Part 1:
Theory

The
Fantasy
Bond

# What is a Fantasy Bond?

- Primitive defense mechanism developed in early childhood as a way of maintaining an illusion of safety and security at times when one experiences overwhelming frustration, hurt, or even terror

- Illusion of connection compensates or substitutes for inadequacies in the early environment. In an attempt to cope with emotional pain, infants merge with their primary caretaker in their imagination, feeling like the all-powerful parent and the helpless infant, all in one.

- This fantasy of being connected to another can give a child an illusion of safety, even immortality, which later helps him or her cope with existential realizations and fears.

# What is a Fantasy Bond?

- As children, it can feel overwhelmingly frightening to be critical of one's caretakers, because you lose your sense of safety and rely on parents for survival.

- Parent's neglect or hostility might have felt terrifying, even life-threatening to the child.

# What is a Fantasy Bond?

- Children uphold an, often <u>unconscious</u>, internalized connection to their parent in the following ways:

  o Idealizing their parents and family

  o Maintaining a negative image of themselves

  o Projecting negative parental qualities and behaviors onto others

  o Reliving parents' life rather than living their own

  o Maintaining psychological defenses that were adaptive as kids but that limit them later on

# What is a Fantasy Bond?

- Though a fantasy bond is established early in life as a way to feel safe and connected, especially when one's parents weren't available or nurturing their needs, people go on to recreate these bonds in their adult relationships as a way to feel protected.

The degree of reliance on a fantasy bond is proportional to the degree of frustration and pain experienced in a person's developmental years.
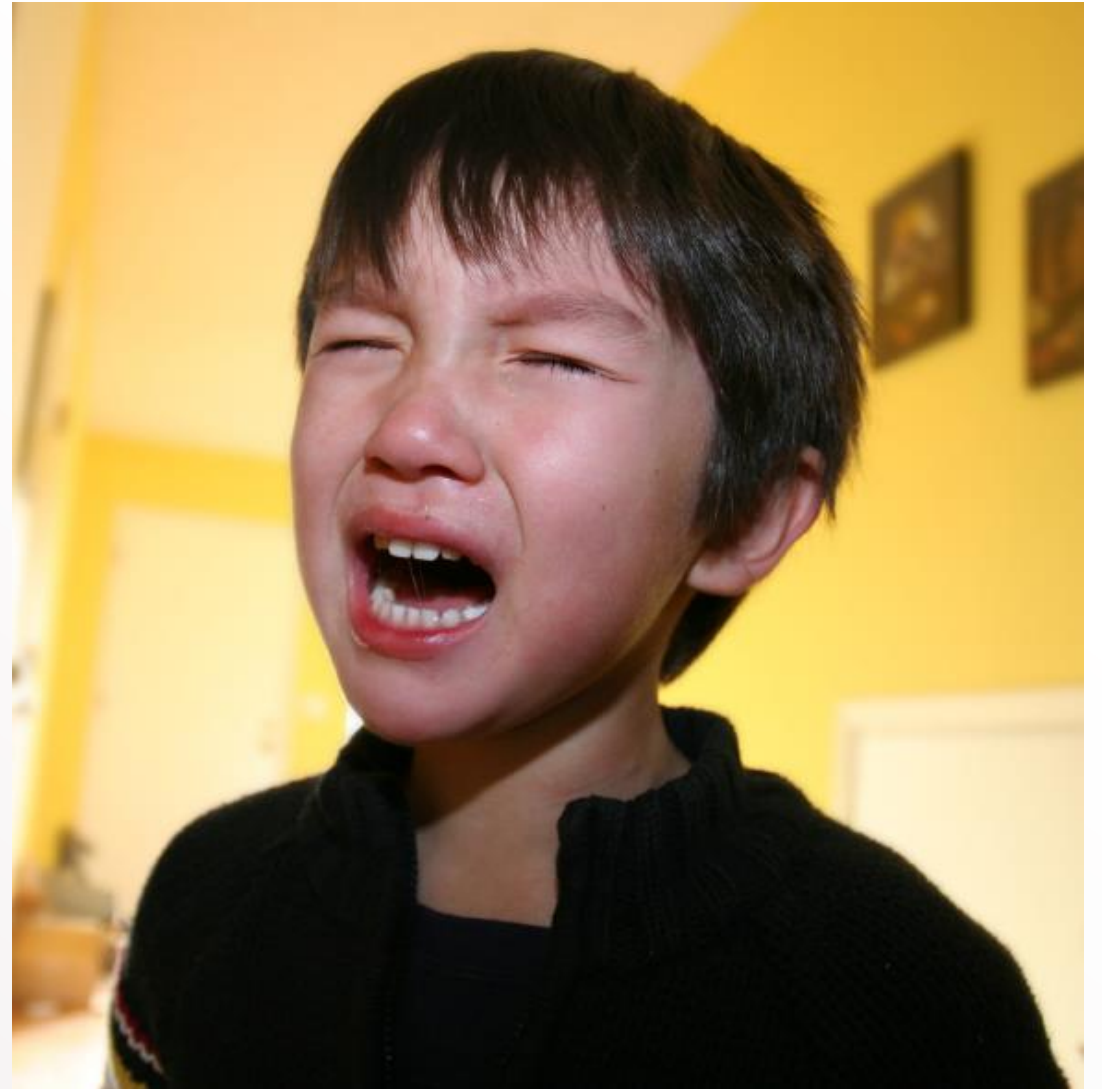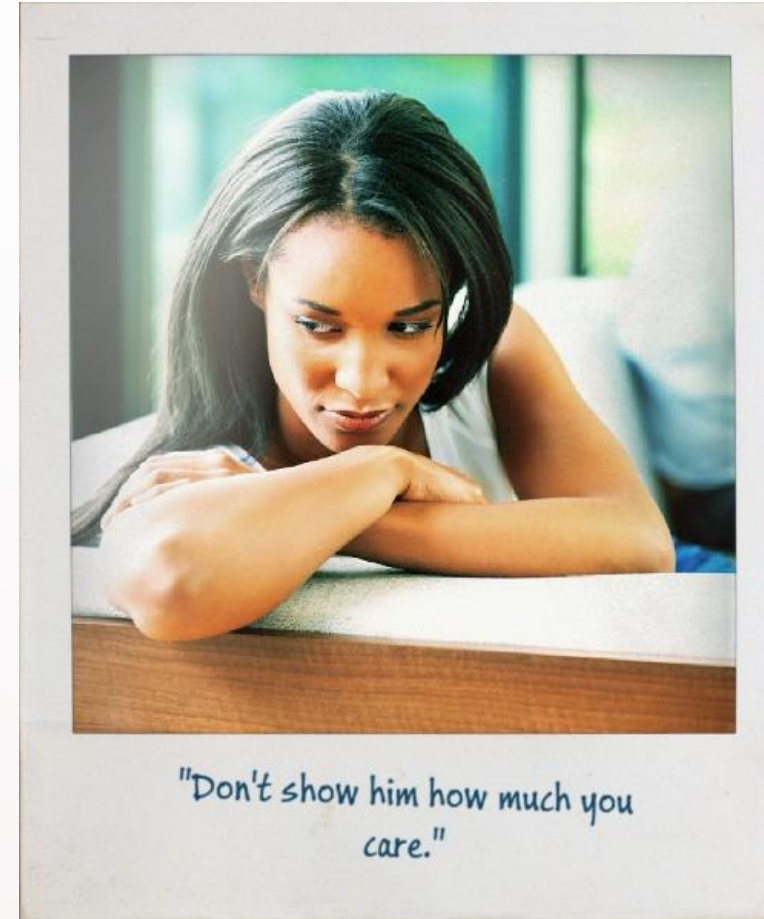
# The Critical Inner Voice

# What is the Critical Inner Voice?

- The critical inner voice is a well-integrated pattern of destructive thoughts toward ourselves and others.

- The nagging "voices" that make up this internalized dialogue are at the root of much of our self-destructive and maladaptive behavior.



"Don't show him how much you care."

# What is the Critical Inner Voice?

- The critical inner voice is not an auditory hallucination; it is experienced as thoughts within your head.

- This stream of destructive thoughts forms an anti-self that discourages individuals from acting in their best interest.



*"Just give up already!"*

The critical inner voice is not a conscience.

# The critical inner voice affects every aspect of our lives:

- Self-esteem and confidence

- Personal and intimate relationships

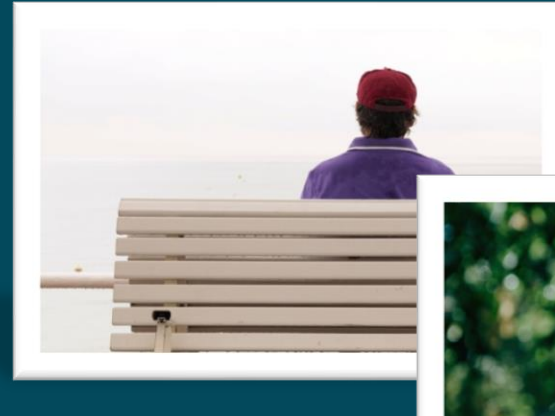- Performance and accomplishments at school and work

The "voices" that make up this internal dialogue are at the root of much of our maladaptive behavior.

## They foster:

- Inwardness
- Self-criticism
- Self-denial
- Distrust
- Addiction
- Retreat from goal-directed activities

# Common Critical Inner Voices

## About Yourself:
- You're ugly.
- You're stupid.
- You're not like other people.
- You'll never succeed, so why even try?

## About Your Career:
- You'll never be successful.
- No one appreciates your work.
- You're under too much pressure; you can't handle it.

## About Your Relationship:
- She doesn't care about you.
- You can't trust him.
- You're better off alone.
- Don't be vulnerable. You'll only get hurt.

"To this day, I can hear my mother's voice—harsh, accusing. 'Lost your mittens? You naughty kittens! Then you shall have no pie!'"

# Our Theory

## Each person is divided:

- One part wants to live and is goal-directed and life-affirming.
- One part is self-critical, self-hating and even self-destructive.
- The nature and degree of this division varies for each person.

**Real Self Positive**

**Anti-Self Critical**

# Our Theory

There is a relationship between these two continuums. How a person is thinking is predictive of how he or she is likely to behave.

Event → Thoughts → Feelings → Behavior

# Division of the Mind

**Parental Ambivalence**
Parents both love and hate themselves and extend both reactions to their productions, i.e., their children.

**Parental Nurturance**            **Parental Rejection, Neglect, Hostility**

# Prenatal Influences

**Disease Trauma**

**Substance Abuse/ Domestic Violence**

**Birth**

**Trauma**

**Baby**

Genetic
Structure
Temperament
Physicality
Sex

# Self-System
## Parental Nurturance

Unique make-up of the individual (genetic predisposition and temperament); harmonious identification and incorporation of parent's positive attitudes and traits and parents positive behaviors: attunement, affection, control, nurturance; and the effect of other nurturing experience and education on the maturing self-system resulting in a sense of self and a greater degree of differentiation from parents and early caretakers.

# Personal Attitudes/Goals/Conscience

**Realistic, Positive Attitudes Toward Self**

Realistic evaluation of talents, abilities, etc…with generally positive/compassionate attitude towards self and others

**Goals**

Needs, wants, search for meaning in life

**Moral Principles**

**Behavior**

Ethical behavior toward self and others

**Goal-Directed Behavior**

**Acting with Integrity**

# Anti-Self System

- **Unique vulnerability:** Genetic predisposition and temperament
- **Destructive parental behavior:** Misattunement, lack of affection, rejection, neglect, hostility, over permissiveness
- **Other Factors:** Accidents, illness, traumatic separation, death anxiety

## The Fantasy Bond

(core defense) is a self-parenting process made up of two elements: the helpless, needy child, and the self-punishing, self-nurturing parent. Either aspect may be extended to relationships. The degree of defense is proportional to the amount of damage sustained while growing up.
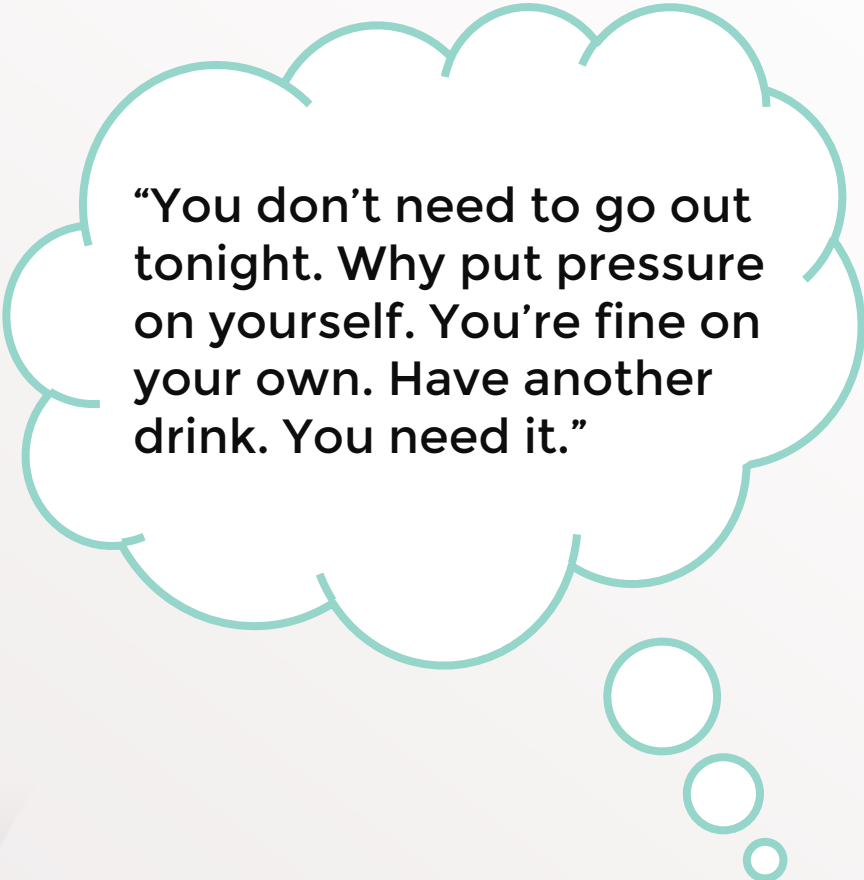
# Self-Parenting Process
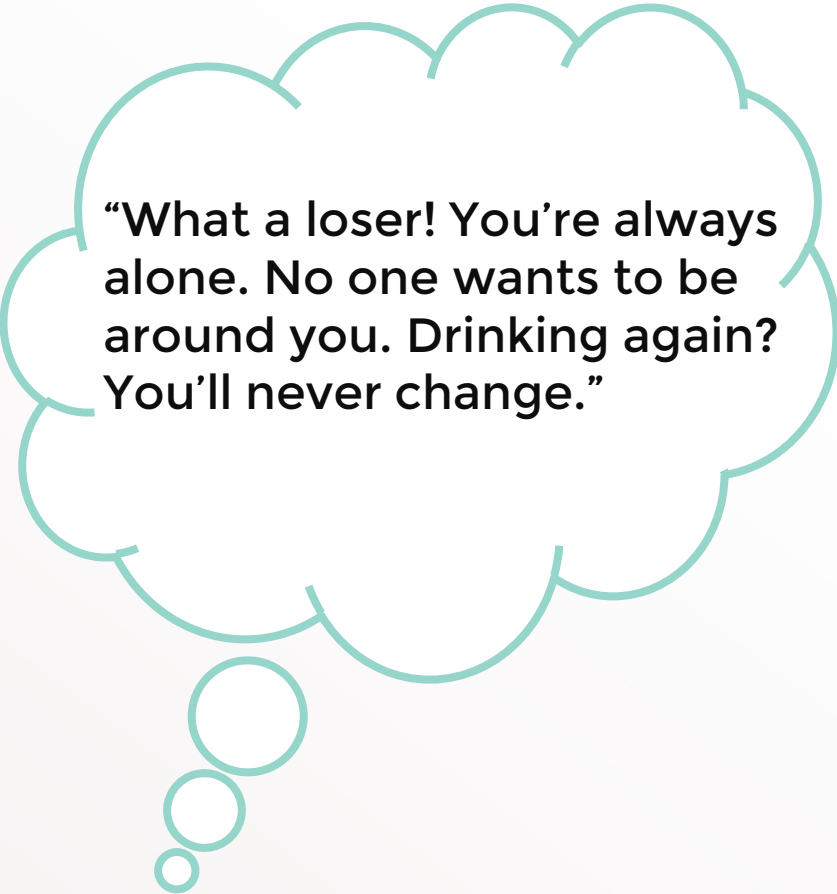
**Punishing**

**Soothing**

# Two Sides to the Critical Inner Voice

## Self-Soothing

"You don't need to go out tonight. Why put pressure on yourself. You're fine on your own. Have another drink. You need it."

## Self-Punishing

"What a loser! You're always alone. No one wants to be around you. Drinking again? You'll never change."

# Anti-Self System

**Self-Punishing Voice Process**

## Voice Process

1. Critical thoughts toward self

2. Micro-suicidal injunctions

3. Suicidal injunctions – suicidal ideation

## Behaviors

Verbal self-attacks – a generally negative attitude toward self and others predisposing alienation

Addictive patterns. Self-punitive thoughts after indulging

Actions that jeopardize, such as carelessness with one's body, physical attacks on the self, and actual suicide

# Anti-Self System
## Self-Soothing Voice Process

## Voice Process

1. Self Soothing Attitudes

2. Aggrandizing thought toward self

3. Suspicious paranoid thoughts towards others

4. Micro-suicidal injunctions

5. Overtly violent thoughts

## Behaviors

Self-limiting or self-protective lifestyles, Inwardness

Verbal build up toward self

Alienation from others, destructive behavior towards others

Addictive patterns. Thoughts luring the person into indulging

Aggressive actions, actual violence

# Voices Pass From Generation to Generation

# The Power of Our Words

- Neurological studies show that just flashing the word "NO" for less than a second causes dozens of stress-producing hormones and neurotransmitters to release in our brains.

- These chemicals interrupt the normal functioning of our brain, impairing logic, reason, language processing and communication.

- Seeing a list of negative words will make a highly anxious or depressed person feel worse. Ruminating on these words can damage structures that regulate memory, feelings and emotions.

- This can disrupt sleep, appetite, and one's ability to experience long-term happiness and satisfaction.

So what could the words of your "critical inner voice" be doing to you?

Part 2:

Help People Identify Their Critical Inner Voice

# Identifying the Critical Inner Voice

1. Recognize the events that trigger it
2. Recognize specific outside criticisms that support it
3. Become aware of times you may be projecting your self-attacks onto other people
4. Notice changes in your mood

# Identify Negative Thinking

## Are you…?

- **Filtering: You magnify the negative aspects of a situation and filter out all of the positive ones.**

- **Personalizing: When something bad occurs, you automatically blame yourself.**

- **Catastrophizing: You automatically assume and anticipate the worst.**

- **Polarizing: You see things only as either good or bad. There is no middle ground.**

Source: Mayo Clinic

# Our Measures

Based on Separation Theory developed by Robert W. Firestone, PhD. and represents a broadly based coherent system of concepts and hypothesis that integrates psychoanalytic and existential systems of thought. The theoretical approach focuses on internal negative thought processes. These thoughts (i.e. "voices") actually direct behavior and, thus, are likely to predict how an individual will behave.

# Uses for Our Measures

- × Risk Assessment
- × Treatment Planning
- × Targeting Intervention
- × Outcome Evaluation

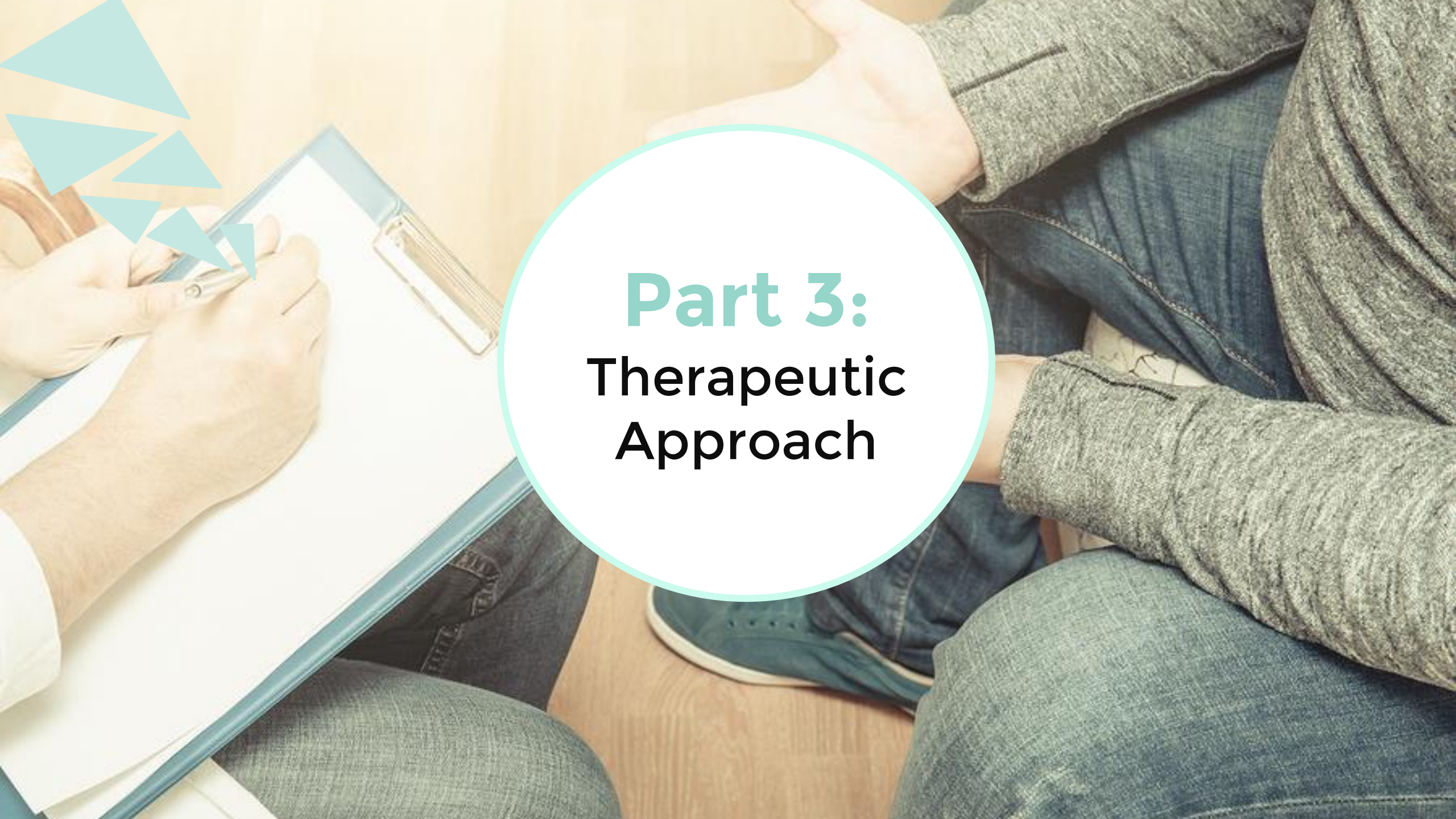# Firestone Assessment of Self-Destructive Thoughts

| | | Never | Rarely | Once in a While | Frequently | Most of the Time |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. | Just stay in the background. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 2. | Get them to leave you alone. You don't need them. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 3. | You'll save money by staying home. Why do you need to go out anyway? | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 4. | You better take something so you can relax with those people tonight. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |
| 5. | Don't buy that new outfit. Look at all the money you are saving. | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 |

**Part 3:**
Therapeutic Approach

# The Therapeutic Process in Voice Therapy

## Step I
The person is articulates his or her self-attacks in the second person and expresses any feelings that arise.

# The Therapeutic Process in Voice Therapy

## Step II
- The person discusses reactions to saying their voices.
- The person tries to understand the relationship   between these attacks and early life experiences.

# The Therapeutic Process in Voice Therapy

## Step III

- The person answers back to the voice attacks.
- The person makes a rational statement about how he/she really is.

# The Therapeutic Process in Voice Therapy

## Step IV

The person develops insight about how the voice attacks are influencing his or her present-day behaviors.
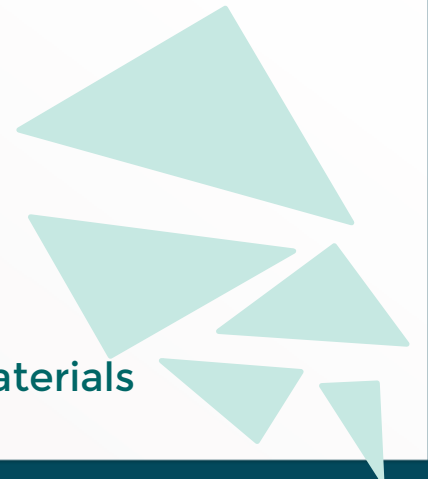
# The Therapeutic Process in Voice Therapy

## Step V

- The person collaborates with the therapist to plan changes in these behaviors.

- The person is encouraged to not engage in self-destructive behaviors and to increase the positive behaviors these negative thoughts discourage.

**Self**

**Anti-Self**

**C**urious
**O**pen
**A**ccepting
**L**oving

# Self-Compassion

*"Being touched by and not avoiding your suffering"*

**From Kristin Neff:**

*Self-compassion is not based on self-evaluation. It is not a way of judging ourselves positively; it is a way of relating to ourselves kindly.*

## Three Elements:

1.  **Self-kindness** Vs. Self-judgment
2.  **Mindfulness** Vs. Over-identification with thoughts
3.  **Common humanity** Vs. Isolation

# Benefits of Self-Compassion

- **Mechanism for change**
- **Lowers stress**
- **Buffers against negative social comparisons**

# Self-Compassion Vs. Self-Esteem

## Research from Dr. Kristin Neff:

## Self-Esteem

- Self-esteem refers to our sense of self-worth, perceived value or how much we like ourselves.

- Low self-esteem is problematic, however trying to have higher self-esteem can also be problematic.

- The need for high self-esteem may encourage us to ignore, distort or hide personal shortcomings so that we can't see ourselves accurately.

- Our self-esteem is often contingent on our latest success or failure, meaning that our self-esteem fluctuates.

# Reactions to Change

- **Fear** of the unknown or unfamiliar
- **Anxiety** over living free from your inner critic
- **Guilt** over surpassing people from your past
- **Sadness** about the preciousness of life

# Types of Resistance and Methods for Dealing With Them

Resistance is encountered in various
stages of the Voice Therapy process:

- Resistance to verbalizing destructive thoughts in the second person
- Resistance to feeling the accompanying emotion
- Resistance to discussing reactions to verbalizing the voice
- Resistance to answering back
- Resistance to formulating corrective suggestions
- Resistance to implementing corrective suggestions

# Thank you!

*See you at session 2 on March 24th.*

Information to purchase your CE Credits
will be shared after session 2.

**Questions?** Contact glendon@glendon.org