

Mapping Parts

Goal - to develop a picture of different aspect/reactions/parts you have that are trying to manage a situation, or achieve a goal. This is an exercise to map out your internal system and struggles around situations.

1)

Start with whatever the issue is that you want to explore. Name the situation eg argument with my spouse, or had a panic attack in the mall, was criticized at work etc It can also be a goal eg I want to quit smoking, I want to have more relaxation in my life.

On a large piece of paper put this as the heading. You can use markers, crayons or oil pastels. Take a moment to get the words to best describe it.

Draw a shape to represent the self. The shape represents the 'you' that is open, calm, attentive, curious and compassionate to all aspects of you. Trust that it is there even if you are not so connected to it right now. This is the you that gives attention to what is going on inside. Eg people often relate to a heart shape but you can draw any shape that makes sense to you.

This shape is your container for all aspects of you that include reactions, repetitive ways of dealing with things, wounded parts, parts of us we relate to and parts/reactions we want to get rid of. This shape represents your desire to welcome all these aspects/parts/habits that make up how you manage your life.

2)

Take a moment to sit with the heading on your paper, as you think about this tune in to your inner system for a reaction to the statement or situation (a part that is triggered) notice how it feels in your body.

Draw a representation on the paper that represents this part, it can be words, or a symbolic image or a combination. Stay with it until it feels complete. Where does it go inside the self container. Tune in to where it feels right.

Explore this part by reflecting on these questions and what comes back. (How this part might answer)

- Describe this parts character.
- What is important to this part.
- How does it help you.
- Does it remind you of anyone in your family.
- Is it protecting another part.
- What emotions does this part carry.

Take it slowly. Tune in to this part. Write down any information you receive in relation to this part.

3)

When you have received as much from one part sit with that part, or go back to the heading, until you sense another reaction/part and notice how that one feels in your body.

Follow the same process for each reaction/part that comes up.

- Identify where on the map.
- Write down that information under the part
- Answer the questions for each.

NOTE You may notice reactions to the exercise that want to cut off or dull the experience You can also explore this as a part.

4)

When you have identified as many parts as you want to (you can revisit another time) take a moment to look at the map.

- Are there parts connected to other parts?
- Add information about how they are connected.

As you get a picture with as much information in relation to this situation sit again with this picture in front of you and ask if there is anything else that needs to be put on this map.

General questions.

As you look at your map reflect on which part would affect all the other parts if you could help it heal. (lynchpin part)

Which part would be the easiest to connect with and work with. (this might be the part to start with in therapy).

Are there parts on here that you identify with the most that feel like you. Are there parts reactions that you say that is not me, or wish to get rid of.

As you get more information you can identify what part you want to work on with your therapist.