



WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT

Schema therapy groups

Schema therapy, developed by Jeffrey Young, blends CBT with attachment, Gestalt, and psychodynamic ideas. It targets early maladaptive schemas: deep beliefs about yourself and the world that form when core needs go unmet in childhood. The group uses both cognitive and experiential tools, like imagery rescripting and chair work, to change them.

WHO IT'S FOR, AND WHO IT'S NOT

- A fit for longstanding patterns that shorter-term treatments haven't shifted.
- Not for acute crisis, active psychosis, or severe substance use. In crisis? Call or text 988.
- Very high shame or sensitivity may call for individual schema therapy first.

What it's used for

Originally for personality disorders, especially BPD, and chronic depression and anxiety.

Now also eating disorders, substance use, relationship difficulties, and complex trauma.

Best when difficulties feel deeply rooted and recur across relationships, not situational.

WHAT TO EXPECT

- 1 Sessions usually run 90 minutes, mixing teaching, experiential work, and discussion.
- 2 You'll learn schemas and modes, then work them through imagery and chair dialogues.
- 3 The therapist is active and directive. Emotional intensity is common.

Schema therapy has a growing and increasingly strong evidence base.

- A pilot of combined group and individual schema therapy for BPD found **large reductions in BPD symptoms, depression, and anxiety**, held at follow-up.¹
- A 2024 trial vs. group CBT for social anxiety with avoidant PD found both helped, with schema therapy stronger on personality outcomes.²

MAKING THE MOST OF IT

Notice schemas firing. The room activates them in real time.

Try the new response. Change comes through doing, not insight alone.

Give it several sessions. Relational trust builds slowly.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU JOIN

- 1 Is the leader trained in schema therapy, and through which body?
- 2 How many sessions? Schema work runs longer than CBT or DBT.
- 3 What does it cost? Is there a sliding scale option?

Ready to find a group?

Browse 2,000+ therapy and support groups in all 50 states.

Free to browse · No account needed · thegroupguide.com



If you're in crisis, call or text 988.

The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact. Sources on page 2.



Sources

Schema therapy groups · references keyed to the numbers on page 1.

- 1 Dickhaut, V., & Arntz, A. Combined group and individual schema therapy for borderline personality disorder: a pilot study. *Journal of Behavior Therapy and Experimental Psychiatry* (2014).
- 2 Baljé, A. E., et al. Group schema therapy versus group cognitive behavioral therapy for social anxiety disorder with comorbid avoidant personality disorder: a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of Anxiety Disorders* (2024).

If you're in crisis, call or text 988.

The Group Guide is a directory, not a clinic. This handout is general education, not medical or mental health advice. Listings are written by group leaders and are not endorsements. Confirm details, cost, and fit with any group you contact.