

Early Maladaptive Schemas

Disconnection and Rejection

1. Abandonment/Instability

The expectation that significant others will inevitably abandon one. Others are unreliable and unpredictable in their support and connection.

2. Mistrust/Abuse

The conviction that others will hurt, abuse, humiliate, cheat, lie, manipulate, or take advantage of one. One is mistrustful and continuously on edge.

3. Emotional Deprivation

The expectation that others won't meet one's needs (for support, emotional nurturance, empathy and protection). One feels isolated and lonely.

4. Defectiveness/Shame

The belief that one is internally flawed, defective, bad, unwanted, inferior, or invalid in important respects. One feels ashamed and worthless.

5. Social Isolation/Alienation

The feeling that one is isolated from the rest of the world, different from other people, and/or not part of any group or community.

Impaired Autonomy and Performance

6. Dependence/Incompetence

The belief that one can't handle everyday responsibilities without considerable help from others. One feels anxious, extremely helpless and incapable of functioning independently.

7. Vulnerability to Harm or Illness

The exaggerated fear that imminent catastrophe will strike one at any time and that one is unable to prevent it.

8. Enmeshment/Undeveloped Self

The excessive emotional involvement and closeness with others at the expense of full individuation or normal social development.

9. Failure

The belief that one has failed, or will inevitably fail, or is fundamentally inadequate in areas of achievement. One feels stupid or untalented.

Impaired limits

10. Entitlement/Grandiosity

The belief that one is superior to others, entitled to special rights and privileges, or not bound by normal rules of social reciprocity. The core theme is power and being in control of situations or people.

11. Insufficient Self-Control/Self-Discipline

The pervasive difficulty or refusal to exercise sufficient self-control and frustration tolerance to achieve one's personal goals, or to restrain the excessive expression of one's emotions and impulses. One can't stand discomfort.

Other-Directedness

12. Subjugation

The excessive surrendering of control to others because one feels coerced, usually to avoid anger, retaliation, or abandonment. The two major forms are: subjugation of needs and subjugation of emotions.

13. Self-Sacrifice

The excessive focus on voluntarily meeting the needs of others in daily situations, at the expense of one's own gratification. Reasons: to prevent causing pain, to avoid guilt from feeling selfish, and to connect with needy people.

14. Approval-Seeking/Recognition-Seeking

The excessive emphasis on gaining approval, recognition, or attention from other people, at the expense of one's own development and needs.

Over-Vigilance and Inhibition

15. Negativity/Pessimism

The pervasive, lifelong focus on the negative aspects of life (e.g., pain, death, loss, disappointment, conflict, guilt, resentment, unsolved problems, potential mistakes, betrayal) while minimising the positive or optimistic aspects.

16. Emotional Inhibition

The excessive inhibition of spontaneous action, feeling, or communication to avoid disapproval by others, feelings of shame, or losing control of one's impulses.

17. Unrelenting standards/Hypercriticalness

The belief that one must strive to meet very high internalised standards of behaviour and performance, usually to avoid criticism. Presents as: (a) perfectionism, (b) rigid rules, or (c) preoccupation with time and efficiency.

Schema Modes

Child Modes

1. Vulnerable Child (abandoned, abused, humiliated)

Feels vulnerable, overwhelmed with painful feelings, such as anxiety, depression, grief or shame/humiliation.

2. Angry Child

Feels and expresses anger in an excessive way in response to perceived or real mistreatment, abandonment, humiliation or frustration; often feels being treated unjustly; acts like a child throwing a temper tantrum.

3. Enraged Child

Feels and acts for similar reasons as Angry Child, but loses control over aggression and attacks and destroys objects and humans; patients often report as if they went into a dissociative state ("everything went black").

4. Impulsive Child

Acts impulsively to get needs met; can be motivated by rebelliousness against maltreatment or against internalised parental modes.

5. Undisciplined Child

Acts impulsively to get needs met; can be motivated by rebelliousness against maltreatment or against internalised parental modes.

6. Lonely Child

Feels lonely and empty, as if no one can understand him, sooth or comfort him, or make contact with him.

Maladaptive Parent Modes

7. Punitive, Critical Parent

Internalised, critical, blaming or punishing parent voice; directs harsh criticism or punishment towards the self; induces feelings of shame or guilt.

8. Demanding Parent

Directs impossible high demands toward the self; pushes the self to do more, achieve more, to keep everything in order, to strive for high status, to put others' needs before one's own; never be satisfied with oneself.

Avoidant and Surrendering Coping Styles

9. Detached Protector

Uses emotional detachment to protect himself from painful feelings; is unaware of his feelings, feels "nothing", appears emotionally distant, flat, or robotic; avoids getting close to other people.

10. Detached Self-Soother/Self-Stimulator

Uses repetitive, "addictive", compulsive or self-stimulating behaviours to calm and soothe himself; uses pleasurable or exciting sensations to distance himself from painful feelings.

11. Angry Protector

Uses a "wall of anger" to protect himself from others who are perceived as threatening; keeps others at a safe distance through displays of anger; this anger is more controlled than in Angry Child Mode.

12. Complaining Protector

Complains, whines, and demands in a victimised, dissatisfied manner; expresses his dissatisfaction in an off-putting manner that masks his real feelings and needs.

13. Compliant Surrenderer

Gives in to the real or perceived demands or expectations of other people in an anxious attempt to avoid pain or to get his needs met; anxiously surrenders to the demands of others who are perceived as more powerful than himself.

Overcompensatory Modes

14. Self-Aggrandiser

Feels superior, special, or powerful, and entitled to special rights; looks down on others; sees the world in terms of "top dog" and "bottom dog"; shows off or acts in a self-important or self-aggrandising manner; concerned about appearances rather than feelings or real contacts with others.

15. Bully and Attack Mode

Uses threats, intimidation, aggression, or coercion, to get what he wants, including retaliation against others or asserting one's dominant position; feels a sense of sadistic pleasure in attacking others.

16. Conning and Manipulative Mode

Cons, lies or manipulates in a manner designed to achieve a specific goal, which either involves victimising others or escaping punishment.

17. Predator Mode

Focuses on eliminating a threat, rival, obstacle, or enemy in a cold, ruthless and calculating manner.

18. Over-Controller Mode (paranoid or obsessive-compulsive)

Attempts to protect himself from a perceived or real threat by focusing attention, ruminating, and exercising extreme control. The Obsessive type uses order, repetition or rituals. The Paranoid type attempts to locate and uncover a hidden (perceived) threat.