist Carl Jung (1875-1961) is most commonly considered the first to have coined the term "inner child."

- This inner child personality is subordinate to the conscious mind yet influences this mind.
- The influence manifests negatively if the inner child is traumatized, wounded or anxious.

Carl Jung famously said, *"The first half of life is devoted to forming a healthy ego, the second half is going inward and letting go of it."*

The Inner Child In Eastern Philosophies

The Inner Child & Karma

- According to **the laws of karma**, the unfulfilled desires of our past life compel our rebirth in the
  present. This cycle also unfolds from moment to moment, as the unmet needs we are unaware of drive our present-moment actions.

The Inner Child & the Buddhist Perspective

- The Buddhist spiritual leader Thich Nhat Hanh has said, *"The cry we hear from deep in our hearts comes from the wounded child within."*

In Buddhist psychology, consciousness is divided into two parts: 1) Mind consciousness or active awareness, and 2) Root consciousness, similar to the subconsciousness where the inner child resides.

Biblical Philosophy of The Inner Child

- God's Word acknowledges the importance of childhood experience and simple joy. The Bible teaches the importance of properly nurturing and teaching children.
- That includes parenting them appropriately, avoiding mistreatment, and defending their innocence.
    - The long-term effects of bad parenting or childhood abuse are cautioned against in.
    - In that way, the Bible instructs us to avoid those things that negatively impact a child's future.

Enlightenment and the Inner Child

The **divine child**, the healed child inside us, is an archetype that's frequently enmeshed with descriptions of enlightened beings. This is the child that comes out to play once the reconciliation and healing process is complete.

- **Swami Amar Jyoti** (Hindu) describes "*the great souls as like innocent children, spontaneous, with simplicity and purity of heart, high beings appear childlike because they are unassuming, free and unattached to a static definition of self."*

WHAT IS THE INNER CHILD?

A more casual use of the phrase ***INNER CHILD*** refers to our natural desire for expression, carefree relaxation, joy, wonder, and enjoyment.

- When asked to ***get in touch with one's inner child***, we (counselors) may at first find someone scared, hiding, angry, or lashing out. Through conscious connection and compassionate self-parenting, clients allow this inner child to shine forth with all their innate wonder, curiosity, awe and potential.

True adulthood and maturity arises when individuals have fully acknowledged, accepted, and taken responsibility for their inner child, through loving and compassionate self-parenting.

UNSAFE RELATIONSHIPS and the INNER CHILD

Ways We Were Made to Feel Unsafe as Children

How many can you relate to?

- You were taught it's not OK to have your own opinions.
- You were punished when trying to speak up.
- You were discouraged from playing or having fun.
- You weren't allowed to be spontaneous.
- You weren't allowed to show strong emotions.
- You were shamed by your parents or family members.
- You were verbally criticized/abused on a regular basis.
- You were physically punished. (smacked, beaten)
- You were made to feel responsible for your parents and their level of happiness.
- You weren't given physical affection. (hugs, kisses, cuddles)

EARLY LEARNING

Learning

Steppingstones of Conclusion

- The steppingstones of conclusion explain why you often do not remember where your deepest beliefs come from.
- All other experiences have been interrelated to the original to support that originally formed belief

In-between observable experiences and actions taken, there are several steppingstones:

- You select specific information from what you observe
- You add your meaning to it
- You make your assumptions based on that meaning
- You draw conclusion
- You adopt a belief or support a current belief

ADVERSE CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES (ACE)

TYPICAL ACE QUESTIONS—*Prior to your 18th birthday:*

1. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Swear at you, insult you, put you down, or humiliate you? or Act in a way that made you afraid that you might be physically hurt?
2. Did a parent or other adult in the household often or very often... Push, grab, slap, or throw something at you? or Ever hit you so hard that you had marks or were injured?
3. Did an adult or person at least 5 years older than you ever... Touch or fondle you or have you touch their body in a sexual way? or Attempt or actually have oral, anal, or vaginal intercourse with you?
4. Did you often or very often feel that ... No one in your family loved you or thought you were important or special? or Your family didn't look out for each other, feel close to each other, or support each other?
5. Did you often or very often feel that ... You didn't have enough to eat, had to wear dirty clothes, and had no one to protect you? or Your parents were too drunk or high to take care of you or take you to the doctor if you needed it?
6. Were your parents ever separated or divorced?
7. Was your mother or stepmother: Often or very often pushed, grabbed, slapped, or had something thrown at her? or Sometimes, often, or very often kicked, bitten, hit with a fist, or hit with something hard? or Ever repeatedly hit over at least a few minutes or threatened with a gun or knife?
8. Did you live with anyone who was a problem drinker or alcoholic, or who used street drugs?
9. Was a household member depressed or mentally ill, or did a household member attempt
10. Did a household member go to prison?

SIGNS OF A WOUNDED CHILD

When clients are upset, they belittle themselves or speak to themselves in a very negative way.

1. **They have a deep fear of abandonment**
2. **Boundaries are either too weak or too rigid**
3. **They are ashamed of expressing emotions like sadness or anger**

"Shame can be experienced as such a negative, intense emotion of self-loathing that it can lead one to disown it, and, in the case of one who acts like a bully, give it away by evoking that emotion in others (…) When children are emotionally or physically abandoned, abused, or neglected they often take on the shame that belongs to the adult who left or hurt them by assuming that it's because they themselves are the "bad" one. Some children behave in ways that make them culpable for the shame that belongs to their parents." **Mary C. Lamia**

4. **They distrust everyone, including themselves:** Trust issues are a defense mechanism to try
   to avoid experiencing the same anxiety and heartache again, and they often stem from a
   wounded inner child that learned the hard way that people can't be trusted.
5. **Clients might be a people-pleaser and they avoid conflict at all costs OR they are conflictual.**

"As a child, I liked nothing more than feeling indispensable and being told I was a good and nice girl. This praise was incredibly important to me, as was making others happy. My own happiness did not come into the equation; I was happy because they were happy. I felt loved, safe, and appreciated, in the short term at least. As I got older my people-pleasing went into overdrive. I continually tried to gain people's approval, make them happy, and help them whenever needed" **KJ Hutchings**

6. You're prone to addiction

Addiction is often a symptom of underlying trauma that hasn't been processed. Rather than confronting issues and letting themselves feel pain, they numb their emotions to avoid *feeling* at all costs.

- <u>Question</u>: Are they addicted to the substance itself; or are they addicted to the relief and escapism it provides you?

RE: ADDICTION

<u>Have clients ask themself these questions</u>:

1. *What am I avoiding?*
2. *What am I suppressing?*
3. *What am I in denial about?*

Other INNER CHILD ARCHETYPES

WEBSITE:
http://innovativeliteracy.com/character-archetypes-joseph-campbell/

HERO CHARACTER ARCHETYPES: The hero is almost always the protagonist, the central character in the story. The audience wants the hero to succeed. The hero usually grows throughout the story to meet the challenges in the story. Examples: Luke Skywalker, Neo, Shrek, Mulan, Pinocchio, Batman, and Harry Potter.

MENTOR CHARACTER ARCHETYPES: The mentor is usually an old bearded man who assists the hero by offering advice, assistance, or with a gift. This character is older and wiser, but for some reason needs the hero to complete the adventure. Examples: Obi-Wan Kenobi, Morpheus, Dumbledore, and Gandalf

ALLY CHARACTER ARCHETYPES: The ally is the character who assists the hero on the adventure. The adventure might be too difficult for one person to overcome, and the ally helps the hero succeed by providing something the hero lacks, such as knowledge, a distraction, or just an extra pair of hands. Examples: Chewbacca, Hermione, Watson (Sherlock), and Robin (Batman)

HERALD CHARACTER ARCHETYPES: The Herald is the character, or something else such as an item or event, that signifies that something is about to change for the hero. This archetype appears at the beginning of the adventure, often delivering a message. Examples: R2D2 (with message from Princess Leia, messenger owl (from Hogwarts with a letter), and the letter to the ball in Cinderella

TRICKSTER CHARACTER ARCHETYPES: The trickster is the character that adds humor to the story. This character might also challenge the status quo or make the character reconsider their preconceptions or thoughts. Examples: Donkey (Shrek), Dobby (Harry Potter), and Mushu (Mulan)

SHAPESHIFTER CHARACTER ARCHETYPES: The shapeshifter is the character that changes. This might not be a physical change, but instead is one between ally and enemy. For example, the character might start off seemingly helping the character only to betray the hero. The shapeshifter might be thought an enemy at first only to be revealed to be an ally. Examples: Han Solo, Severus Snape, and Catwoman (Batman)

GUARDIAN (THRESHOLD GUARDIAN) CHARACTER ARCHETYPES: The Guardian is often the character who stops the progress of the hero on his or her adventure. The guardian might not be an actual character but might be an obstacle instead. The guardian might not be an enemy but is there to warn the hero that he or she should not go ahead because it is dangerous. The hero usually has to either trick, defeat, or find some other way around the guardian to continue on the adventure. Examples: Wall guard (Stardust), hall monitors, and Whomping Willow (Harry Potter)

SHADOW CHARACTER ARCHETYPES: The shadow is usually the villain in the story, although this might not necessarily be true. For example, if something exists to cause conflict or create a threat the hero has to overcome, it would be considered the shadow. Examples: Darth Vader, Voldemort, Sauron, and Dottie (the asteroid from Armageddon)

SHAME and INVALIDATION

SHAME/INVALIDATION AFFECT THE TEMPERAMENT TRAITS

Adaptability: The ease with which a child adapts to changes in his environment
Activity Level: The proportion of active periods to inactive ones
Approach/Withdrawal: The response to a new object or person
Distractibility: The degree to which extraneous stimuli affect behavior
Intensity of Reaction: The energy of response regardless of its quality or direction
Quality of Mood: The amount of friendly, pleasant, joyful behavior as contrasted with unpleasant, unfriendly behavior
Persistence/Attention Span: The amount of time devoted to an activity and the effect of distraction on the activity
Regularity/Rhythmicity: Regularity of hunger, excretion, sleep and wakefulness
Sensory Threshold: The intensity of stimuli required to evoke a discernible response

INJUSTICES and LOVE DEFICITS and TRAUMAS

Question client can ask themself regarding the pain and hurt in their life that is a result from injustices, traumas, and love deficits:

- *Have you ever truly paid attention to the little voice inside of you? The voice that reminds you of your younger self. No matter how old we grow, we carry our younger self within us. What is my inner child telling me?*
    - What is special about listening to your inner child is having the intention to speak to that part
      of yourself in a language that is emotionally-based and embodied, rather than through intellectual thoughts or words.
- *How has my natural enthusiasm towards life been compromised by events in my childhood? Have these events affected my curiosity and creativity?*
    - As children we are impressionable, and we readily absorb what our environment and our caretakers teach us and absorbing beliefs by how they treated us.

INNER CHILD THERAPY WORK & PROCESSES

Inner-child work involves personal awareness, acknowledgment, acceptance, and ultimately being a loving adult to, or *reparenting*, the inner child.

Some of the benefits of inner-child work include the following:

- Improved quality of life
- Reduced symptoms of depression
- Reduced anxiety
- Improved responses that are proportionate to the situation
- Improved functioning
- Integration of ego states
- Better interpersonal relationships
- Improved vitality
- Returned sense of child-like wonder
- Improved emotional regulation and maturity
- Greater authenticity and whole-person behavior

LIFE SKILLS THAT WERE NEVER TAUGHT (or learned)

WRITE YOUR INNER CHILD A LETTER

Write them a letter with everything you needed to hear as a child — whether it was love and nurturance or a safe space to express your emotions or opportunities to play and be a kid.

- It could go something like this, "*You deserve more chances to play with other kids your age instead of taking on responsibilities that the adults in your life would've been handling. Play is a vital space to grow, learn, and heal. I'm sorry you didn't get that chance*."

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

IMPORTANT QUESTIONS TO ASK CLIENTS:
What are some things you wanted a trusted adult to tell you at that age? What is something kind you can say about yourself? How can you forgive yourself for not knowing then what you know now? How can you release the shame of what you've been through? What wisdom can you learn from the wounded inner child?

Here are the summarized points that clients can do:

- Reflect on the timeline of their childhood
- Write a letter ***to*** their inner child
- Write a letter ***from*** their inner child
- Use loving and supportive affirmations
- Do an inner child visualization/meditation
- Help clients become their own protector and nurturer

PERSON-CENTERED THERAPY

Rogerian / Person-Centered Therapy

- In the 1940s, noted psychologist Carl Rogers developed a therapeutic method that became
  known as person-centered therapy or Rogerian therapy. This therapy approach, less commonly called client-centered therapy, emphasizes the abilities, experience, and wisdom of the person seeking therapy.
    - Rogers said: "*Individuals have within themselves vast resources for self-understanding and for altering their self-concepts, basic attitudes, and self-directed behavior; these resources can be tapped if a definable climate of facilitative psychological attitudes can be provided*."