IFS INTRODUCTION

In recent years, amidst a global wave of interest in mind-body exploration **Richard Schwartz's evidence-based Internal Family Systems (IFS) model** has gained worldwide momentumas a compassionate healing paradigm.

KEY CONCEPTS

1. IFS welcomes **diversity and multiplicity of our internal parts** as natural, not pathological.
IFS identifies **three types of parts** with systemic relationships between them.

2. IFS recognises that parts carry unresolved wounds/trauma and suffering, called ***burdens* in IFS**.
Burdened parts are stuck and unable to change on their own.

3. IFS sees a **Self-energy** within us all, an **undamaged resource of healing life force and healthy attachment**. Bringing Self into a *direct felt relationship with our burdened parts* is what makes IFS radically effective as a healing practice and a wellness lifestyle.

THE GOAL OF IFS

IFS leads us on a journey of attaching our parts to a secure compassionate wise Self, capable of leading our whole being in calm, creative, choiceful courageous ways.

For many, this may be the first opportunity parts have had to develop a secure attachment and start to experience the resulting states of increased wellness and harmony.

Learning about IFS often awakens a healing shift within us, as we **recognize** our parts and create a new meaning of our experience.

IFS says *You are not broken.*
Your wise Self is within you.
Your parts are not problems to fix.
They are messengers to understand.

THE THREE IFS PARTS

IFS identifies three types of parts and their systemic relationships that together create our internal family system, or inner 'village' of parts.

MANAGER PARTS

Managers are proactive **protectors** that work hard to **prevent pain** from recurring and keep the system **functioning** via **control**. Some are:

- **The Inner Critic** - authority, judge, compares/contrasts, self-policing.
- **The Perfectionist** - believes flawlessness will prevent failure.
- **The Caretaker** - focus on others to maintain safety and connection.
- **The Controller** - manages the environment to prevent triggers.
- **The Achiever** - uses work, success & status to avoid discomfort.

Managers feel responsible, tired, overworked and often frustrated. They gain relief and change once they trust enough in **Self** leadership.

FIREFIGHTER PARTS

Firefighters are *reactive protectors* that can react quickly to **distract**, **soothe or defend** when our **exiles** feel **pain** and emotional overwhelm.