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Initial Session Questions and Set Up

Purpose:

Increased social isolation and atomization resulting from the digitalization of work and personal interactions as well as the effect of the COVID 19 epidemic have left many individuals without opportunities to socialize at various stages of development. The group is for persons with average or above social intelligence and awareness experiencing social anxiety. Membership is prioritized for those with limited opportunities for social interaction in daily routine. The purpose of the group is to reduce social anxiety and build social skills by practicing social interactions with a cohort.

Clients with significant cognitive, social, or behavior disorders would be contraindicated. Clients with severe trauma, anxiety or dissociative disorders that have not been stabilized with meds or therapy are contraindicated. As long as patients have made progress with their primary therapist and no longer need or are in maintenance therapy, then they are appropriate for the group. The age range preferred is 22-32, although exceptions can be made in certain circumstances.

Rules and explanation:

This information should be covered and fielded for questions in the first session.

1. This is not a support or traditional psychotherapy group. This is a peer group designed to facilitate social skills development, reduce isolation, increase interaction and foster connection.
2. Because the purpose of the group is to increase social cohesion of group members not therapy or support, the clinician for the group may change or the group may be co hosted in certain situations.
3. All group members are encouraged to share whatever contact information that they are comfortable with in the first session. Because the purpose of the group is to build social cohesion, group members socializing outside of the group is encouraged! To facilitate the purpose of the group we ask that his interaction be (1) in person as often as possible and (2) include an invitation to all group members. Anyone can set up a social event outside of the group! Just remember to invite everyone.
4. Members may leave the group at any time if they feel that it is not needed or not helpful. We ask that you communicate this in a clear and timely way if this is your intention.
5. Group leaders are not the participants' therapists. Please keep interactions during group time. If group members need extra support please refer them either to the group or participants' individual therapists.
6. This group is not designed to replace ongoing therapy. Please continue treatment with an individual therapist.
7. Because the goal of the group is social interaction the group can choose to continue meeting without the clinician after termination of group.
8. It is fine to talk with friends about your work in the group, but please respect the reasonable confidentiality of the other group members. This includes after the termination of the group.

The group leader may need to remind participants of these rules if digital interactions are becoming the majority of communication outside of the group or if indications are given that cliques or factions develop.

Each session begins with a “highs and lows” where each group member shares the highest and lowest point of the week. This may lead to naturalistic discussion where a theme for the week develops organically. In these cases curriculum may not be needed.

After reviewing the rules, these are good discussion questions to guide the first and second sessions.

1. What do you want to get out of the group?
2. What is family? What does it mean to be alone? What does connection mean to you? What way do you want to be connected or less alone?
3. As a young adult one of our primary tasks in development is to learn how to make a family away from our own families and build human connection. What have the hardest parts of this phase of your life been?
4. What parts of combating loneliness or building connection feel hopeless?

5. One of the primary tasks of young adulthood is to feel secure in our individuality and also experience our shared humanity. Realizing that we are unique and different while learning to live in community is hard. What are some thoughts that come to mind when you sit with the tension of being a separate individual from others and also needing relationships and community to be whole?

Communication

This is a good first exercise to let the group discuss communication and communication strategies and style.

1. How would you describe the way that you communicate with others? Are you more Passive, avoidant, assertive, or aggressive? What other adjectives describe how you communicate?
2. Where are you comfortable with communication and where does it scare you?
3. What places in life do you avoid communicating where you should?
4. What is passive communication is what you communicate without speaking? Where do you communicate passively in life?
5. What is the difference between being assertive and being aggressive? Do you get accused of being aggressive? Do you think you are?
6. Do you find that anyone who thinks that you, everyone who accuses you of being aggressive is being reasonable? Are some people threatened when you are being reasonable? What do you think is happening in communication there?
7. Who do you find is most difficult to communicate with? Who do you have repeated disagreements with?

Communication Part Two

1. Who do you find is most difficult to communicate with? Who do you have repeated disagreements with?
2. Now that we have talked about who we fight with repeatedly, try something harder. Do you ever find yourself having the SAME fight with DIFFERENT people? Is there a common thread in the fights that you have? Think about the things that you can't stand or that set you off.

3. Eric Berne observed that conflict is often not motivated by what the participants claim they want. Often it is caused by people trying to GAIN or AVOID something.

Things people Pursue:

Respect, to be right, to feel victorious, to have power, to feel smart, to feel superior, to reinforce their position or authority, to have others obey, to have money, to have independence or freedom, to be accepted, to be heard, to be accepted

Thing people avoid:

Feeling foolish, feeling shameful, losing money/possessions/time, losing relationships, losing authority, losing control, losing social status, being rejected, making someone angry

4. What are you seeking to gain or avoid in fights?
5. What do you think the other part in your fights wants?
6. Eric Berne pointed out two factors that are often present in repeated negative communication are that people are either reenacting action on childish emotion or reenacting a parental lesson or rule an authority figure taught them.

Being an adult is about acting on what you have learned is effective and authentic. It is unproductive to be parental to others or to reenact childish emotional wounds.

7. How do you see this dynamic in your life? Where are you failing to be an adult?

[Continued reading on Eric Berne and Transactional Analysis.](#)

Anxiety and Protective Parts Program

“For West is where we all plan to go some day. It is where you go when the land gives out and the old-field pines encroach. It is where you go when you get the letter saying: Flee, all is discovered. It is where you go when you look down at the blade in your hand and the blood on it. It is where you go when you are told that you are a bubble on the tide of empire. It is where you go when you hear that thar's gold in them-thar hills. It is where you go to grow up with the country. It is where you go to spend your old age. Or it is just where you go.”

— Robert Penn Warren, *All the King's Men*

Reading:

Unrecognized or undealt with anxiety can show up in our life as many different kinds of symptoms: avoidance, addiction, obsession, amotivation, depression, insomnia, dissociation, panic attacks,

How does anxiety show up in your life?

What are the things in life that make you feel the most anxious? What situations and people do you have the most anxiety around?

How do you notice that you are feeling anxiety? How does it change your posture, muscle tension and body energy?

How does anxiety change your behavior, mood and self image?

In what situations do you feel least like yourself?

What moments in life can you least relate to your own behavior?

Often the way our anxiety manifests in life can be a protective part that protects us from a bigger fear or problem. For example, I might get panic attacks socially so that I don't have to face the larger fear that I will be rejected when I engage socially. I might avoid applying for work so I don't have to face the fear of failure.

What are the larger fears or unresolved tensions that your anxiety protects you from?

The Shadow Program

“Perhaps all the dragons in our lives are princesses who are only waiting to see us act, just once, with beauty and courage. Perhaps everything that frightens us is, in its deepest essence, something helpless that wants our love.”

— Rainer Maria Rilke, Letters to a Young Poet

In Jungian psychology the shadow is all the parts of ourselves that we do not want to accept or deal with. It can contain trauma and shame, but it can also contain things that contradict our ego or self image. Many of these parts are the “opposite” or paradoxical to the way we see ourselves.

What are the things that are hard for you to think about?

What are the parts of yourself that you feel the least in touch with or the most overwhelmed by?

When are the times that you felt the most out of control?

Reading:

Mapping and understanding the shadow is not something that can be accomplished quickly or in one session of a group. However, there are several ways that we can find the shadow quickly.

We often project and attack the parts of self that we are out of touch with in our self image. For example: I may view myself as an entrepreneur, but I know unconsciously that my father gave me the money to start my career. In this case I might attack other entrepreneurs who boast about benefiting from public grants or other's largesse.

One of the ways that it is easiest to find the shadow is in the things that we have the strongest emotional reaction to or the things that get the most under our skin. When we are out of touch with something internally we obsess about it internally. We often attack it or, paradoxically, latch to it.

What kinds of people most frustrate you? In what situations are you the most obsessive and angry?

The Shadow is always a paradox. It is always two extreme "opposite" parts of the self that need to be integrated. For example a part of me that is afraid of being judged might ALSO judge everyone.

Can you find these patterns in your friends or family?

Can you see these patterns in your own life?

At the end of this program, assign the assignment for part 2.

Drawing The Shadow; Shadow Program Part 2

But I had forgotten to mention an upland
Of wind-tortured stone white in darkness, and tall, but when
No wind, mist gathers, and once on the Sarré at midnight,
I watched the sheep huddling. Their eyes
Stared into nothingness. In that mist-diffused light their eyes
Were stupid and round like the eyes of fat fish in muddy water,
Or of a scholar who has lost faith in his calling.

Their jaws did not move. Shreds
Of dry grass, gray in the gray mist-light, hung
From the side of a jaw, unmoving.

You would think that nothing would ever again happen.

That may be a way to love God.

-Robert Penn Warren, excerpt from A Way to Love God

Assignment:

Before the next session take a piece of paper and draw a large blank circle on it. Your task is to fill this circle up with an artistic representation of your shadow before the next session. You can paint or draw, but you can do lots of other things to. You could cut out pictures, rip the circle into pieces, or stab a pencil through the page. Anything that you want to create is ok. Just be sure that you.

- 1.) Listen to the shadow when you draw. Contact all the things about you that make you uncomfortable or that make you feel overwhelmed.
- 2.) Make sure that what you bring in is something that you are comfortable sharing.

“Closer examination of the dark characteristics – that is, the inferiorities constituting the shadow – reveals that they have an emotional nature, a kind of autonomy, and accordingly an obsessive or, better, possessive quality.” (Carl Jung)

Each person shares their shadow with the group and explains their reasoning. Field questions after each person presents but make sure there is time for everyone.

Questions for after everyone presents:

Did you realize anything about your shadow while completing the exercise?

Did you realize anything new after watching the group present?

What are some current dynamics in technology, politics and social norms that contribute to your shadow.

Is there a theme in the group's shadow?

Drawing the Shadow Part 3

Instructions:

If the drawing the shadow program is a hit, this can be assigned as the next group activity or as an individual follow up activity. For a printable worksheet click [here](#).

Shadow Work Art Activity

The shadow is all of the parts of self that scare us and that we repress. The shadow is something that we can go years, or even a lifetime, without confronting. We cannot find the shadow with our intellectual or logical mind. In fact we often avoid the shadow because we know intellectually that it is untrue or illogical.

The shadow is an overwhelming unprocessed emotion in the subcortical brain. It may be the result of trauma. Sometimes the shadow is the result of painful experiences in life, or judgements from our family or culture and even our genetics and epigenetics. We might know that we are safe, intellectual but our shadow still feels terrified of losing control, being abandoned, being judged or being inferior. The shadow is responsible for the repetitive, obsessive and neurotic behavior that we know intellectually is illogical but feel powerless to stop.

Our shadow can be a million different things with an infinite amount of flavors. Confronting the shadow can take years, but starting to map the shadow can take only a few minutes. The shadow lies primarily in the part of the brain responsible for our intuition, emotional and somatic awareness. Because of this it is easier to flesh the shadow out through our artistic expression and feeling function. Creativity is a highly effective way to contact the shadow. If you find yourself thinking about the instructions instead of feeling them in your body and emotional space then get out of your head, and come back to the body.

Map the Shadow

Instructions: Find the places in life that are most overwhelming and upsetting to you. Think about pain, loss, fear, anger and abandonment. What are the conditions that make you feel the most out of control?

Don't think about the feeling, but try and feel it?

What changes in your body when you feel the overwhelming emotion.

Do you feel pressure, weight, temperature, sensation, fidgets, tension, or another sensation physically. Write down what you feel.

Head:

Hands:

Feet:

Chest:

Stomach:

When you sit with the physical response see if it feels like it has a certain age?

Does it feel 16, 8, or 2 years old? Does it feel older than you?

Flesh Out The Properties

Think of idea words that come up when you map the shadow.

Does it feel big, deep, ancient, evil, dark, immature, wild or something else?

Sit with the feelings that you unearth and see if you get a sense of

Age:

Color:

Texture:

Images:

Symbols:

Locations:

Find Your Medium

Take the ideas that you are uncovering in your shadow and try to get them out creatively. You can draw, write, paint, sculpt, compose music or make digital art.

Sitting with these feelings can leave you feeling raw but it will heighten your creativity. You may need to try multiple new mediums, but you may be surprised by what you can create.

Sometimes processing the shadow creatively can make you feel like the art is autonomous or automatic.

Self Esteem Program

*It's not the story though, not the friend
leaning toward you, saying "And then I realized—,"
which is the part of stories one never quite believes.
I had the idea that the world's so full of pain
it must sometimes make a kind of singing.
And that the sequence helps, as much as order helps—
First an ego, and then pain, and then the singing.*

- Excerpt from Robert Haas, Faint Music

What does it mean to love yourself?

What does it mean to have compassion for yourself?

Do you remember a time in life where you felt comfortable with content with your identity?

What is it that makes you valuable as a person?

What do you value in others?

What kinds of things attract you to other people or make you feel safe?

What are the things that bother you about other people or make you feel alone?

What are the parts of you that you feel the most unresolved in or make you the most uncomfortable?

How do these parts of you make it difficult to love and accept who you are?

Relationships Program

Instructions: Because this program contains information that continues on concepts explained in the shadow program, it is recommended to do the shadow program first.

Reading:

Alfred Adler said that all problems in psychology are fundamentally problems with the way people relate to one another. Adler continued that all psychological problems can be traced to patients not knowing how to do one of two things.

1. Help other people.
2. Wait till they ask for help.

On its face this seems like an oversimplification. Upon a second glance there is a profound truth to this concept. Most problems ARE caused by either our failure to have empathy or our failure to respect the autonomy of others.

What have been the most difficult relationships in your life?

Are there patterns in your relationships that you repeat?

What are the patterns in relationships that you want to change?

Often we project our shadow in relationships. We reach for externally the things that we are out of touch with internally. For example, someone who is a “goodie goodie” might date people with “bad dude” or irreverent streak.

Is there a pattern in the friends or romantic partners that you find that is opposite of your self image?

Reading:

Alfred Adler said that we cannot have healthy or authentic relationships until we develop the “courage to be disliked”. He meant that we cannot really be ourselves until we are free from the fear of others' judgment.

Where are you limiting your ability to be authentic based on fear?

Where do you feel trapped in your relationships with others?

What is it that you would want in the ideal relationship?

Family Discussion

This discussion is meant to encourage awareness of roles and aspects of identity

Often we learn what makes us lovable from the parent of the same sex, but learn how to live in the word from the parent of the same sex.

Can you see this dynamic in your life?

What makes you loveable? What do you feel the purpose of your life is?

How have you learned to be in the world? What are your coping skills? What are your personality attributes?

What are the ways you are similar to your mother?

What are the ways you are similar to your father?

Sometimes we orient our lives around achieving what we think we need, what we were taught to want or what we think others in our lives want.

List some of the ways that you have done this in the first part of your life?

What are the things that you thought you wanted or needed? What are the things that you thought you were poorer for not having. What are the things that you strove hardest to build or acquire?

What were you taught to want:

What were you told to need:

What did you think others in your life needed:

Family Discussion Part Two

Think about each stage of life that we go through in life.

Birth, Infancy, Childhood, Young Adulthood, Adulthood/Parenthood, Later Life, and Old Age.
Where was your Mother, Father, or caregiver stuck in their own development?

Think about who they were, and the things they wanted for you.

Think about the things they taught you.

Where your parents stop growing?

What did they want or need you to be?

Were your parents able to let you be your own person, separate from their needs or plans for you?

Jung said that the unlived life of the parent is the largest force that acts on the child. How did the things your parents wanted as children affect your development?

Death is often the last lesson we teach our children. Did/have your parents come to terms with the end of their life?

Were you raised to believe death was a scary and overwhelming thing, or another phase of life. Who are you? What is it in you that needs to grow?

The last time you were doing exactly what you knew you were supposed to be doing, what was it?

When were you last happy and at peace?

What in your current life is furthering your growth, and what in your current life is limiting you?

What are your own needs for your own growth you have been ignoring?

It is your job to bring new life into this world. This can be through art, family, community, and many other things. Each person is called to create something beautiful with their life. What are you bringing now? What do you want to bring?

Are you living your life or someone else's?

Labyrinth Program

We all have places that we are afraid to go. In our own head in our own heart in our soul.

Identity Exercise

This exercise is adapted from an activity that Yalom describes in *Existential Psychotherapy*.

Reading:

Barry Lyndon Irish is a 1985 epic film about an Irish grifter trying to become a member of the English aristocracy. At the end of the film the following text is shown:

"It was in the reign of George III that the aforesaid personages lived and quarreled; good or bad, handsome or ugly, rich or poor, they are all equal now."

Instructions:

Each member of the group is given a group of 3-5 slips of paper. The group members are instructed to write on each card the parts of themselves that are the most important aspect of who they are. One by one the group members are instructed to set the cards down on the table and explain who they are WITHOUT that part of them. DON'T reveal this at the beginning of the exercises. Feedback from the group is encouraged to help members see where they are.

Group members are encouraged to call each other out when they begin to relate to a part of self they have previously set down. For example, if *member A* has already set down a card that says "mom" then *member A* should be reminded of that if she begins to talk maternally or speak about her children after setting down the card.

What parts on the cards are the hardest to think about yourself without?

Notice how your body and physicality changes when you try to separate yourself from the parts on the card.

Why is it hard to think about who you are without the things listed on the card?

Does "feeling" who you are without these pieces of yourself change your self image?

Transitions and Thin Places

Reading:

In Ancient Celtic Ireland, it was believed that there were places where the material world became "thinner". In these spaces human time lost meaning. Time ceased to matter and merged with all the times of the past. All those who entered there were put into communion with something larger than themselves. The ancient Celts called these places "thin places".

It was believed that these thin places were the entrances and exits for faerie, piskies, giants, gnomes and other creatures coming and going into our world. This idea that there was a prodigious divinity present within the world waiting in certain places to burst through and put us into communion with the divine and fantastic. A thin space does not have to be a geographic point on a map, but can be an activity, group of people, an object, or a habit that you find centers you. Thin places open your life to your deep self and new perspectives.

What are the places that you have felt most safe in your life?

Where have you felt most whole?

What is the last time that you knew exactly who you were?

Reading:

The word "liminal" comes from the Latin word "limen," which means threshold. To be in a liminal space means to be on the precipice of something new but not quite there yet. You can be in a liminal space physically, emotionally, or metaphorically. Being in a liminal space can be incredibly uncomfortable for most people.

In what ways is this point in your life "liminal"? What do you feel that you are on the verge of? What things do you feel you are in between?

What is the project of your life that you are building?

You do not have to know the end result of the project. Instead discuss the flavor, texture or rhythm of your life goal.

What within you needs to die so the rest of me can live?

Existentialism vs. Mysticism Program

“When we were only several hundred-thousand years old, we built stone circles, water clocks. Later, someone forged an iron spring, set clockwork runnings, imagined grid-lines on a globe. Cathedrals are like machines to finding the soul; bells of clock towers stitch the sleeper’s dreams together, you see; so we’ve always been on our way to this new place—that is no place, really— but it is real. It’s our nature to represent: we’re the animal that represents, the sole and only maker of maps. And if our weakness has been to confuse the bright and bloody colors of our calendars with the true weather of days, and the parchment’s territory of our maps with the land spread out before us—never mind. We have always been on our way to this new place—that is no place, really— but it is real.”

- Memory Palace by William Gibson

Existentialism is the belief that there is no one meaning for life. That mankind develops their own reason for existence.

Mysticism is the belief that mankind can only know ultimate truth, or the divine, through a journey inward to know the self.

Had you ever heard of these terms or encountered these ideas?

What are your feelings about these beliefs?

Existentialism and Mysticism are often seen as philosophies that are at odds with one another? Existentialists are characterized as believing that there is *no* universal truth. Mystics are characterized as believing that there *is* a universal truth that we can find if we have the courage to complete an inward journey.

Do you believe these beliefs are at odds? Which belief do you subscribe to?

How are these things in tension in your life Existentialism and Mysticism.

Can you have a sense of spirituality without organized religion?

Is there a way that there can be a universal journey that makes us *fundamentally the same* while we are also each on a unique path that makes us *fundamentally different*?

What are the things about humanity that are universal and what are the characteristics of humanity that are unique to each person?

MBTI Personality Lesson

Keirsey and Bate’s *Please Understand Me*, first published in 1978, sold nearly 2 million copies in its first 20 years, becoming a perennial best seller all over the world. Advertised only by word of mouth, the book became a favorite training and counseling guide in many institutions --

government, church, business -- and colleges across the nation adopted it as an auxiliary text in a dozen different departments. Why? Perhaps it was the user-friendly way that Please Understand Me helped people find their personality style. Perhaps it was the simple accuracy of Keirsey's portraits of temperament and character types. Or perhaps it was the book's essential message: that members of families and institutions are OK, even though they are fundamentally different from each other, and that they would all do well to appreciate their differences and give up trying to change others into copies of themselves.

You can find a copy of The Please Understand Me 2 [here](#).

Instructions: This curriculum requires a little bit of prep work and is better suited to later on in group formation. Assign the Keirsey temperament sorter to participants at the end of a session. Have group members send the results to the group leader a few days before the session. The group member should print the personality result of each member and give them their results at the beginning of the group. The group members should each read their MBTI Keirsey Personality description to the group. Afterward everyone discusses their feelings about the text. Where do you agree or disagree with the results?

What line of the description do you most/least agree with?

What are the things about your personality that you think this description leaves out?

If there is time let the group critique or challenge one another's interpretation of their descriptions.

Jungian Archetypes Discussion

This activity is better assigned further into sessions when the group has gotten a chance to get to know each other. The worksheet should be printed or emailed to members before the session begins so they can read and complete the assignment before the session. The archetypes are complex metaphors for where we are comfortable exercising control or authority and how we communicate. They can lead to some interesting discussion but there are discussion questions if they are needed. [Here is a printable version of the curriculum](#).

Voice Dialogue Discussion

Have a different member of the group read each of the sub personalities and discussion might ensue naturally. If they are needed there are discussion questions to help the conversation along.

The Pusher

The Pusher is the energy pattern behind everything that we accomplish. No matter what we have done it will tell us that we have not done enough. Its job is to move us on to the next thing, no matter what that is. Clean your room, fix the house, stop at the gym, send one more email, stay up for one last Netflix episode.

We acquire the pusher when we are in middle school. At this time we are becoming a social, sexual, academic, and early adult all at once. We cannot feel our overwhelming emotions at this time. We learn to turn it off and obsessively focus on one thing to survive.

The Inner Critic

The Inner Critic is the energy pattern that finds fault with all of who we are and what we do. After you leave a party the Inner Critic will tell you how stupid everything you said was and how awkward you were. The Inner Critic will often tell you that you do not deserve compliments or have not accomplished enough in life. Learning to turn the Inner Critic into an ally is an important part of reducing anxiety and depression. The Inner Critic will often criticize your performance in religious, professional, social, or familial roles.

We acquire the inner critic when we are beginning to learn self discipline around the time that we potty train. During this time we are learning that we have to forgo feeling good right now for a better reward later. If we feel shamed and judged our inner critic can learn that we should always feel bad.

The Pleaser

The Pleaser is the energy pattern that cannot stand to be disliked by anyone for any reason or for any amount of time. In very empathetic individuals The Pleaser sometimes

becomes the caregiver and tries to anticipate everyone else's needs and meet them. Albert Ellis said that it was "pathological to want to be liked by everyone all the time." The Pleaser is the part of our personality that cannot stand to be disliked, even when we need to confront someone, challenge authority, stick up for ourselves, or realize our life is not what we want it to be. These are things we need to be able to do to be healthy humans.

We acquire The Pleaser when we are learning what makes us lovable in our families and in our early social groups. If we are made to feel abandoned or isolated as children we can fear being alone and lose control of our Pleaser as adults.

The Vulnerable Child

The Vulnerable Child is the energy pattern in touch with all of our needs and all of our fear and vulnerability. It wants to be honest about how much it needs to be cared for. The Vulnerable Child is the first sub personality that we develop. We learn to turn it off in the beginning of our adolescence and often must learn to turn it back on in therapy as adults.

Potential Discussion Questions

What does your pusher want you to do to keep moving? Think of some of the things that you do compulsively so that you don't slow down. Think of the things that you "can't stop" doing.

Usually when our Pusher is overly active we are avoiding thinking about or feeling something. What is your Pusher avoiding feeling? What do you not like to feel?

If you have a hard time figuring out what your Pusher is avoiding the next time you want to indulge it, don't do what it wants. Don't have one more bite, one more drink, take one more sales call. See how you feel when you don't indulge your Pusher.

Where in your life is the Pusher helping you? Where is it hurting you?

What does your Inner Critic sound like? What kinds of criticism does it make?

What does your Inner Critic sound like? Often when we have a critical parent or caregiver

our Inner Critic will resemble the way that they spoke to us. The Inner Critic will often sound like a critical parent in its tone but will criticize us about failing to live up to our own values. Where do you notice this energy pattern in your life?

Does your Inner Critic sound like a parent, sibling, teacher, or someone that you know?

An overly identified Inner Critic can be exhausting. Where in your life is the Inner Critic helping you? Where is it hurting you? Where do you need to ignore it?

How in touch are you with your Vulnerable Child? Are you comfortable feeling sad and hurt, or are you out of touch with these emotions?

In what places or parts of your life do you feel safe enough to be in touch with asking others for help or admitting that you aren't ok?

Do you avoid confrontation? In what parts of your life and why?

What are you afraid will happen if someone dislikes you? What happened when you were disliked before?

What are the parts of yourself that you avoid developing by getting approval from other people?

Jungian Archetypes Worksheet



The Warrior



The Magician



The King



The Queen



The Child



The Lover

Instructions: Read the description of each archetype and place an X on the line below each one to indicate how strongly you are identified with it. An X to the extreme left shows under identification, while an X on the far right represents over identification. An X placed in the middle of the line indicates a healthy identification and conscious awareness of that personality construct.

The Warrior

The Warrior archetype allows us to harness our own sense of personal power to face fear and assert our own energy against the plans of others and the plans of the universe. The Warrior allows us to enforce boundaries securely between ourselves and others. It lets us carve out our

own sense of personal space and make clear to others what is allowed and what is not. Mankind has had a warrior class as long as there has been civilization. We must all at some point in life learn to face our fears and accomplish something scary. The psychologist Albert Ellis was fond of saying that it was “pathological to want to be liked by everyone all the time”. He knew wisely that we must all learn to face conflict and navigate disagreements with others to remain true to ourselves and our journey.

The Warrior is our actualized capacity for self expansion, personality development and discovery. We cannot discover who we are meant to be unless we are brave enough to face the unknown and know we deserve to grow. The Warrior is our capability to develop and use our talents for personal and professional achievement, but the Warrior does not exercise leadership or hold authority. The Warrior is not power within systems, only our sense of personal power and competency. The Warrior is our own success within a system of many other Warriors. The Warrior is our own unique abilities harnessed to make ourselves succeed.

Each of the archetypes deals with some form of fundamental anxiety, and the anxiety that the warrior assuages is meaninglessness in the face of chaos. The enemy of the warrior is chaos. When chaos surrounds us we feel like we are not special, like there is no plan, like we do not matter. The Warrior allows us to impose our will into the void and create meaning from scratch. When we feel like life has no purpose, it is our Warrior energy that lets us create purpose. While this function of the Warrior is not a bad thing when it becomes overindulged it becomes the shadow function of tribalism.

While the Warrior lets us strike back at chaos when it threatens our meaning and significance it can also lead us to turn on other people who are not like us. The overidentified Warrior sees other *people* as chaos when they act contra its own plans and meaning. Shadow political and religious leaders often call us to over identify with the Warrior when they tell us to defend our own tribe against attacks from those who are different and would take away what is ours. The Warrior is what allows us to reclaim our purpose and significance when the world threatens to take these things away from us but when overindulged it robs others of these things.

Patients who are under identified with the Warrior will feel listless, purposeless, and incapable. These patients will often have had their Warrior taken away in an abusive relationship or in their families of origin where they were not allowed to assert themselves. Often they will present to therapy with a general sense of anxiety, believing they lack the power to be assertive, enforce boundaries or change their current reality when it distresses them. Losing touch with the Warrior leads a person to be fearful and conflict avoidant yet be prone to bouts of rage. Without the Warrior we can not act on our anger and do not notice it until it takes us over.

Over identification with the Warrior means that we see every interaction as a challenge, every challenge a fight with a winner and a loser. When the only tool you have is a hammer, every problem is a nail; the old saying goes. If you are over identified as a Warrior you will not be able to back down from any confrontation. Diplomacy is never an option to the Warrior. The Warrior is not an archetype that is comfortable with accepting humility or the mystery. The warrior is only

comfortable with certainty, but as adults we must learn to be comfortable with the mystery of life. An overidentified warrior archetype might benefit the occasional type-a personality in the business world but most often at the expense of personality development, healthy relationships, and a well rounded existence.

The Warrior is the mask that we wear when we want to see ourselves as the hero. Patients under identified with the Warrior may have lost the ability to see themselves as the hero, where patients over identified with the Warrior may not be able to take off the mask of the hero they aspire to be. The Warrior archetype requires that life and development has taught us to have faith in ourselves and a self image that allows us to achieve our dreams. Many patients with damage in childhood do not know that they have a right to their own hero's journey or deserve self discovery. Oftentimes therapy with traumatized patients will require a therapist to teach patients how to put on the warrior mask.

Under Identification with the Warrior is a disowning of one's powerful self and ability to act heroically or make meaning. The warrior is at its base an ability to make meaning out of life. If we have disowned the warrior we either see life as meaningless or rely on others to make it for us as followers. Oftentimes patients who have learned that anger is not allowed will try and disown the warrior and "play zen" to avoid the anxiety that conflict causes for them. These patients will often act as though conflict is beneath them, when in truth judging or disagreeing with others terrifies them.

The Magician

The Magician is intuition, education, and reflexes. In myth and legend the Magician appears in stories not to be the hero, but to aid the hero on their quest. In these stories the Magician can also take the form of a witch, enchanter, or shaman. The Magician is the most esoteric part of our schooling that filled us with the most passion. The Magician is a sense of personal power and accomplishment, but not power gained through conflict like the Warrior. Power for the Magician comes through cleverness, tricks and being resourceful and inventive.

To the Warrior knowledge, secrets and intrigue make one strong, not brute strength. The Magician is a wiseman and a diviner, both prescient and empathic. The magician can act as a negotiator or statesman, but is more commonly a salesman, seducer, or an entertainer. The Magician stands with one foot in two worlds. He is a gatekeeper between the abstract clairvoyant realm of the unconscious and the practical and results oriented world of the everyday. He brings back visions from the world of the unconscious and bestows them as gifts on others. This power to surprise and interest others is closely tied to our own need for attention. Patients that did not get the attention they desired as children will often have a well developed Magician. These patients believed as children that something about them was bad or shameful, and developed their magician archetype as a way of being seen or having control.

It is the Magician that impresses others with insights, funny stories and hidden talents. It is the Magician that is able to stand out in a bar room or business meeting when others are vying for attention. The Magician is our ingenuity, and adaptability in the face of situations that we cannot plan for or control. The Magician is our ability to read between the lines in academic domains, to see the broader point or meaning beyond a text. Every insight or inspiration that you have ever pulled from the ether and used to your advantage feels like magic. If you are comfortable pulling clever observations and realizations from the unconscious and putting them to use then you are strongly identified with the Magician.

Patients may be under identified with their Magician if they were brought up to be rule oriented or understand the world only as a series of lists to be memorized. These patients are not intuitive but learn by memorizing a series of steps that became a crutch for their thinking. Patients under identified with their own Magician will distrust the Magician in others. They are not adaptable and are inflexible in their thinking. Patients who view people that are funny or creative with suspicion are likely to be under identified with their own Magician.

Patients who are over identified with the Magician may have a grandiose idea of what their intellect or insight will get them out. They may think genius will solve every problem without elbow grease. They may try to use a charming personality or a quick wit to escape hard work or interpersonal conflict. Patients who are deeply dismayed over poor academic performance despite no effort at study will be over identified with the Magician. These patients are often under identified with their Warrior because they have never learned to overcome situations their intuition cannot control or to work hard for a reward.

The fundamental anxiety that the magician assuages is the inability to control one's surroundings. The Magician is at its root a personality device developed to maintain control during a period in a person's life when assertiveness was not allowed. This was often a way to hold on to some control of our environment when direct confrontation was not an option. The Magician can also develop in early childhood when a child feels like there is a need in the family of origin that neither caregiver can meet. This is often a wounded or unreliable caregiver the child has to manage. This leads to the development of an often "magical" seeming ability to read others, read between the lines, and communicate in indirect ways like art and humor.

A patient who is over identified with both the Warrior and the Magician may try to dominate others with their intellect, delighting in the humiliation they cause. After all the cynic is the shadow of the caregiver. A caregiver sees the needs of others in order to meet them. The cynic sees the same needs in others, but uses them to exploit or write off other people. This cynic is the shadow side of the magician's ability to use intuition to understand others. An example in pop culture would be the stand up comic that summarizes and denigrates groups of people with acerbic insight.

The King

The King is our sense of systemic power or our sense of power within society . The King is both the father of the family and of society. He has a larger plan for others and sees how all pieces of the system work and what different types of people need. This larger plan comes from creativity and imagination, but it is the practical imagination of planning and developing communities and systems. The King not only wants to improve himself, but to improve others linked to him as an extension of himself. The appropriately identified King is a proud father.

We need the King in order to manage our households, supervise employees, or volunteer in leadership roles. The fundamental anxiety the King manages is the fear that there is no larger plan structuring others lives. The King fears anarchy. The King lets us take the reins and provide leadership when we see that no one else can. The King is able to organize the many individual Warriors behind a single banner. The King is order, organization and unity.

It is healthy and positive to have a vision for a better world that we would like to see our life and works contribute toward. Without the King we cannot have hope for our families or for the world. Patients who were raised being systematically excluded or oppressed are likely to be under identified with their King. If society has rejected or oppressed them their entire lives they have been taught that it doesn't want them, and will have difficulty believing others will let them lead. If we do not believe we have any power over the world, it is difficult to function within it. These patients will be plagued with interpersonal difficulty until the under identification is resolved.

Patients under identified with their King will avoid any position where they have responsibility for or power over others. They were often punished for being angry or assertive in their families of origin and felt they were not allowed to hold power. Often these patients will have anger “turned off” and have extreme anxiety when circumstances force them to judge others, even accurately, or when they are angry. These patients will have difficulty reconciling anxiety when they have a moral standard that others violate. They do not want to let go of their own moral compass but also are uncomfortable when others fail at being moral or good by their own standard.

Patients who are under identified with their King may be highly competent and successful, but still remain highly individual and atomized, clinging to solely personal power or adhere to strict moral standards they refuse to apply to others. . They may express hopelessness or even contempt for ideas relating to improving family or government systems, even though they could otherwise be highly successful in either.

Patients over identified with their King will mistrust and criticize all authority because it is not their own. They will play contrarian during any discussion of politics or religion and often family issues. They will often get into conflicts with superiors at work but secretly feel unheard or misunderstood. During these times they are reliving their experiences in their own families of origin. Extreme identification with the King will leave patients listless and unsatisfied no matter how much power they attain. Extreme over identification with the King means that there is no amount of power that will ever make one feel fulfilled. Life becomes a competition. It does not become a competition with individuals like the warrior, but a competition with all “great” men from history. Total overidentification makes one want to hold power and influence over others in every domain of life.

Patients over identified with their King will rarely present for therapy of their own volition. These patients can become tyrants to their friends, families and colleagues. Even though these patients may do things that society would consider immoral they will never see themselves as evil. These patients see themselves as saviors that want to save an unappreciative society or family by making them great. Patients who are under identified with their Magician and Warrior often over identify with their King in order to compensate for their failure to develop their own domain of internal (intuition) or external (accomplishment) personal power. These patients often are prone to fantasies about what would happen if they were in charge. They will never see themselves as immoral, but only as misunderstood heroes.

The Queen

The Queen is the power behind power and the maternal influence on development. The Queen is the indirect power that we hold over authority and systems just as the magician is the indirect power we hold over peers and our immediate vicinity. She is every calculated comment that ever made you reconsider your own behavior. She is every raised eyebrow that made you behave. The Queen is long talks by the fire with a loved one about your own worst impulses. She is tempering to power, but when over identified with she becomes a manipulative puppet master behind the throne, a Bloody Mary.

The Queen uses her influence over the powerful to exercise her own power. If this concept is lost on you, then you are likely under identified with your own Queen. If this is the case, be careful, because it is the patients under identified with their own Queen who are most susceptible to be influenced by the Queen of others. If we do not understand the art of manipulation, we have no defenses against it. The Queen is, by her very nature, the least recognized archetype. The Queen is the thing behind the thing. She is the unnoticed influence on the world. The Queen is the reason that the people in charge behave better than they otherwise would.

The Queen is a mothering impulse in all of us. She sits close to our Anima or archetype of the feminine. The Queen is the part of us that wants to see the people around us grow and flourish under our watchful gaze. The Queen smiles as her children and her husband mistake her subtle suggestions for their own ideas. She is the master of the understated and implied. The Queen is consigliere, advisor, right hand man, and second in command.

The fundamental insecurity behind the Queen is the fear that power is incompetent or malevolent. Patients with an over developed Queen usually had a competitive parent or a parent that viewed them as a peer in childhood. Like patients with an overdeveloped Magician, the child with an overdeveloped Queen may have worn this anxiety like a badge of honor in childhood. However, also like the child with an over developed Magician this damaged the child, leaving them hyper vigilant and trapped with an exhausting control instinct. Unlike patients with an over developed Magician, patients with an overdeveloped Queen felt responsible for running a household by proxy and controlling an irascible or inconsistent parent. They did not

seek to be understood or get attention from a caregiver like children with an overidentified Magician.

Patients that present to therapy reporting that they are the “therapist for all their friends” or that “everyone asks them for advice” have a healthy identification with their Queen. The over identified Queen is not content to advise power, but wants to control it from the shadows as a puppeteer. Overidentification with the Queen leads patients to become obsessed with subtly influencing other people as extensions of themselves and power. Manipulative patients, who begin to hold their altruism over the heads of those they are helping are on the road to over identification with the Queen. Therapists should be aware of the functioning of this archetype, as it is the role of the therapist to play The Queen in the patient's life during the process of therapy.

The over identified Queen as a mother does not want children to develop as individuals outside of the family or have a personal identity. Children are to remain a part of her and only exist as her accessory and a reflection of her purposes and her values. The over identified Queen wants to know all her children's secrets, and to get to tell them exactly who they should become. Because patients who had a mother over identified with her own Queen never had the chance to listen to their own inner voice during development they will present to therapy with a bothersome inner critic that reflects the internalized critical voice of the parent. This overwhelming voice of inner criticism is the implanted voice of the parent that did not want their Child to exist outside their own sphere.

The Child

The Child is a tricky archetype to find within ourselves. The Child is the first archetype that the self identifies with. The Child has no problem asking for help or expressing it's emotions and desires loudly and honestly. The Child is a kind of creative anarchy that we lose as adults and rediscover during liminal and transitional spaces in our development. The Child is a freedom we reconnect with when we release the parts of ourselves that have held us back. The Child is the “alive” feeling that addicts begin to connect with after completing recovery. The Child is strongly associated with the unconscious and a sense of connectedness to all things. Children are still discovering the things that make them unique individuals. The Child is growth and Children know how to grow instinctively.

The Child does not remember all of the rules that we had to learn as adults and is more interested in its own creative impulses and whims than rules or deadlines. The Child is necessary for art and for self discovery, but it can become solipsistic when it is over indulged. The Child puts us in touch with vulnerability but it cares about its own emotions, desires and whims. It is not aware of others or their wants or needs. The Child is important to creatives because it is the source of new ideas and perspectives but it needs to be tempered lest we become selfish, oblivious and inwardly focused.

In adulthood is the process of losing touch with the vulnerability and capacity for growth that we felt as children. Adults come to believe that the limiting voice of their inner critic is “responsible” and that asking for help or admitting vulnerability is “weak”. Many times the process of therapy forces us to uncover our own vulnerable child and reconnect with the parts of ourselves that are hurting or scared. When we cannot honestly admit our own needs, fears and sadness we often over complicate our life.

Patients who are over identified with the Child may present to therapy lost in creative visions and emotional whims. While over identified with the Child, these patients will be oblivious or in denial about the practical and detail oriented responsibilities of adult life. They may be prone to bouts of drug use or personal vision quests and passion projects. Patients will often overly identify with the Child as a response to their families of origin having pathological Queen archetypes that stifled development. In college or as adults they cast aside all responsibilities and overcompensate for the constraints of their childhood with an overly juvenile outlook on responsibility.

Patients under identified with their Child will present to therapy asking the therapist to produce pragmatic and concrete changes in their lives and relationships. They often come from families led by an over identified King or Warrior that had no interest in the uncertainty or self discovery of the Child archetype. They are rote and uninterested in the abstractions of therapy, art, or life. These patients have little interest in getting in touch with the vulnerabilities or flights of fancy of the Child.

We are all born into the world as a vulnerable Child, as naive beings that see the world as an unending canvas on which to paint our vision for ourselves. These tendencies are idealistic, but also natural. Material realities impose restrictions on our lives, and we are remiss to ignore them, but also waste the potential meaning in our lives if we become their slaves. Rediscovering the child is necessary for personal growth and healing required to make progress in therapy. The Child is not only creativity and growth, but also our innate resilience. Patients who rediscover the Child during a chronic illness may make recoveries whereas patients who do not may not.

The Lover

The Lover is one of the most difficult archetypes to notice that you are experiencing. By its very nature it is seductive and spontaneous. The Lover is most commonly associated with sex, but sex is the smallest part of the archetype. You cannot experience the Lover by yourself, but you do not necessarily have to experience it with another person. Anytime you are pulled into an alluring daydream, swept up in the rhetoric of a rousing speech, or moved to a sense of greater understanding by a work of art or fiction, you are beginning to fall into the embrace of the Lover. The Lover is a drum circle, it is staring deeply into a bonfire, it is a poem about time, a drug trip. The Lover can be an infinite amount of things.

The Lover is most easily understood as our ability to give up a small part of ourselves to become part of something greater. The Lover is our ability to merge with another person or a group of people. The Lover lets us dissolve part of our own ego to be a part of a greater purpose or force of society. If we do not have access to the Lover we are completely alone, completely with purpose and life becomes an abstraction. We are connection making creatures and it is the Lover archetype that allows us to make those connections.

Because The Lover requires us to give up a piece of ourselves in order to identify with it, over identification with The Lover can be disastrous. Patients over identified with The Lover might try to dissolve themselves passionately into each many new relationships or over identify with each new friend. Extreme over identification with The Lover leaves patients with no sense of self. These patients will operate in society as chameleons. Over identification with the Lover is over identification with something outside of oneself. They will continue to find religious, romantic, or social relationships that let them take on someone else's identity and concept of self.

When working with patients with substance abuse problems therapists should be very aware of the functioning of the lover archetype. Addiction is often understood by therapists as an attempt to numb out painful emotions or memories, and while this interpretation is correct it is also an incomplete understanding of what addiction is. Substance abuse is always fueled by a desperate attempt to have connection with something. The loneliness and isolation that patients with substance abuse issues feel is an extreme under identification with the lover archetype and the hunger for the wholeness of the lover is often the emotional state sought by the addicted person.

I always tell my patients that an addiction is often a hunger for growth with a simultaneous refusal to change. Substance abuse provides the *feeling* of growth and connection without the actual *work* or risk. Drugs like alcohol and stimulants often activate the Lover by making us feel productive, creative, loved or accepted. Drugs like depressants or psychedelics often activate the Lover by allowing us to turn off our conscious mind and remerge with the world. Psychedelics and transcendental religious practices often allow a person to experience *ego death* or a "oneness" with all things. This form of ultimate connectedness is the most activated state of the archetype as we have completely given up our own identity.

The Lover requires us to have the ability to trust something outside of ourselves and may be difficult for patients with trauma to experience without anxiety. We first learn how safe it is to open up to others within our family of origin. Patients that have a strong under identification with The Lover often never felt safe in their families of origin. Patients over identified with the Lover might have had a parent over identified with their Queen and are used to finding a controlling partner. If someone has made us a puppet then we involuntarily find a puppeteer when we leave our families of origin. These patients often become codependent in relationships, looking for someone to give their life rules and meaning. They believe they are unable to do this for themselves.

The Lover is an often ignored archetype, but is needed to give the other archetypes any ability to operate. What is the cause that the Warrior fights for, where is the growth or the creativity of the Child without The Lover? For that matter, what is the grand vision of a King or control of the Queen without the ability to make a connection? For a patient to participate in a relationship with a therapist there must be some part of the Lover archetype active. Therapy requires trust and a dissolution of boundaries enough for the therapist and patient to collaborate on treatment. We cannot begin to benefit in therapy unless we give up some part of our old self and are willing to be open to creating a new self image. Resistance to the therapy process can also be understood as a resistance to experience this archetype.

Discussion Questions

1. Which archetypes were you the most/least identified with? Are there places in life or periods in the past where you were more/less comfortable with these parts of you. For example, are you more comfortable in your personal or professional life?
2. What are the physical sensations that the experience of the archetypes activate. What do you notice in your posture. Do you feel hot, cold, heavy light? Notice what changes in your body when you get in touch with each one.
3. Do you have a different perspective on any other group members' perception of their identification?