

In a typical IFS session, we might work with these Protectors from a place of Self (mostly feeling compassion, curiosity, and acceptance towards the parts) to discover their motivations. When we find the Exiles that they are protecting, we retrieve them from the past, unburden and release their painful feelings, and invite them to reclaim qualities that had been split off or lost in the past. We set up and maintain a nurturing relationship between Self and Exile. When the Protectors see that the Exiles have been exposed without negative consequence, they can unburden the extreme nature of their roles.

However, in certain situations, such as leading a therapy session, we don't have time to go through those steps. In this case, if there is enough Self-energy in the system, we can simply ask the parts to step aside. Sometimes, we might need to briefly feel and welcome the Exile that they are protecting. In Part 2 of this article, we'll look at how this might play out in a Supervision class before beginning a session.