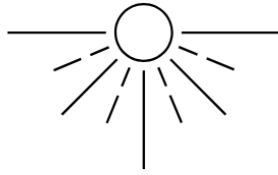


THE HOLISTIC COUNSELOR PODCAST



A LEARNING & REFLECTION GUIDE

Understanding IFS

Internal Family Systems

READ / LISTEN / REFLECT

Diana S. Rice

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FROM THE MIC TO THE COMMUNITY

EXPLORING THERAPY

Begin where you are.

You might want connection and also want to pull away, or care about helping someone and feel worn out. IFS offers a way to explore different inner responses with curiosity. Here is what that approach means and what to ask about it.

Listen alongside this guide

Conversations from The Holistic Counselor Podcast to explore with these pages.

EPISODE 59

Understanding IFS with Dr. Tori Olds

Begin with Dr. Tori Olds' introduction to Internal Family Systems.

[Listen or read the transcript](#)

EPISODE 118

Parts work, trauma, and faith with Lynn Kearney

Lynn Kearney explores parts work, complex trauma, and faith.

[Listen or read the transcript](#)

IN THESE PAGES

Understanding the topic / Make room for your questions / Keep learning. Find support.

EXPLORING THERAPY

Understanding the topic

A model for understanding inner experience

Richard Schwartz developed Internal Family Systems. It uses the word parts for different inner responses and roles. Some parts try to prevent hurt; others respond when distress is already high. These terms describe a therapy model, not a diagnosis of multiple personalities.

Compassion can leave room for responsibility

The approach encourages curiosity toward responses that may have served a protective purpose. Understanding a response does not mean that every action is helpful or that harm should be excused.

A gentle starting point

You might notice, “Part of me wants to say yes, and part of me wants rest.” A present-day example gives you something concrete to discuss. Exploring traumatic memories belongs within appropriately supported clinical care.

Research and perspective

The Internal Family Systems Institute describes an emerging evidence base. Early studies are promising. Larger, well-designed studies and research on possible harms are needed. This approach is not equally established for every condition.

What if the language of parts does not feel natural to me?

You can say so. A therapist can explain why they use the model and discuss whether another way of describing your experience fits better. Everyday mixed feelings do not, by themselves, establish a dissociative disorder. Questions about diagnosis need an appropriate assessment.

EXPLORING THERAPY

Make room for your questions

Choose a question that feels useful today. A few notes in your own words can be enough. Your reflections stay with you; this website does not collect them.

Type in the spaces below, or print and write by hand.

What two wishes seem to pull me in different directions?

What might I need more time to understand?

How could I respond with kindness while making a responsible choice?

Questions for a conversation

Are you licensed to provide therapy in my location?

What Internal Family Systems training and certification do you have?

How will we decide whether it fits and respond if I feel overwhelmed?

The Internal Family Systems directory includes therapists and practitioners. Verify the license if you need mental health treatment; training and certification are separate credentials.

EXPLORING THERAPY

Keep learning. Find support.

Another conversation to explore

EPISODE 78

Money stories with Jennifer Schrappe

Jennifer Schrappe connects parts work with money beliefs.

[Listen or read the transcript](#)

EPISODE 53

Christian faith and trauma care

Kayla Roberts discusses Internal Family Systems within faith and trauma care.

[Listen or read the transcript](#)

OPTIONAL FAITH REFLECTION

How might curiosity and compassion fit with my faith without setting aside accountability?

Sources and further reading

Editorial revision: October 13, 2026. The linked authorities provide current rules, services, and evidence.

[1. Internal Family Systems Institute: The model outline](#)

[2. Internal Family Systems Institute: Research and its limits](#)

[3. Internal Family Systems Institute: Therapist and practitioner directory](#)

Wherever you are reading from, your culture, language, beliefs, access needs, and daily circumstances belong in the conversation. Professional titles and services vary between countries. Sources and directories identify their own regions; a local health service or professional regulator can explain the options where you live.

ABOUT THIS GUIDE

These guides offer general education for adults. They do not provide personal therapy, diagnosis, medical advice, or a professional relationship with Diana. A qualified professional who can practice where you live can help you apply information to your circumstances. Changes to prescribed care belong in a conversation with your treating professional.

[Read the full educational disclaimer](#)

FROM THE MIC TO THE COMMUNITY

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at your own pace.

Scan for this guide and its episode links.

theholisticcounselor.com/resources

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IF YOU NEED URGENT SUPPORT

If you need urgent emotional support in the U.S. or its territories, the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline offers phone, text, and chat support. For immediate danger or a medical emergency, use your local emergency number (911 in the U.S.). Elsewhere, contact a crisis service in your country. The podcast and its messages are not monitored for urgent care.

988lifeline.org/chat/

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