

IFS Rating Scale Constructs Definitions and Observations August 8th 2013 edition

Construct	Definition	Therapist's Prompts	Visual Observation of Construct	Auditory Observation of Construct
Overall Process				
Direct Access	A way of working with a client's part that involves a direct relationship between the Self of the therapist and the part of the client. The therapist talks directly to the client's part(s) rather than having the part's words reported by the client.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May I talk to that part directly? • Questions with "you" such as "So you are afraid that this part will overwhelm the system?" • What are you concerned will happen? • Statements with "you" such as "that makes sense that you would have that concern" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden tears • Sudden anger • No awareness of any other parts <p>Through direct access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • voice changes • Tone of voice • Rate of speech • Sounds younger/older • Changes in body posture • Changes in eye contact of either avoidance of eye contact or eye contact may be intense <p>Body language changes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person goes into first person description of what is going on such as "I am so angry...I am devastated..." • Verbalizes "it's just me" <p>Person verbalizes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That he or she is experiencing strong feelings thoughts or sensations
Insight	A process of working with client's parts that facilitates the direct relationship between the client's self and the client's parts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it OK to shift your awareness from the outside world? • Are you aware of any parts? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person closes eyes/soft focuses eyes • Deeper breaths • Muscles relax • Shift awareness from external to internal 	<p>Person verbalizes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This part is.... • Details of the part • What the part is revealing • That body tension is relaxing • I feel more space....
Contract	The client and therapist speak about the presenting problem. The client with therapist's help identifies the target part and they make an agreement on what they want to work on.	<p><i>Listens to presenting problems and identifies key parts involved</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I hear you saying that.... • There is a part of you that feels.... • Let me see if I am understanding your issues/needs/concerns accurately... • You have a part of you thatand another part of you that.... • Therapist reflects back what he or 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client nods in agreement • Eye contact with therapist may increase 	<p>Client verbally agrees to work on a target part...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes that would be good to do • Well ok I can give it a try • I want help with this part of me that....

Rating Scale Constructs Definitions and Observations August 8th 2013 edition

		<p>she is hearing from the client</p> <p><i>Introduces the model</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Everyone has parts within them....• Certain external events or issues push our parts to become extreme.... <p><i>Accesses external constraints</i></p> <p>Includes questions like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is your home environment safe and supportive of you?• Have you or are you experiencing any self-harming or self-sabotaging thoughts or feelings?• Are your family/couple relationships safe and supportive? Is there any current abuse in relationships happening?• What is the support system around you? <p><i>Agrees to work on target part</i></p> <p>So you would be open to do some work with these parts and I would be honored to guide you....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does it feel right/ ok to all your parts for us to work with this part?		
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Rating Scale Constructs Definitions and Observations August 8th 2013 edition

----- Construct	----- Definition	----- Therapist Prompt	----- Visual Observation of Construct	----- Auditory Observation of Construct
Part	Personality part (known in some of the literature as subpersonality) that is an aspect of the person's personality that interacts internally in a sequence and style that is similar to the ways in which a person interacts.	<p>Therapist encourages the client to notice the part.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So take a couple of deep breaths and notice what is happening.... <p>Therapist reflects back with the word "part" or a synonym such as aspect....</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So this part of you is feeling.. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Body posture changes • Protector parts may emerge (see Protector Parts) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tone of voice changes
Protector Part	Parts that try to divert attention away from the extreme emotions, body sensations, thoughts and or images of the exiled parts in order to maintain safety and protection of the person's system. They can act either proactive to manage the system or exiles (Manager Parts) or they can act excessively reactive in order to douse and push down the exiles (Firefighter Parts).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How old does this part think you are? • Where is this part in and around your body? • Gently asking the client if they notice what is happening right now? • Can you draw or map out your parts as they are presenting right now? • Can you map protective parts? • Use of sand tray, scarfs, other objects available to represent protective parts (polarities between firefighter and manager parts) • How do you feel toward this part? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rigid body posture • Crossing arms • Keeping eyes open • Averting eye contact • Either intense, focused energy or detached withdrawn demeanor • Person gets distracted • Person zones out or dissociates • Person becomes angry • Person becomes anxious • Person becomes sleepy 	<p>The person will verbalize statements of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organization • Criticism or blame • Anxiety • Analysis or arguing • Interpretation • Caretaking • Intense focus • Thoughts of self harm • Cravings • I am tired • I feel fuzzy, blank • I can't remember what we're talking about

Rating Scale Constructs Definitions and Observations (August 8, 2013)

Construct	Definition	Therapist Prompts	Visual Observation of Construct	Auditory Observation of Construct
Exile	Parts that carry the pain and wounding from early overwhelming experiences and trauma and thus may be stuck at a younger developmental stage or an earlier time in the person's life. They have been sequestered within a system for their own protection or for the protection of the system from them.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel toward this part? • Can you open your heart to this young part? • Where is the part? • Does this part notice you? • What does this part want to share with you? • What feelings and beliefs does this part carry? • Where in or around your body are you feeling or sensing this part? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person at a specific chronological age frequently presents at a younger age • Body and head drops • Shoulders hunch and pull in • Tearfulness • Anger, fear or frozen and mute 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in voice sound and tone • Voice may fade away • Voice gets softer • Vocabulary regresses to a younger age • Intonation changes and goes up and down • Labile affect
Self	The core of the person that is not a "part" which contains leadership qualities such as compassion, perspective, curiosity, and confidence. The Self is the natural leader and healer of the internal family.	<p>The prompts below are to enhance the client's ability to bring Self energy into relationship with the part:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel toward this part? • Do you feel there are any parts of you who don't like that part? • Do you notice any feelings like judgment, fear, dislike, impatience or frustration? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The person's muscle tone relaxes • Visible reduction in muscle tensions (shoulders drop) • Face relaxes • Smiling occurs • Breathing rate is slower • Breathing is deeper 	<p>In asking "how do you feel toward the part?" the person verbalizes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding • Accepting • Caring, compassion • curious, interested • open, soft, tender, connected <p>The person reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • feeling lighter or having more space inside • pleasant surprise • a shift of awareness or that this is very different <p>The person shifts to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a participant observer • verbalizes a statement that reflects the 8 Cs or the 5 Ps (patience, perspective, persistence, perseverance playfulness)

Rating Scale Constructs Definitions and Observations August 8th 2013 edition

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Blending/ Part Blending	When a part carrying extreme feelings and beliefs merges with the Self. This state is related to a lack of trust from the (blended) part(s) toward the Self of the client, the Self of the therapist, the therapeutic relationship, the IFS intervention or a combination of those four.	<p>To determine whether or not a part is blended the therapist questions the part directly either implicitly or explicitly(Direct Access)</p> <p>Implicitly saying things like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • So you are feeling _____ about this situation (e.g. frustrated, scared, anxious, worried, etc) • Sounds like you're feeling overwhelmed/sad/angry/anxious, etc • What are you afraid would happen if you don't _____ • Do you feel like this is "you"? • Is that the only perspective you have right now? <p>Explicitly:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is it OK if I talk directly to that part? • I'm going to speak directly to that part. • Is it OK for the part to take over your body and speak directly to me? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudden tears • Sudden anger • No awareness of any other parts <p>Through direct access:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • voice changes • Tone of voice • Rate of speech • Sounds younger/older • Changes in body posture • Changes in eye contact of either avoidance of eye contact or eye contact may be intense • Body language changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Verbalizes "it's just me" • May use first person such as "I am so angry....I am devastated...." <p>Person verbalizes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That he or she is experiencing strong feelings thoughts or sensations

Rating Scale Constructs Definitions and Observations August 8th 2013 edition

Construct	Definition	Therapist's prompts	Visual Observation of Construct	Auditory Observation of Construct
Unblending /Part Unblended	IFS skill that creates the condition for the blended part to increase its level of trust towards the Self of the client, the Self of the therapist, the therapeutic relationship, the IFS intervention which aims at reassuring the blended part to separate out from the Self in order to allow for a direct relationship between the client's Self and the previously blended part.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel toward the part? • Would the part be willing to unblend a little? • How do you experience the part? • Do you see it? Can you see the part? • Do you feel it, sense it? In or around your body? • Where is the part in or around your body? • How close is this part? • Direct access statements such as "You don't need to overwhelm (client). We will spend time with you. We want to hear what you have to say." • How do you experience this part? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relaxed • Separate and calmer • Person closes or soft focuses the eyes • Takes deep breath • Facial affect that changes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I see/feel/sense a part here that looks like/feels like • Client starts talking in third person (The part looks like a little child....The part is giving me the message that...The part wants to get to know me....etc) <p>Identifies one of the 8 C's in response to the therapist prompt "How do you feel toward this part?":</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Calm • Confident • Courageous • Clarity • Curious • Compassion • Creativity • Connectedness
Feeling toward a	To access the client's relationship with the part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel toward the part? • Is this ok to feel? 	For a Self to part relationship: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Closing eyes or soft focus 	The person verbalizes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A feeling that comes up in

Rating Scale Constructs Definitions and Observations August 8th 2013 edition

part	and to assess the amount of Self energy present in the system. Also used to identify other parts that are protecting target part or are polarized with the target part.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Muscles in the face relax • Body less tense and more relaxed <p>If a polarized part is present:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facial muscles tighten • Brows could be furrowed • Psychomotor level becomes agitated • Arms may cross 	<p>considering the part</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I'm getting a little more clarity, seeing things more clearly • Oh now I get it • Voice becomes louder or softer
Construct	Definition	Therapist's Prompts	Visual Observation of Construct	Auditory Observation of Construct
Differentiating a part	Client begins to move toward a part and begins to differentiate from the part. Client begins to notice a part and a part begins to notice the Self as distinct from itself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the part notice you (Self) are there? • How do you feel toward the part? • How do you notice the part? • Do you see the part? • Do you feel the part? • Where do you notice the part in or around you body? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A shift in body posture • Body movement • Deep breathing • A shift in energy 	<p>The person verbalizes that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client sees an image of the part • Client may see the part in front of them • Client can listen to the part • Client says he/she has some space from the part • Client verbalizes that the part is aware of the Self
Establishing a relationship with the part (s)	<p>The client's Self getting to know, understand and appreciate the part. It is equally important for the part to notice/acknowledge the Self. This leads to a trusting relationship between the part and the Self.</p> <p>Facilitating a relationship between the client's self and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can you notice the part? • Does the part notice you? • What does it look like? • How do you feel toward the part? • How does the part feel about you? • Do you appreciate the part? • Do you appreciate what the part's been trying to do for you? • Does that make sense? • Does the part have a reaction to you? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client appears calmer • A shift in body posture. • Eyes may be closed or soft focused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I can see the part • I can sense the part. • It notices me. • It's looking at me. • It feels comfortable with me. I • It's afraid of me. • It's surprised to see me. • I feel sad for it. • I'm happy to see it.

Rating Scale Constructs Definitions and Observations August 8th 2013 edition

	part(s). As this relationship develops there is mutual appreciation/acknowledgement leading to a trusting connection between the part and the Self.			
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Construct	Definition	Therapist's Prompts	Visual Observation of Construct	Auditory Observation of Construct
Burden	All parts can have burdens. Extreme ideas, beliefs, and emotions that are not inherent in the function or nature of the part. These beliefs, emotions, ideas are often imposed on the parts by the outside world and are often from an earlier developmental stage and have not been processed (burdens are sometimes from traumatic experiences). May be held in the body in the form of disease, pain or injury.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Therapist reflects back extreme thoughts or feelings the client is saying. • Therapist reflects back that this extreme thought may be a part: • This is a heavy load that this part is carrying... • This part stepped up and took on this job when no other part would... 	Physical signs of illness pain or injury	The person verbalizes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rigid beliefs about self, others and the world • Feeling words such as lonely , scared, angry, unlovable, worthless, anxious • Sensate words such as nauseated, pressure, heaviness, emptiness
Unburdening Process	The Unburdening process has six stages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would the part like to release that burden of feeling at fault? • Does the part feel ready to let that go? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Person is relaxed • Eyes are closed or have soft focus 	The person verbalizes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That the part seems ready • The part wants to....
	Stage 1: Developing Trust Between Self and the Part Refers to the Self's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do you feel toward this part? • Does the part notice you? • How does the part feel toward 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client is quiet • Eyes are closed or soft focused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client is still and quiet • The part is seeing me • The part is looking at me

Rating Scale Constructs Definitions and Observations August 8th 2013 edition

	extending of positive energy and compassion to the part so that the part develops increased emotional security with the person's Self.	<p>you?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let it get to know you a little.. Just stay with this part until it feels like it can trust you... 		<p>noticing me</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The part is afraid of me The part is hiding in the corner or behind something or is in a hole or underground The part doesn't want to look at me The part is relieved to see me
Construct	Definition	Therapist's Prompts	Visual Observation of Construct	Auditory Observation of Construct
	Stage 2: Witnessing Refers to the Self of the client and the therapist listening and understanding the part's history, how it took on its role, and what its purpose is in the internal family system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it ok for the part to show you what it's been like for it? Can the part tell you what is going on for it? Can you invite the part to tell you what it wants or needs? Invite the part to share with you whatever it wants you to know Invite the part to let you know how it came to feel this way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client may be quiet Eyes are closed or soft focused Facial affect and expressions may change Some tearfulness may occur Psychomotor level may change and client can become more or less agitated Client may cry/tearful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whaling or sobbing may occur Client may be really silent Client may cough or choke up
	Stage 3: Retrieval (Optional) Refers to the Self of the client leading the part out of the time space dimensions where it was stuck due to traumatic experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would the part like to come out of that place and come into the present with you? The part could come to a sacred place inside of you or in the room where you are now. Would the part like it for you to step into the scene with it? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client may be quiet Eyes may be closed or soft focused Client's affect and facial expressions may change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Yes the part would like to come out of there That sounds good It wants to do that
	Stage 4: Unburdening The process of releasing extreme negative emotions, beliefs, Ideas through	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any beliefs or feelings that this part would like to let go of? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client may nod head Affect and facial expressions may change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client may verbalize "yes, the part wants to do that" It wants to let go

Rating Scale Constructs Definitions and Observations August 8th 2013 edition

	witnessing with the part that held them as a result of a traumatic experience. The unburdening occurs internally as the client directs her/his internal parts in a release of the pain connected to the memories or the experience. The Unburdening process has six stages.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The part may let go of it anyway it wants to via water, air, fire, or burying it in the earth or any other way it wants to. The part can let go of any amount it wishes today. Is there anything the part wants to unload? Is there anything the client wants to give back? 		<p>of _____</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It would like to but is not sure how to do that That sounds great
Construct	Definition	Therapist's Prompts	Visual Observation of Construct	Auditory Observation of Construct
	Stage 5: Invitation Refers to the Self of the client and/or therapist empowering the part to invite in to the spaces where the burden was previously housed other positive qualities or healing traits.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Are there any qualities the part would like to invite in that it will need as it goes forward? Is there anything the part would like to invite in that it had to give up when it took on this burden? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client may nod head Affect and facial expressions may change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The part would like to invite in _____ It already has let _____ in..
	Stage 6: Integration Refers to the Self of the client or the therapist asking how the other parts of the system are responding to the part that has been transformed through the unburdening process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Would it be ok to invite in other parts to see this part now? How do the other parts react to the change in this part? You might notice a difference in how you feel this week. Can we check in with this part next week to see how it is going? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client is quiet Eyes may be closed or soft focused 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Its ok to invite the other parts The other parts notice there is a change Some parts are not sure what to make of this
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Witnessing May occur outside the Unburden-	Refers to the Self of the client and the therapist listening and understanding the part's history, how it took on its role and what its	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is it ok for the part to show you what it's been like for it? Can the part tell you what is going on for it? Can you invite the part to tell you 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Client may be quiet Eyes are closed or soft focused Facial affect and expressions may change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Whaling or sobbing may occur Client may be really silent Client may cough or choke up

Rating Scale Constructs Definitions and Observations August 8th 2013 edition

ing Process	purpose is in the internal family system.	<p>what it wants or needs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite the part to share with you whatever it wants you to know • Invite the part to let you know how it came to feel this way 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some tearfulness may occur • Psychomotor level may change and client can become more or less agitated • Client may cry or be tearful 	
Construct	Definition	Therapist's Prompts	Visual Observations of Construct	Auditory Observation of Construct
Retrieval May occur outside of the Unburdening Process	Refers to the Self of the client leading the part out of the time space dimensions where it was stuck due to traumatic experience.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would the part like to come out of that place and come into the present with you? • The part could come to a sacred place inside of you or in the room where you are now. • Would the part like it for you to step into the scene with it? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Client may be quiet • Eyes may be closed or soft focused • Client's affect and facial expressions may change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yes the part would like to come out of there • That sounds good • It wants to do that

These constructs were developed by a group of mental health, medical and research professionals (Lois Ehrmann, PhD; Pamela Krause; LCSW; Francois Le Doze, MD; Toufic Hakim, PhD; and Nancy Wonder, PhD) in support of the IFS Adherence Scale. Researchers are encouraged to use these constructs, which accompany the IFS Adherence Scale. For questions, please contact the Foundation for Self Leadership or write to Research@FoundationIFS.org.

Constructs are elements of the IFS Therapy protocol, developed by Richard Schwartz, PhD, as Internal Family Systems Therapy in the early eighties. You may read more about IFS on www.FoundationIFS.org or www.SelfLeadership.org.