

Sample Schema Therapy Syllabus With Embedded Deliberate Practice Exercises

APPENDIX

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This appendix provides a sample one-semester, three-unit course dedicated to teaching schema therapy (ST). This course is appropriate for graduate students (master's and doctoral) at all levels of training, including first-year students who have not yet worked with clients. We present it as a model that can be adapted to a specific program's contexts and needs. For example, instructors may borrow portions of it to use in other courses, in practica, in didactic training events at externships and internships, in workshops, and in continuing education for postgraduate therapists.

Course Title: Schema Therapy: Theory and Deliberate Practice

Course Description

This course teaches the theory, principles, and core skills of ST. As a course with both didactic and practicum elements, it will review the theoretical model of ST and its change process, the therapist style and intervention of limited reparenting, and the treatment outcome research supporting the effectiveness of the ST approach, and it will foster the use of deliberate practice to enable students to acquire key ST skills.

Course Objectives

Students who complete this course will be able to do the following:

1. Describe the core theory, concepts, and skills of ST
2. Apply the principles of deliberate practice for career-long clinical skill development
3. Demonstrate 12 key ST skills
4. Explain clients' current problems in schema therapy terms
5. Develop client homework corresponding to each session

Date	Lecture and Discussion	Skills Lab	Homework ^a
Week 1	Introduction to schema therapy (ST): theory, history, and research; process and outcome research	Lecture on principles of deliberate practice; deliberate practice research	<p>To read before Week 1: Behary et al. (2023, Chapter 1); Young et al. (2003, Chapter 1, pp. 1–62)</p> <p>Optional reading before Week 1: Edwards & Arntz (2012, Chapter 1, pp. 3–26); Farrell & Shaw (2022)</p> <p>Week 1 homework (for next class): Young et al. (2003, Chapter 6, pp. 177–220); Roediger et al. (2018, Chapter 5, pp. 83–107)</p>
Week 2	Developing a working alliance; bonding and emotional regulation	Exercise 1: Understanding and Attunement	Roediger et al. (2018, Chapter 7, pp. 125–142); Farrell & Shaw (2018, Modules 12 & 20)
Week 3	The healthy adult mode; focus on accessing and supporting client's strengths and abilities	Exercise 2: Supporting and Strengthening the Healthy Adult Mode	Young et al. (2003, Chapters 2 & 3, pp. 63–99)
Week 4	Introducing early maladaptive schemas and their role in current problems	Exercise 3: Schema Education: Beginning to Understand Current Problems in Schema Therapy Terms	Young et al. (2003, Chapter 7, pp. 207–270); Farrell & Shaw (2018, Module 6)
Week 5	Basic concepts of the ST model's etiology of psychological problems	Exercise 4: Linking Unmet Needs, Schema, and Presenting Problem	Young et al. (2018, Chapter 8, pp. 271–305); Roediger et al. (2018, Chapter 4, pp. 57–82)
Week 6	Identifying the role of demanding/punitive inner critic modes in current problems	Exercise 5: Education About Maladaptive Schema Modes	Farrell et al. (2014, pp. 95–98, 267–280); Farrell & Shaw (2018, Module 8)
Week 7	Mode awareness for the maladaptive coping modes	Exercise 6: Recognizing the Mode Shifts of the Maladaptive Coping Modes	Farrell et al. (2014, pp. 99–102); Farrell & Shaw (2018, Module 10)
Week 8	Mode awareness for the demanding/punitive inner critic mode	Exercise 7: Identifying the Presence of the Demanding/Punitive Inner Critic Mode	Farrell et al. (2014, pp. 103–110); Young et al. (2003, Chapters 1 & 2, pp. 4–76); Farrell & Shaw (2018, Module 5)
Week 9	First case conceptualization due (Problem Analysis Plan and Mode Map), self-evaluation, self-reflection	Exercise 14: Mock Schema Therapy Sessions	Farrell et al. (2014, pp. 292–316); Farrell & Shaw (2018, Modules 14 & 15)
Week 10	Mode awareness for the angry and vulnerable child modes	Exercise 8: Identifying the Presence of the Angry and Vulnerable Child Modes	Farrell et al. (2014, pp. 10–15); Roediger et al. (2018, pp. 119–122)
Week 11	Limited reparenting, corrective emotional experiences for the child modes	Exercise 9: Limited Reparenting for the Angry and Vulnerable Child Modes	Farrell et al. (2014, pp. 280–291); Farrell & Shaw (2018, Module 11); Behary (2021, Chapters 7 & 9); Behary (2020, pp. 227–237)
Week 12	Limited reparenting to challenge the demanding/punitive inner critic mode	Exercise 10: Limited Reparenting for the Demanding/Punitive Inner Critic Mode	Roediger et al. (2018, pp. 112–119); Farrell et al. (2014, pp. 267–280); Behary & Dieckmann (2013, Chapter 17)
Week 13	Empathic confrontation	Exercise 11: Limited Reparenting for the Maladaptive Coping Modes: Empathic Confrontation	Young et al. (2003, Chapter 5, pp. 146–176); Farrell & Shaw (2018, Module 11)
Week 14	Mode management and behavioral pattern breaking	Exercise 12: Implementing Behavioral Pattern Breaking Through Homework Assignments	ISST example of case conceptualization
Week 15	Second case conceptualization due, final exam, self-evaluation, skill coaching feedback, self-reflection	Exercise 13: Annotated Schema Therapy Practice Session Transcript	None

Note. ISST = International Society of Schema Therapy.

^aHomework is for the next class. The citations included are located in the Required Readings section.

Format of Class

Classes are 3 hours long. Course time is split evenly between learning ST theory and acquiring ST skills:

Lecture/Discussion Class: Each week, there will be one Lecture/Discussion class for 1.5 hours focusing on ST theory and related research.

ST Skills Lab: Each week there will be one ST Skills Lab for 1.5 hours. Skills Labs are for practicing ST skills using the exercises in this book. The exercises use therapy simulations (role-plays) with the following goals:

1. Build trainees' skill and confidence for using ST skills with real clients
2. Provide a safe space for experimenting with different therapeutic interventions, without fear of making mistakes
3. Provide plenty of opportunity to explore and "try on" different styles of therapy, so trainees can ultimately discover their own personal, unique therapy style

Mock Sessions: Once in the semester (Week 9), trainees will do a psychotherapy mock session in the ST Skills Lab. In contrast to highly structured and repetitive deliberate practice exercises, a psychotherapy mock session is an unstructured and improvised role-played therapy session. Mock sessions let trainees

1. practice using ST skills responsively,
2. experiment with clinical decision making in an unscripted context,
3. discover their personal therapeutic style, and
4. build endurance for working with real clients.

Homework

Homework will be assigned each week and will include reading, 1 hour of skills practice with an assigned practice partner, and occasional writing assignments. For the skills practice homework, trainees will repeat the exercise they did for that week's ST Skills Lab. Because the instructor will not be there to evaluate performance, trainees should instead complete the Deliberate Practice Reaction Form, as well as the Deliberate Practice Diary Form, for themselves as a self-evaluation.

Case Conceptualization Assignments

Students are to complete two case conceptualizations: one due at midterm and one due at the last day of class. These should be based on the trainees' therapy cases with real clients.

Vulnerability, Privacy, and Boundaries

This course is aimed at developing ST skills, self-awareness, and interpersonal skills in an experiential framework as relevant to clinical work. This course is not psychotherapy or a substitute for psychotherapy. Students should interact at a level of self-disclosure that is personally comfortable and helpful to their own learning. Although becoming aware of internal emotional and psychological processes is necessary for a therapist's development, it is not necessary to reveal all that information to the trainer. It is important for students to sense their own level of safety and privacy. Students are not evaluated on the level of material that they choose to reveal in the class.

In accordance with the *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (American Psychological Association, 2017), students are **not required to disclose personal**

information. Because this class is about developing both interpersonal and ST competence, following are some important points so that students are fully informed as they make choices to self-disclose:

- Students choose how much, when, and what to disclose. Students are not penalized for the choice not to share personal information.
- The learning environment is susceptible to group dynamics much like any other group space, and therefore students may be asked to share their observations and experiences of the class environment with the singular goal of fostering a more inclusive and productive learning environment.

Confidentiality

To create a safe learning environment that is respectful of client and therapist information and diversity and to foster open and vulnerable conversation in class, students are required to agree to strict confidentiality within and outside of the instruction setting.

Evaluation

Self-Evaluation: At the end of the semester (Week 15), trainees will perform a self-evaluation. This will help trainees track their progress and identify areas for further development.

Grading Criteria

As designed, students would be accountable for the level and quality of their performance in

- the Discussion classes,
- the Skills Lab (exercises and mock sessions),
- homework, and
- midterm and final case conceptualizations.

Required Readings

- Behary, W. T. (2020). The art of empathic confrontation and limit-setting. In G. Heath & H. Startup (Eds.), *Creative methods in schema therapy: Advances and innovation in clinical practice* (pp. 227–236). Routledge.
- Behary, W. (2021). *Disarming the narcissist* (3rd ed.). New Harbinger Publications.
- Behary, W. T., & Dieckmann, E. (2013). Schema therapy for pathological narcissism: The art of adaptive reparenting. In J. S. Ogradniczuk (Ed.), *Understanding and treating pathological narcissism* (pp. 285–300). American Psychological Association.
- Behary, W. T., Farrell, J. M., Vaz, A., & Rousmaniere, T. (2023). *Deliberate practice in schema therapy*. American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000326-000>
- Farrell, J. M., Reiss, N., & Shaw, I. A. (2014). *The schema therapy clinician's guide: A complete resource for building and delivering individual, group and integrated schema mode treatment programs*. John Wiley & Sons. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118510018>
- Farrell, J. M., & Shaw, I. A. (2018). *Experiencing schema therapy from the inside out: A self-practice/self-reflection workbook for therapists*. Guilford Press.
- Roediger, E., Stevens, B. A., & Brockman, R. (2018). *Contextual schema therapy*. New Harbinger Publications.
- Young, J. E., Klosko, J. S. & Weishaar, M. E. (2003). *Schema therapy: A practitioner's guide*. Guilford Press.

Suggested Readings

- Behary, W. (2012). Schema therapy for narcissism: A case study. In M. van Vreeswijk, J. Broersen, & M. Nadort (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell handbook of schema therapy: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 81–90). Wiley-Blackwell.
- Behary, W., & Dieckmann, E. (2011). Schema therapy for narcissism: The art of empathic confrontation, limit-setting, and leverage. In W. K. Campbell & J. D. Miller (Eds.), *The handbook of narcissism and narcissistic personality disorder: Theoretical approaches, empirical findings, and treatments* (pp. 445–456). John Wiley & Sons.
- Edwards, D., & Arntz, A. (2012). Schema therapy in historical perspective. In M. van Vreeswijk, J. Broersen, & M. Nadort (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell handbook of schema therapy: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 3–26). Wiley-Blackwell. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781119962830.ch1>
- Farrell, J., & Shaw, I. A. (2022). Schema therapy: Conceptualization and treatment of personality disorders. In S. K. Huprich (Ed.), *Personality disorders and pathology: Integrating clinical assessment and practice in the DSM-5 and ICD-11 era* (pp. 281–304). American Psychological Association. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0000310-013>
- Rafaeli, E., Bernstein, D. P., & Young, J. (2010). *Schema therapy: Distinctive features*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203841709>