

Schema Therapy - Limited Reparenting for the Vulnerable Child Mode

The therapist improvises a response to each client statement using the following criteria:

1. **Validate the client's triggered Vulnerable Child mode.**
2. **Take one of the following actions to meet the need within professional boundaries:**
 - **Action #1: Remind the client of your connection and emotional support.**
 - **Action #2: Suggest a "safe place" imagery exercise that meets the need.**

Example

Client: [upset] I'm devastated that my best friend is moving so far away next month. It's like my dad leaving us all those years ago.

Therapist: It makes so much sense that you're triggered by this... You still remember the pain of losing the support of someone important... (Criterion 1) Let's slow down... This is also a place to give "little you" the support she needs. Can this Vulnerable Part of you take in that I'm here for her? I'm not going anywhere... (Criterion 2, Option 1)

CLIENT STATEMENTS



Client Statement #1: [sad] I waited all weekend for my date to call me. His rejection is so unbearable. I feel like I'll be alone forever.

Client Statement #2: [hopeless] I think my coworkers are making jokes about me. I'm always the target of jokes and criticisms. It's always been like that.

Client Statement #3: [devastated] My partner speaks to his cousin every day and barely says good morning to me. I don't matter to him. I don't matter to anyone. I'm invisible.

Client Statement #4: [devastated] I'm nothing. My divorce just proves that once again. It's like when my dad left my mom and me when I was little.

Client Statement #5: [scared] I can't attend this business event. I know I'll be standing in a corner all by myself. It will be like primary school all over again.

Client Statement #6: [angry] Why should I believe that you care about me? My own mother never did. The moment I expressed anything, she just shut me down.

Example Therapist Responses



Client Statements	Example Therapist Responses
<p>1. [sad] I waited all weekend for my date to call me. His rejection is so unbearable. I feel like I'll be alone forever.</p>	<p>Of course it was extremely painful for you... The Vulnerable Child part of you brings with her the feelings of despair from early times in your life. (Criterion 1) Can you focus right now on our connection? I know how lonely it gets for you sometimes... This is the place to start to give "little you" some of the connection she needs... (Criterion 2, Option 1)</p>
<p>2. [hopeless] I think my coworkers are making jokes about me. I'm always the target of jokes and criticisms. It's always been like that.</p>	<p>It must be so hard for that Vulnerable Part of you, when he senses that he's becoming the target of bullies again... (Criterion 1) Would you be willing to try an imagery exercise? Could you close your eyes... [pause] And imagine being in a Safe Place where you've felt seen and appreciated, instead of judged... [pause] Do you have it? What are you seeing?... (Criterion 2, Option 2)</p>
<p>3. [devastated] My partner speaks to his cousin every day and barely says good morning to me. I don't matter to him. I don't matter to</p>	<p>It's so painful for anyone to feel that they don't matter to anyone... When you're in this state it's like all those painful feelings from childhood come back. (Criterion 1) Let's slow down... Can you take in right now my saying</p>



anyone. I'm invisible.	that <i>I see you</i> and <i>I care</i> . You matter to me. Try to let the Vulnerable part of you take this in. (Criterion 2, Option 1)
4. [devastated] I'm nothing. My divorce just proves that once again. It's like when my dad left my mom and me when I was little.	Divorce is such a painful experience for anyone, and even more so to you because it brings back all those feelings from when you were little... (Criterion 1) This is a place where you can share all these difficult feelings. You're not nothing... And I'm not going anywhere... (Criterion 2, Option 1)
5. [scared] I can't attend this business event. I know I'll be standing in a corner all by myself. It will be like primary school all over again.	I get it, all your old panicky feelings and feeling invisible come back when you consider being in a social situation... (Criterion 1) Do you want to try something? Try closing your eyes for a moment... [pause] Now, try imagining being in a Safe Place, where you've felt seen and safe... [pause] Do you have it? What are you seeing? (Criterion 2, Option 2)
6. [angry] Why should I believe that you care about me? My own mother never did. The moment I expressed	Of course you're doubtful of my caring... It makes sense. The Vulnerable Part of you remembers all the times he had no one to count on, no one to safely express your feelings. It will take time to have confidence in my caring.



anything, she just shut me down.	(Criterion 1) I'm here for the whole of you, including your doubtful, hurt or angry parts. I'm not going to shut them down. I actually like all these sides of you, and want to be here for them. (Criterion 2, Therapist Action #1: Remind the client of your connection and emotional support)
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