

Compassion Focused Therapy

Advanced Formulation

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[www: Compassionatemind.co.uk](http://www.Compassionatemind.co.uk)



Formulation

The CFT formulation integrates cognitive, emotive behavioural, and attachment models and focuses on four key domains.

1. Innate and historical influences that give rise to -
2. Key external and internal threats and fears that give rise to -
3. Externally focused and internally focused safety strategies that give rise to -
4. Unintended consequences - that fuel more distress, safety strategies and difficulties - including self-criticism

Assessment vs Formulation

Assessment is general (e.g, risk assessment)

- The symptoms and problems
- The nature of the difficulties

Formulations are model based

- The origins, nature and structure of safety strategies and defences
- The patient's competencies and abilities
- The therapeutic tasks
- The order of work

Excercises Safety Strategies

- What are safety strategies? Examples
- What is the difference between internally and externally focused SS
- When are safety stragies problematic and when not

Formulating

- Understanding how the past influences the present (explain to client – not just digging up)
- Awareness of people's abilities to think about their past, the emotions experienced, the avoidance of trauma memories etc
- Cannot rely on history alone because key difficulties may lay in *current* processing competencies/difficulties or be screened out of conscious access or are unprocessed.

The Formulation

Our experiences together with our evolved brains results in **key threats/fears** around harms, injuries and losses –thwarted developmental needs

These can be external and internal

It is understandable that the individual engages in a range of **safety strategies** aimed at protection

These safety strategies give rise in **unintended consequences**

The individual engages in (further) defenses such as **self attacking**, and can experience a range of **emotions**, **reflects** and **feels trapped**

Things to notice

- Yours and their Non verbal communication
- How person talks about themselves - their motives, emotions, memories and hopes
- Reflective function (mind of self and others)
- Drop in and out of mentalizing?

Formulating Within CFT

External key events

Critical mother

Distant father

School bully

Internal reactions

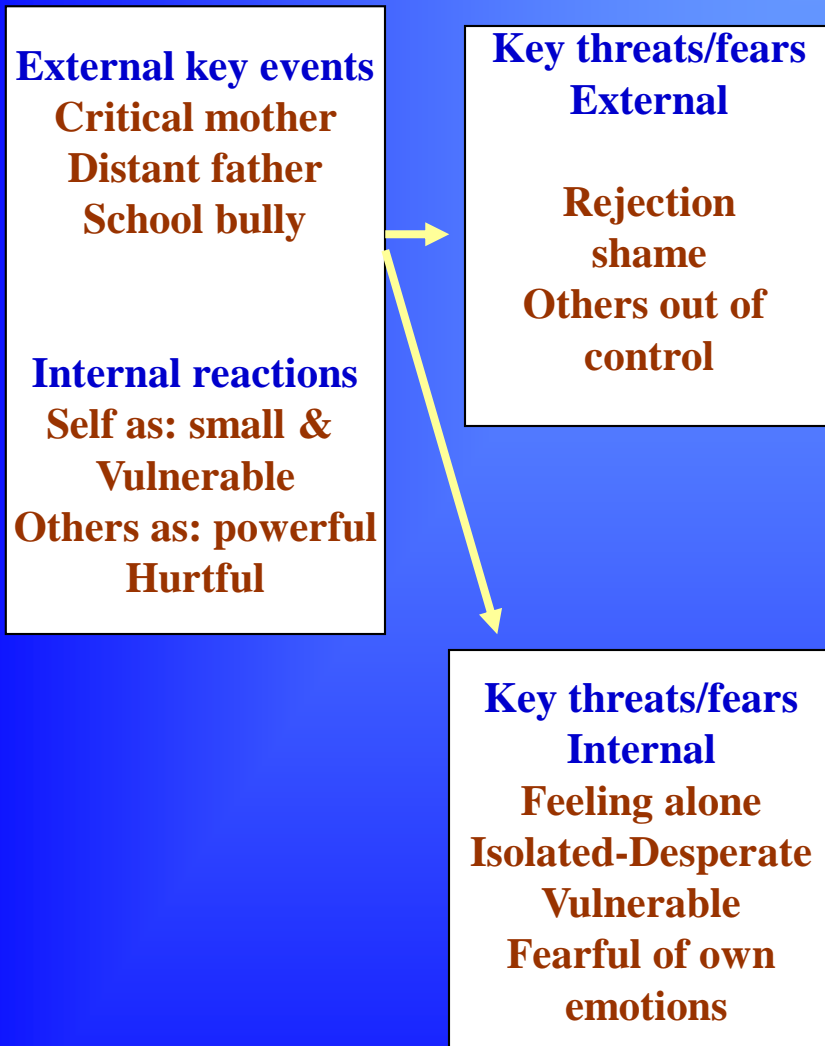
Self as: small &

Vulnerable

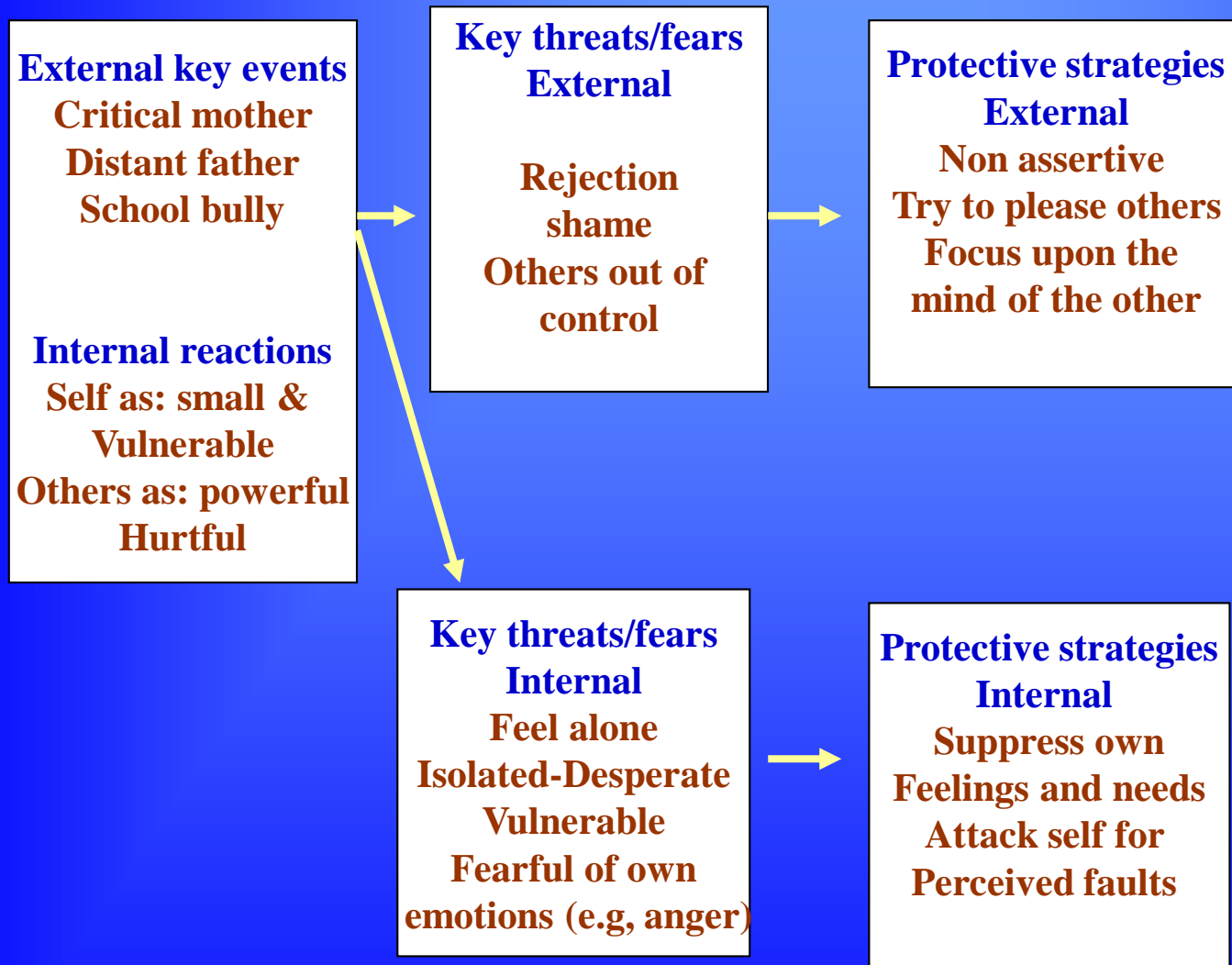
Others as: powerful

Hurtful

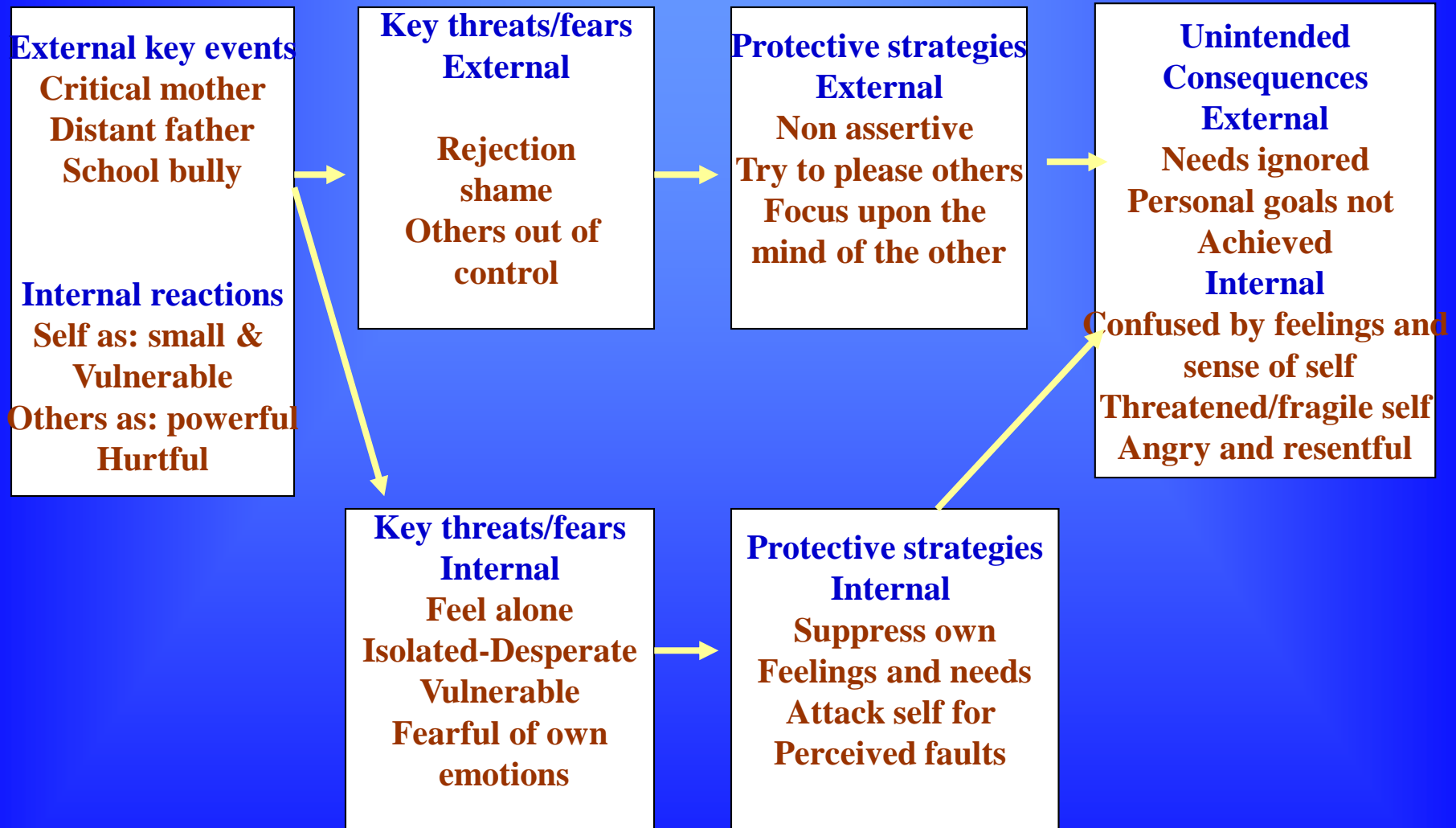
Formulating within CFT



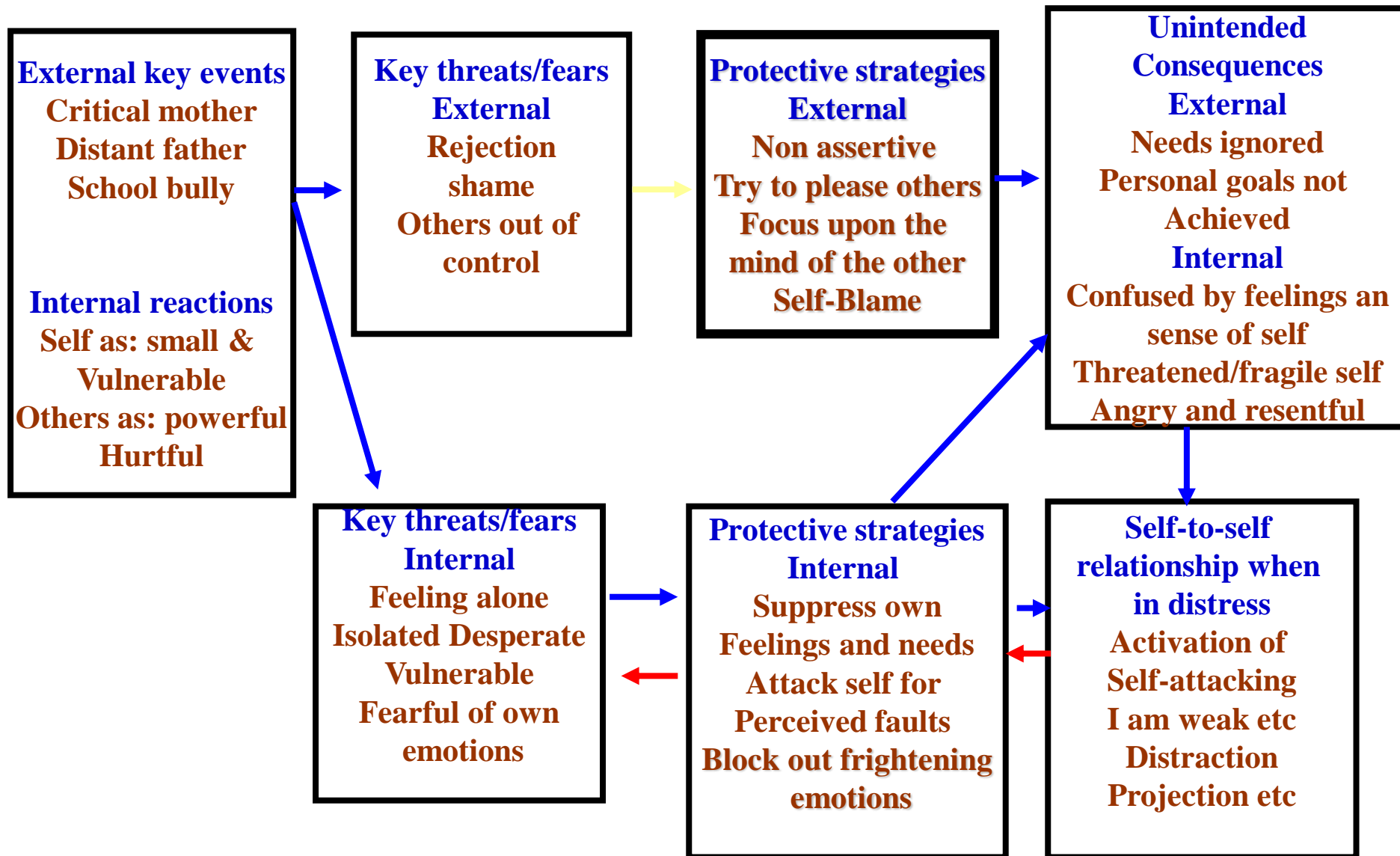
Formulating within CFT



Formulating within CFT



Formulating within CFT



Background

Others as critical,
overprotective,
wanted but distant
father

Key fears

Stimulating anger
rejection, powerless,
being alone

Safety Strategies

Threat focused

Withdraw

Be as others want

Hide/avoid emotions

Unintended Cs

Others don't see me as a
person

Feel worthless

Controlled by others

No sense of self

Develop *feeling* compassion for
background and safety strategies via
experience, explanation of the science &
formulation

Understanding our
minds, not our fault

Compassionate acceptance and
integration of multi-self

Compassion imagery, focus (e.g.
attention, behaviour) and reframe

Self-attack
Shame

Depressed, angry,
anxious

Well-being



Fusion of Emotions

Fusion of Emotions

classical conditioning

Emotions that fire together wire together

**Look for experiences of fear with aloneness;
anger with fear/guilt/shame --- aloneness**

**Most prominent emotions may not be the most
problematic –use multiple selves exercise to reveal
relationships between emotions**

Track aloneness/disconnection experiences

Key to CFT is the History

Aloneness

Disconnection

Associations of threat 'meanings' in shame-traumas

FROM OTHER

ARISING IN SELF

Emotion and intent
flowing from the other
e.g. Aggression/contempt

Alone – no help/rescue
Others are frightened
or joining in (bullying)

Verbal labels
defining the self
stupid/bad

THREAT

Intense sense of fear-
rage-contempt

Entrapment

Acute sense of self as
'under attack' and
defined

Sense of having
done something
wrong/terrible

Shame-threat memories, scenes and themes

- If I think about it I become upset and cant get it out of my mind (rumination)
- Images from the memory can powerfully affect me (imagery - emotionally reactivity)
- I try not to think about it (avoidance)
- Unwanted thoughts memories pop into my mind (intrusion)
- I feel these events have shaped me (centrality)

Exercise

What have we learned from this way of formulating

Formulation 2

- Using the 3 circles
- Draw out, using size, to show how dominant each one is for you
- What key things in your life influenced how they developed
- In what way might these be out of balance and what might that mean for you
- How do you move in and out of each system

Types of Affect Regulator Systems

Drive, excite, vitality

Content, safe, connected

