

A Guide to Integrating the Youniverse in Therapy

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First and foremost, I would like to thank David Cantor for letting me join him in the adventure of writing a handbook for his beautiful invention of the Youniverse. It has been a joy to work together and come up with a way to teach how therapists can use the Youniverse with their clients.

Thanks also to Pam Krause, Toni-Herbine Blanc, and Michael Mithoefer who have each proofread chapters and collaborated with us to find a clear way of expressing what we would like to present. Thank you to Michi Rose, my therapist, for her gentle humor, and to my husband, Tom, for his encouragement and editing skills.

Thank you to Richard Schwartz for lending us the Internal Family Systems (IFS) model that touches our hearts and minds.

Many of my parts were tickled that David and I were able to build a wider team to support us in this task. IFS teaches us to recognize and work with our internal parts, but it also takes a wider look at our external relationships. It was especially meaningful to us to find the support and teamwork that flowed into this handbook.

Our wish is that many therapists will start using the Youniverse with their clients because we have loved using it in our own work. We believe that the Youniverse is an exciting tool that makes systems work with clients easy and impacting. We are glad you are considering learning about the Youniverse, and we wish you in your personal journey and in your journey with your clients much joy and satisfaction,

Sabine Boots, LMFT

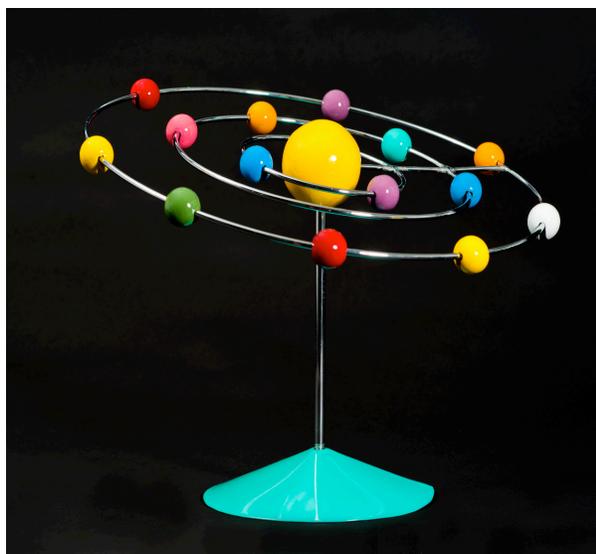
Note: We changed client names and client identification (such as gender, age, and family constellation) throughout the Guidebook to maintain client confidentiality

Introduction

The idea for the Youniverse came to me as a first waking thought...an inner world image bright and clear in my mind's eye.

I saw at once the potential it offered as a visual tool in therapeutic work and set about the journey to bring it to tangible life. Today, three years later, it is a patented device being used by hundreds of helping professionals and many more clients, parents and families in easing the path inward, finding center, communicating inner dramas, connecting with core feelings, and unburdening self-doubt.

The Youniverse is inspired by the grace and simplicity of the Internal Family Systems™(IFS) model of psychotherapy which underscores the warm and wise power of our center-core “Self”, represented by the *Big Bright Ball* central sphere, to help and heal the “Parts” of us in pain, represented by the attachable, smaller colored orbs.



Applying IFS terminology, the inner ring can represent parts serving “Manager” roles who want to **prevent** pain from happening, the middle ring, parts serving “Firefighter” roles who want to **sooth** or **distract** when pain is felt and the outer ring, parts put into “Exile” for fear their **pain and vulnerability** might be too much for the system.

By placing parts around a compassionate, “seeing” Self, clients find a new means to communicate with the landscape of their inner worlds and client and therapist find a new means to communicate with one another, crossing the interpersonal bridge.

The Youniverse swivels our attention. It beckons us to notice it and then, in using it, to notice ourselves. A concrete, visual model like this one can help bring to the table thoughts and feelings difficult to bring forth in a narrative way and affords unique opportunities for insight and working with, otherwise overwhelming, emotional material.

The Youniverse is accompanied by, *The Big Bright Ball Answers the Call*, an illustrated storybook, which I often read out loud to encourage that first, crucial “You-turn” inward.

I invite you to read and enjoy this Guide written by my friend and colleague, Sabine Boots, LMFT for a comprehensive and compelling explanation of the learning theory underlying the Youniverse as well as its many possible applications.

I want to thank Sabine for gifting her enthusiasm, wisdom, and dedication to Self-led communication, all of which come to life in the pages that follow.

I want to thank Dick Schwartz and his wonderfully elegant and exceedingly practical Internal Family Systems(IFS) model of therapy. His is the best model I know for compassion-based work.

Creative Applications in the Therapy Room

When I talk with other therapists, I notice that many of us get stuck with clients who seem resistant to our favorite way of doing therapy. All of us are attached to the models we love and the way we have helped clients succeed in the past. Many of the clients we struggle with are slow to talk about their feelings and seem introverted or even defiant, yet they would love for us to provide help in symptom relief.

“This client wants a magic pill, but is not doing the work,” I’ve heard, or, “This client is just not ready to be in therapy yet.” For many clients who struggle in talk therapy, I’ve found that creative applications can help open some doors into productive therapeutic work.

In her book, *The Body Remembers: Casebook*,¹ Babette Rothschild asks the therapist not to be a “one-trick pony” and recommends the following:

Adapt the therapy to the client, rather than expecting the client to adapt to the therapy. This requires that the therapist be familiar with several theory and treatment models.

Many times in therapy, I’ve thought of Babette’s words, and her advice has prompted me to explore new ways of connecting and working with clients.

In this handbook, we would like to introduce you to a new tool for therapy that has enriched many of our clients’ experiences in therapy. The Youniverse can be especially valuable with clients who have a difficult time expressing their feelings and emotions verbally. With the Youniverse clients can, instead, use this innovative visual communication tool to externalize their inner drama and displace their painful emotions in a more concrete fashion.

The Youniverse falls into the category of tools and creative applications that are typically not part of traditional talk therapy. As I shared my enthusiasm about the Youniverse with my colleagues, I realized that many therapists do not feel comfortable using creative tools or understand how it could be helpful to clients. The Youniverse is a wonderful example of an innovative and intuitive application that holds many benefits for some of our clients. In this chapter, I would like to share some of my thoughts on why tools like the Youniverse can complement our therapy.

As a former teacher, I have often spent time thinking of how my students integrate information. I was taught to present learning materials in oral, visual and kinesthetic ways in order to serve my students’ different learning styles. Learning was based on experiencing and on engaging the whole person. We learned that if content was presented in several ways (visual, oral, kinesthetic) the learning process would be faster and more deeply entrenched. I started thinking of learning and integrating information as a multifaceted process. Additionally, I realized that kids loved learning when the content

¹ Rothschild B. (2000), *The Body Remembers*. New York: W. W. Norton & Company.

was presented in ways they found appealing and unthreatening. When they were happy and unafraid, their brains opened up to retaining their lessons.

As I changed my profession and started studying to be a Marriage and Family Therapist, I realized that I needed to pay less attention to teaching my clients lessons, and instead focus on observing and listening intently to my clients so that I could mirror their inner world back to them. I was asked to facilitate an environment in which my clients would be able to add the puzzle pieces of their emotions, needs, and values together so that they could find their own path towards solving their questions. I was discouraged from bringing handouts and tools into the therapy room and taught to let my clients talk about their perceptions.

Language, therefore, was to be the primary vehicle for moving towards self-discovery and self-healing. As I was able to watch many student sessions through a one-way-mirror, I often felt that sessions were repetitive in nature. Clients seemed to talk about similar material for weeks at a time, without much change occurring. The tone of the sessions often seemed somber. I felt discouraged about the value of therapy in our clients' lives.

I wondered why tools that facilitated insight and learning in the classroom were thought inappropriate in the therapy room. How could we maintain an atmosphere of introspection and client-led self-discovery, yet enrich the therapy environment? How could we bring elements into our sessions that let clients experience and express their feelings and assumptions in diverse ways?

During that time, I was able to take a play therapy class with Dr. Eliana Gil, a child trauma specialist. This class focused on experiential learning through the use of miniatures and a sand tray. Puppets, crafts, and drawing techniques were introduced as additional venues for child therapy. I was very surprised to see how quickly the play therapy techniques elicited a depth of emotional experience and expression in the adult student population. Nothing of that nature had ever happened in any of the other classes. Dr. Gil explained that the use of images in play would bypass the clients' critical thinking, thus leading more quickly and accurately to the client's core feelings. Suddenly, therapy was colorful, materials were stimulating, and they invited a wide range of expressive emotions.

At the end of the semester, Dr. Gil invited the rest of the faculty to witness the play therapies that each student group had developed. However, none of the other professors came to class. This strengthened my suspicion that play therapy was deemed a lesser academic venue of therapy, and possibly in some therapists' minds, a lesser form of therapy. Perhaps, play therapy was truly thought of as a venue only for children and not appropriate for adult clients. Yet in the class, the techniques had worked wonders on the adult student population.

Soon thereafter in my own private practice, I treated a boy with selective mutism. I was relieved to have games, play therapy figures, a sand tray, puppets, child meditation stories, crayons, and play-dough in my room. The child participated very well and processed emotional content when asked to express himself in those ways, yet froze when asked to verbally answer a question. I also realized that the child meditation and play therapy segments had a deeply calming and reassuring effect on the mother. When the father joined therapy, he was able to express himself in creative ways that made

more sense to his son, and opened the father's range of expression. After twelve sessions of individual and family therapy, the child started speaking both at home and at school.

This case showed me again that not only children have a difficult time expressing what they are feeling inside; the same applies for many adults. The experiential therapy had benefited the parents as well as their child. I saw this more clearly when I moved from general family therapy to treating clients with eating disorders. The pace of the sessions seemed painfully slow as I tried to ask my clients question after question hoping to engage them. I felt that clients wanted to participate but that the format of talk therapy was at times too difficult for them. The clients' own feelings and behaviors were puzzling to them, and their socially withdrawn style did not lend itself to talking freely with a therapist.

Very gingerly, I started integrating play therapy techniques — first with my eating disordered clients, then with a wider range of adult clients — only to be delighted at how quickly clients lost their reserved manner in the room and thoughtfully participated. Clients were quickly able to use meaningful metaphors they had developed with concrete materials. The work with miniatures and drawing exercises helped clients see internal connections and inner conflict. Processing took place on an intuitive level and resulted in new awareness and integration. Additionally, I realized that creative applications could build a holding environment for clients, a kind of map that created safety and orientation for emotional processes to take place.

I wondered if we had not limited the therapy field in ways that might hinder a complementary enrichment from other disciplines. In my own practice, I discovered that the more I could adjust my style of therapy to the client's preference of expression, the more my client participated in the session in an engaged and open way. Many clients were open to trying out techniques like working with miniatures (small play figures), drawings, relaxation techniques, games, sculpting, visualizations, and writing exercises. Some of my clients preferred to talk and would never want to engage in another style of therapy; others, however, were grateful for other ways of processing. When I compare my experiences to how our brains store and process information, it makes sense to me why some creative tools and techniques work better for some of my clients than talk therapy alone.

The prefrontal cortex (the frontal area of the brain) is the center for logical thinking and problem solving. However, brain research shows us that memory can be stored in various, unprocessed states in different locations of the brain and thus be unavailable through the logical thought process. The brain perceives images, sounds, touch, movement, smells, etc., in distinct areas of the brain.

A complex memory is formed by neuro-connections in the brain, a kind of street map connecting, for example, a *smell* with a *person* with an *emotion* with a *place in time*. If the connections do not exist between different pieces of the memory, clients cannot access them meaningfully or process them accordingly. This is especially true for memories that are encoded during extreme stress. Neuroscientists and some therapists contend that due to the outpouring of stress hormones during times of duress, the memories are not stored as resolved memories, but in fragments all over the brain.

Trauma memories are not absorbed by the thinking brain, the way ordinary memories are. Rather, they are shelved in disconnected sensory fragments, somatic sensations, and muscular impulses, in the more primitive areas of the brain. As such, they are walled off, disconnected from awareness, and inaccessible to cognition.²

We see activities that involve motion, touch, visual images or objects, sounds, and body-focused exercises stimulating the brain in a very different way than language alone. We can use this knowledge to find venues of therapy for clients that engage different brain centers. I believe this is why some therapies that don't even involve language at all — like art therapies, mindfulness training, and body therapies such as bodywork and yoga — can have a profound impact on clients' mental health. Apart from helping clients use their brains in different ways, creative applications also often add an element of joy and playfulness to therapy, increasing the sense of relaxation and openness for clients. This will actually in turn optimize a client's thinking abilities.

There is an intimate connection between the ability to relax and the ability of the brain to function at its optimal level. When humans perceive threats (either on a physical or emotional level), the sympathetic branch of the nervous system activates and floods the body with stress hormones. This guides the energy in the body away from all non-essential life preserving or defending functions. The body goes into "fight or flight mode" and relies on automatic brain impulses. The amygdala, a small area in the center of our brain, orchestrates our fight or flight reactions. These commands run much faster than our prefrontal cortex, the problem-solving center. This is why the brain diverts energy away from our problem-solving brain and our prefrontal cortex simmers on low energy. Logical thinking is severely impacted and we end up with "brain fog" when this fight or flight response is triggered inappropriately. Agitated clients often have few resources for problem solving left and may appear stuck and unreasonable, while relaxed clients are still able to access a broad range of their inner resources.

Many of our clients have benefited from learning tools that help them deactivate their stress response and find ways to self-calm. Mindfulness skills, deep breathing, movement, and creative ways of expression can be good tools for the nervous system to calm. Feeling safe is a fundamental need for humans. If clients are not able to feel safe in our therapy rooms, or if they get activated too frequently, they will start numbing their emotional states and even dissociate. We might then falsely assume that clients are resistant to treatment.

As a teacher, I learned to perceive my students' learning preferences and match ways to help the student integrate information. As therapists, I believe we should assess the client's arousal system, ability to express and use language for emotional processing, and preferences for expression. We should then look for ways to provide the client with experiences in the therapy room that match the client's preferences and capacities. Therefore, I believe therapists should have a wide array of techniques and tools at hand to support their clients' needs.

One of the tools that can help therapists and clients in the therapy room is the Youniverse. It is a very simple, yet rich, tool that lends itself to a variety of applications that are outlined in the chapters of this manual.

² Naparstek, B. (2004). *Invisible Heroes*. New York: Bantam Dell.

When using the Youniverse with clients, I observed that many of my clients felt more focused and calm. The Youniverse seemed to provide a holding environment for the client, a structure, and a map to locate one's self. I believe that seeing the roadmap is an important anchor for many clients in facilitating the sense of not getting lost. In this way, the tool can act as an emotional regulator. Even if a client gets temporarily overwhelmed or side tracked, the orbs on the Youniverse can help them find a way back to safety.

As with any tool, the Youniverse cannot cover all the needs for creative expression. The more you work with it, the more you will recognize its clear advantages and recognize some of its limitations. The Youniverse was developed to accompany IFS therapists in their work. It can, however, also be used with many other therapeutic models (see Appendix).

The sleek design and colorful orbs appeal immediately to most clients. It is easy to use as an introductory experience to creative work because it does not carry a lot of metaphors (unlike miniatures) or demand that the client demonstrate ability at creative expression (like drawings or sculpting). It typically fosters a curiosity in the client and most clients find manipulating the orbs pleasant.

The Youniverse combines visual images, touch, and a representation of distance or proximity. It can be used to express emotions that the client does not need to verbalize. I believe various brain centers are activated while working with the Youniverse.

Additionally, the Youniverse is a great help for couples and groups to focus on several talking points that otherwise easily get lost in conversation. Language can only hold one talking point at one time in the room, and often clients get sidetracked by a comment and lose the original idea. This is especially distressing for group discussions. The Youniverse helps therapists to gently guide the conversation back to the original issues that clients set out to explore.

In IFS work, we often guide clients to do their own internal work in a compassion-based self-led way. This work is a deep and wonderful way to move clients toward inner healing. Some clients are, however, reluctant to try new techniques that require a sensing or seeing of inner parts. Other clients have little ability to separate themselves from their parts and also cannot perceive a calm, reflective center of their existence. In both instances, I saw the Youniverse help greatly. When I used the Youniverse in the beginning stages of IFS therapy with clients, I got appreciative feedback from them. The in-sight work was done more easily and with greater trust from the client's side. They "got" what we were doing, because they had "seen" the roadmap on the Youniverse.

One of my clients, a woman in her thirties, had done some nice IFS in-sight work in previous sessions, but found the experience a bit too intense. I then used the Youniverse in the beginning of a session to have her locate her reactions to her addictive process she was struggling with. The client reacted to the initial Youniverse work by saying, "It's easier to see the Parts, because I can see a physical connection. I can visualize it now. It helps me see how I balance. The thing I really want is on the periphery and what I don't want is close in."

We then did IFS in-sight work and ended with retracing her progress on the Youniverse. She commented that she liked this way of working and stated, "It makes it deeper for me to see the Parts. Being able to track the parts and visualize them. It does make it clearer for me. I can figure out where it all fits in. I feel okay now."

The Youniverse and IFS

David created the Youniverse as a companion tool for Internal Family Systems Therapy (IFS). IFS is a rich therapeutic model that bases its assumptions on systemic thinking. It integrates much wisdom brought to us by previous models of therapy. IFS was developed by Richard Schwartz in the 1980's and has since become one of the leading models in psychotherapy.

This chapter will not explain IFS in detail. If you are new to IFS, there are several ways for you to get more acquainted with this model. The book *Internal Family Therapy* by Richard Schwartz teaches the theory and praxis of IFS in depth. There are also various training opportunities in IFS which you can access through the website, www.selfleadership.org.

One of the main assumptions of IFS is that people have the ability to experience a calm, observant state at the core of their experience. This center "Self" is a place of deep resourcefulness and healing. In the Youniverse, the large yellow orb in the middle of the structure represents the "Self." Schwartz associates the following traits with the Self: calmness, curiosity, compassion, connectedness, confidence, creativity, courage and clarity.

The second assumption states that each person has a number of subpersonalities, or "Parts", with distinct desires and needs, and these Parts help make up the particular flavor of each of us. It is the belief of IFS that all people experience themselves as a system of parts rather than a single unit of identity. Most of us can easily relate to an expression such as, "a part of me would love to change my job and do something really exciting; yet another part of me really likes the convenience of my current work life." The better we understand and nurture our own parts, the more we experience a sense of competency and completeness in life, drawing on the many assets that our Parts bring to us.

Schwartz uses the metaphor of the conductor and the orchestra to describe the relationship between the Self and the Parts. The more we can use self-leadership in our system (i.e., work from an active "Self" that organizes the Parts congruently), the better all parts work as harmonious players to bring flow to our experience.

Internal conflict indicates that the Parts have taken on extreme roles in the system. This can happen when the system gets overwhelmed — for example, through stress or trauma. Parts often get forced into extreme ways of reacting that are functional in the crisis; however, they often later hinder internal resourcefulness. The IFS therapist helps clients discover where Parts got stuck and renegotiate old beliefs.

The Youniverse provides a set of colorful smaller orbs to represent the Parts. Parts are purposefully displayed as smaller orbs in order to teach that the "Self" has the ability to calm and nurture any part. The Self is in the most resourceful place in the system, displayed by the big yellow orb in the middle, even though the client might subjectively feel that an individual Part is "bigger" than the Self.

Clients can place the smaller orbs (Parts) on three concentric circles around the Self. I usually ask clients to put orbs on the inner rim if they experience them strongly, and on the middle or outer rim if they are hidden or protected by other Parts. The bar connecting the circles can be used for a “waiting room” if Parts are willing to step aside to let the Self connect with a target part.

Healing happens when Parts can reconnect with the Self and renegotiate their internal relationships. In this way, the Youniverse is used as a teaching tool and does not represent the exact proportion of feeling states. Think of it as a planetary system, with the orbs marking the planets. Using the Youniverse helps the client get a sense of where the planets are – how they circle around the sun, and which planet is obscuring another planet or creating a kind of eclipse of the sun (i.e., disconnecting a Part from Self). This 3-D model improves the client's sense of orientation and placement.

As we work with clients to relate to this new way of inner exploration, it might be helpful to remember how in the Middle Ages people believed the earth was the center of the universe. It took generations for people to accept the idea that the sun was the center of our solar system; likewise, it can be equally daunting for clients to believe that they have a center, core Self that can bring warmth and healing to the Parts of them that are in pain. The Youniverse facilitates this process.

Many clients come to us with little experience of feeling a sense of Self. Our task in therapy is to support clients to recognize that they do indeed have a Self and to help protective Parts to trust the Self. When clients cannot access Self, IFS teaches a method called “direct access.” The therapist functions as the Self of the client for a while and models acceptance, curiosity, and compassion. Through the relationship with the therapist, the client can begin to get to know his/her own Parts and eventually negotiate with the Parts to get to know the client's own Self.

It has been our experience that clients with little access to internal Self are greatly helped by using the Youniverse. Even if their internal system does not experience a sense of Self yet, the client is able to understand the IFS framework and process more readily. Many clients who have a highly defended system cannot do in-sight work yet. The Youniverse can provide a simple visual aid for clients to understand why we explore their Parts with them.

Picture a solar eclipse and the confusion arising in people resulting from the sun's disappearance. This is the internal experience of a person without access to the Self. The Youniverse can be tilted to simulate a Part taking over the governing position. We have also taken a paper tissue and veiled the center, showing the client that the Self can feel hidden. The client gets a sense of a missing center while the center is still clearly evident. The Center is firmly mounted, demonstrating that our center is always present, even if we don't experience it yet.

As clients start developing trust and interest in their Parts, we might use the Youniverse less and work mostly through in-sight. The work with the Youniverse will often allow a client to get to in-sight work more easily and earlier in the process.

We believe that when a client is able to watch their internal parts and successfully communicate with them, a “hub of awareness,” as neuropsychologist Daniel Siegel

refers to it, is built within the brain that allows access throughout the brain. Creating a "hub of awareness" enables us to acknowledge troubling states without being taken over by them, and to see things as they are, rather than being constrained by our expectations of how they "should be." It also opens us to the full range of our perceptions — to information from the external world, from our bodily states, relationships, and the mind itself. The Youniverse communicates this idea visually to clients and works as a backdrop for clients when they are ready to do the internal work.

Work with Individual Clients

First session work:

As we help a client understand and access their actions, emotions, and underlying beliefs, we are looking at the internal Parts that create the client's behavioral patterns. It is sometimes a bit tricky to communicate the IFS model successfully to new clients. When we explore a therapeutic contract with clients in an initial session, we explain the way we would like to work with them. Clients often challenge us when we describe our belief in Parts. "Do you mean I'm like Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde?" they say, or "Do you think I have multiple personalities?"

Often, David and I already use the Youniverse in the first session to demonstrate the way we work with clients and their issues. When we chart the clients' Parts as they tell us the reasons for coming to see us, we can explain to them right away how we are planning to help them. We have often noticed that a client visibly relaxes when we ask them to move the orbs on the Youniverse. Most clients are hesitant and a bit anxious when they visit us for the first time. They want help, but are not sure if we can be a safe and conducive place for them. As we give clients a task and visually anchor the issues we discuss, we help the client to develop an additional venue for processing and understanding concepts.

In a first session, we simply map Parts and do not go into detail on the Parts' experiences and beliefs. The mapping serves as a way to communicate to clients that we get their issues, and we have a way to help them with their concerns. It also helps as a teaching tool about IFS and our direction in therapy. It moves us towards a therapeutic contract with the client and illustrates a way to achieve the therapeutic goals.

As we map Parts with clients, we repeat a statement that they have used, or reflect on a feeling state that they expressed, as we detect a Part in them. We ask the client to get in touch with the Part and then associate a colored orb with it. Colors do not represent universal feelings. For example, we've had clients who have chosen red for anger, while others chose red for love, and others chose red for hurt, etc. It only matters that the color association makes sense to the client and that we know what the client communicates through it.

Example

Therapist: This loneliness that you are describing, if you had to choose a color for that, which one would you pick? *Client picks blue.*

The therapist then explains to the client that the inner ring represents parts that we are very much in touch with, and the consecutive rings parts that we feel less intensely.

Therapist: Now that you've chosen the blue orb, how much do you feel this loneliness? Is it close in, not so close or farther away?

Client: I feel it a lot — *puts it on the inner rim.*

We can then use the first orb to elicit information about other Parts.

Therapist: When you become aware of the loneliness, what happens next for you?

Client: I get really down on myself. I should be able to get past this.

Therapist: Could you choose a color for the part of you that is upset at that blue orb?

At the end of the session we can reframe the client's cycle, offering a way to help them.

Therapist: You've told me that you have several ways that you are trying to approach this situation, and it sounds as if the way your Parts interact keeps you in a vicious cycle.

You feel really lonely (*point at blue orb*), but you have a part that wants you to get over it (*point at purple orb*), and then you find yourself just watching TV or sleeping all day (*white orb*) and getting more and more depressed (*green orb*).

You also tell me that you are often so frustrated at your ex and other people that let you down (*red*) and tell yourself you should stand up for yourself, but then the white orb somehow makes it go away and you find yourself watching TV, and you get even more depressed (*green*) and down at yourself (*point back to red*).

How would it be if I could help you understand your Parts better and help you in a way that those Parts could trust your Self and you could orchestrate your reactions from that calm, creative centered place within so that your life would feel in sync with your needs?



Follow-Up Sessions

In follow-up sessions we can reproduce the mapping from an earlier session, or ask the client to tell us what they want to look at today. We might develop a new Youniverse by focusing on a recent experience, and then look at only one or two of the orbs, or discuss the sequencing of Parts, work with a polarity, or wonder about the Self in the system.

As mentioned previously, the orbs only serve as an anchor — like a pin on a map. We may say to clients, "On your map, you realize there are different cities you would like to visit — Rome, London, New York, New Orleans, and Seattle. Which one would you like to get to know better today? Or you might realize that somehow people in Rome and people in New York seem to have very different ideas about this issue. Are you curious as to why they are so at odds with their beliefs?"

In the same way we say to clients, "There is a green orb that symbolizes the hopelessness you feel and a red one that shows your anger; there is also the blue one that you've chosen for your loneliness and a white one for the part of you that doesn't want to feel anything. Which orbs are you most interested in exploring today?" We then proceed with direct access or in-sight, depending on the client's readiness. We could also explore Parts through other creative means.

Often, we will discuss the progress at the end of a session and prompt the client to determine if any of the orbs might want to change either color or location as a result of the work we've just done. This helps strengthen the integration of the internal work.

Therapist: When you look at the orbs now, after you spend time with your angry part, do you want to leave the orbs the way they are, or do any of them want to change?

Client: The red is much calmer now. I want to change it to orange. And it does not feel so close anymore, it wants to help me look out, but it trusts me more. I can move it out one circle.

Therapist: How does it feel now, that the red orb is orange and moved to the second circle?

Client: Much better. The other Parts like this better, too.

Processing an Event

Sometimes clients come to us after having experienced a situational stressor that inflicts pain and confusion in the client's system. In the IFS language, we label the result of overwhelming intense emotion as "Parts *blending* with the system of the client." The Youniverse can help clients to sort out their reactions to the stressor and bring more clarity to their awareness; parts "*un-blend*" and the client can find access to the Self.

The following example shows a client that came to treatment after a relative of hers committed suicide:

Client: I am so surprised that her death is making me feel so bad. I've been crying a lot and feeling really scared. I would have loved to help, but she didn't reach out ...*pause*.... She was a good person*pause*.... I didn't know about how depressed she was. She never let on. ...*pause*.... I feel so bad for her children. They didn't know. She didn't even write a note. She gave her son a birthday party, just the weekend before she killed herself. ...*pause*.... I'm also worried for my daughter. She got so angry. She's known two people now who've committed suicide. She feels the world is all messed up. And what if I ever got so bad? What if I would ever do something like this?

Therapist: This has really been hard for many parts of you.

Client: Yes it has. I wish it wasn't so bad for me. I wonder why it's hitting me so hard.

The therapist then proceeded to chart the Parts that were reacting to the news of her aunt's suicide. At first, the client had a hard time finding her Parts since all her reactions seemed snowballed together. She then was able to start with one reaction, finding her way through.

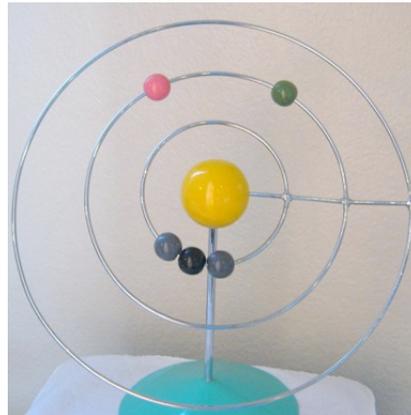
Therapist: There are many things that are important to you about this. Can you start with one thing?

Client: That she was a good person (*chooses pink, puts it on the second rim*). Yes, she really helped me out when I was sick once. She was a good person.

Therapist: Yes. What's next?

Client: I worry about my daughter (*puts a gray orb on the first rim*). She's had a lot to deal with. I'm worried she will be cynical about this world, not wanting to believe in good things happening. And what if I was ever that bad off? I've been really depressed and I thought it could not get worse. But it must have been worse for her.

- Therapist: What color is the fear that you might be doing this in the future?
- Client: Black, that's really scary (*puts it next to the gray orb on the first rim*)
- Therapist: Hmm.
- Client: And I'm just also really sad; she was a part of our family and now she is gone.
- Therapist: The part of you that is sad, what color is that?
- Client: Gray, *puts it on the first rim, next to the black orb.*
- Therapist: And there was a Part not understanding why you felt so bad?
- Client: Yes, that would be green – *puts it on the second rim.*
- Therapist: Now that you see the gray, black, and second gray orb so close in, how is that for you?
- Client: Those Parts are really having a hard time; there are three of them who are very upset.
- Therapist: Right, does that make more sense to the green orb now?
- Client: Yes, it does.



- Therapist: It will probably take a while to come to terms with this death. As you pace yourself with the grieving, what would the gray and black orbs need from you now?
- Client: They need some rest.
- Therapist: What needs to happen so they can rest?
- Client: There is a place I went to as a kid; it has a creek and it is really peaceful.

As the client used internal imagery (practiced in earlier sessions) to take her Parts to a safe space, she started breathing more steadily and her body began to relax. She left the session feeling she could go on, focusing day-by-day on making it. The client reported in the follow-up session that she felt more removed from the death, and while still sad, she could focus on her own life again.

Working with Couples

When we work with couples, we have two systems of Parts reacting to each other, creating the couple's interactions, a kind of dance that's intricate and often well entrenched. Couples ask us to help them improve their communication, overcome trust issues, help them with their sex lives, parenting issues, money, in-laws, etc. It is easy for a therapist to get lost in the content of the couple's issues and thus miss the underlying burdened Parts that create the dance of neediness and defensiveness.

IFS brings the therapist great tools to track the process of clients' interactions, regardless of their ever changing content of discussions. By helping clients detect their own reactivity to the other and empowering them to have access to an internal self-soothing mechanism, couples can learn to react to each other in more helpful, self-led ways. Yet, it is often challenging for the therapist to hold the couple in a state of openness and receptivity as partners can slip back into their usual dance of blame and defensiveness toward each other.

The Youniverse can help focus a couple on the process between them, facilitate a curiosity about their own and their partner's Parts, and provide a sense of safety. Couples' nervous systems are easily aroused in the therapy session, as the clients discuss emotionally laden content. Couples therapists can attest to how quickly a vicious cycle between partners can arise out of practically nowhere. Having a way to visually hold Parts present in the room can help the therapist guide the couple back to a sense of Self-to-Part relationship.

Let's imagine Sally, a client who suffers under her husband's temper. She might say, "Brian always does this. He makes me feel like I have no voice." The therapist can explore with Sally that she has a Part that feels voiceless. She might choose the color green for this part, then turn to Brian and say: "When you just said this, Brian, a part of me got very upset (*pointing to the green orb*) and felt it had no voice. That part wants to leave and disappear."

The therapist can then explore with Brian what his reactions are. Brian might usually react in despair, feeling Sally disappears from him frequently and, as a result, he gets angry all over again. As Brian sees the Youniverse, he can see that it's just a part of Sally (*green orb*) that wants to leave, and Sally (*center, yellow orb*) is still there. As Brian chooses an orb for his part that is in despair (*he might pick black*) and then realizes his anger (*he might choose red*) protects his despair, Sally gets a view at the vulnerable feelings that exist in Brian beneath his anger.

The couple's process is visually defined by having a Self and Parts. Clients learn to identify the chain reactions their Parts have with each other and learn to distinguish Parts in themselves and witness them in the other. Using the Youniverse with couples has helped us on many occasions to diminish the couple's reactivity and encourage partners to be more curious about their own process in the partnership.

Especially in the beginning phases of couples therapy, the Youniverse can be a great tool to teach and practice the IFS language of "Parts to Self" and "Parts to Parts."

Similar to when we work with individuals, we start using the Youniverse by helping clients identify their own Parts through language, sensations, and images. We then have clients express their Parts by choosing a color for that part, putting it on one side of the Youniverse. The therapist does not have to own two tools to make this process work for the couple. We usually have one partner use one half, and the other partner use the other half of the Youniverse. As we advance in the session the partners can add orbs to their side, change colors or locations of their orbs and talk about the relationships of their Parts to each other and to the partner's orbs.

The Following example shows David Cantor working with a couple using the Youniverse. The transcript shows excerpts of the second session with Larry and Joan. In the initial meeting, the couple had agreed on Joan working on her critical, impatient part and Larry working on his scared, hesitant part. Larry's part keeps him from speaking up when he thinks his wife is being too harsh with him or the kids. In the next segment, David introduces using the Youniverse with the couple:

Therapist: So how would you like to use the time today?

Larry looks at Therapist benignly without saying anything. Joan looks at Larry holding herself back from speaking.

Joan: *(Staring at Larry)* Do you have anything to say?

Larry: *(Long pause)* Nope.

Joan: *(Looking at Therapist)* I just want him to say something.. anything.

Therapist: I'm wondering what's happening for you right now, Larry? What do your insides feel like as your wife asked you to talk?

Larry: *(Pause)* I don't know.

Therapist: Maybe I can help. Do you mind if I create a visual of the Parts of both of you with the aid of this Youniverse *(pointing to Youniverse)*, so we are all looking at the same thing at the same time? If we do this, we'll be able to get your thoughts and feelings out here where we can see and work with them.

David then works with the couple to identify the Parts that are present right now in the interaction and prompts each client to choose a color for each of their Parts. Larry chooses a gray orb for his "reluctant to talk part", and Joan chooses two red and two orange orbs for her "impatient/frustrated" part. The couple decides that Larry will work with David to get to know his gray orb:

Therapist: Okay, as you notice your "reluctant/scared to talk gray part" on the Youniverse, can you notice where you feel it in or around your body?

Larry: My neck and shoulders....and my stomach.

Therapist: Choose a place where it is strongest or where you want to focus.

Larry: Okay.

Therapist: So as you lay your attention on it - how do you feel toward it?

Larry: I don't like it.

Therapist: What don't you like about it?

Larry: It doesn't let me speak for myself.

Therapist: Can you choose a color for the part of you that doesn't like it?
Larry chooses a black orb and places it next to gray orb. After discussing the part's function, Larry decides to place the black orb on inner ring directly between the Self and the gray orb. It now blocks the gray part's access to the Self.



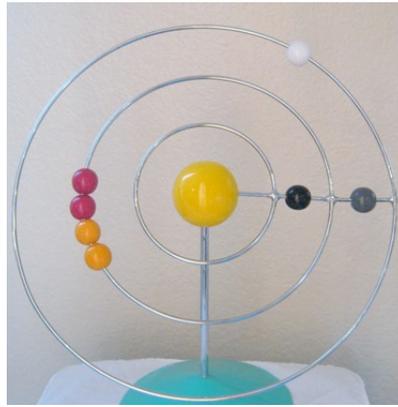
Therapist: Can you acknowledge this Part and its feelings (*pointing to black*) and ask it if it's willing to take its feelings and slide to the side or take a seat in a waiting room (*pointing to horizontal line*) so YOU (*pointing to big bright ball yellow sphere and him*) can get to know it from a place of compassion or if you prefer, rational inquiry, rather than dislike?

Larry: Okay, it went there.

David: So it's all right to move the part?

Larry moves it to the horizontal line – “waiting room” position.

As David and Larry explore the gray orb that's afraid to speak, it becomes clear to Larry that this Part works as a protector. It protected a white orb – that carries the memories of being terrified of his father (“blanched”), a functional alcoholic who made it clear, often angrily, that Larry and his brother were not to speak out of turn, interrupt, or express emotions of their own.



While Joan witnesses Larry's work she feels suddenly calm and willing to just sit with Larry. Her impatience stepped aside as she saw Larry getting in touch with the Parts that prevented him from speaking out.

The next session begins with the couple refilling the Youniverse with their Parts. Joan then explores her impatient/frustrated part that she represents with the two red and two orange orbs. She discovers that her impatience around her husband's silence stems from a hurt part (light purple) that she identifies stemming from her experience as a preteen. She remembers how her Mom refused to praise her. This left that part ever doubting herself and she became anxiously convinced that when someone did not speak up, she was disappointing that person.

As therapy progressed, Joan and Larry learned to take turns speaking for their own Parts with the Youniverse in view as a reminder of the warm power of their center-core Self and the Parts they had come to know.

Joan and Larry were clients that had no prior experience with IFS Systems' language. Using the Youniverse eased Joan and Larry into understanding and envisioning their Parts' reactions internally and externally to each other.

Working with Children, Teens, and their Families

Working with Young Children

Children aged four through ten depend even more than adults on the therapist offering various ways of creative expression in the therapy room. A child can rarely sustain attention beyond having a 10-minute conversation with an adult. Most children that see us will also initially miss the vocabulary to express what bothers them. They can tell us things feel "bad" and they would like to feel "happy" or "good," but often can't give us more concrete, verbal info.

When we work with children our main venue is probably going to be play therapy. The Youniverse can be one of the tools we make available to children in the therapy room. Small children like to play with the Youniverse, make color patterns and delight in the magnetic properties of the orbs. Once a child is familiar with the Youniverse, the therapist can prompt the child to choose orbs for Parts that the child expresses in the therapy room and have them build their own world with the Youniverse.

When I brought my first Youniverse home, my own children (ages 6 and 9) took to it right away and readily expressed their Parts and their correlating feelings. I was especially touched to see my son, who often struggles to talk about his feelings, right away being able to show me what was going on for him that day. I was so excited about this that I ordered a second Youniverse that very week — one for home and one for work. The Youniverse now sits in our living room and is frequently used. Sometimes my children (and their friends) just play with it, but often they will go and show me what's up. I am always impressed with how my kids choose several orbs to explain what goes on for them - if they talk to me they usually focus on one Part, but when they show me, they intuitively understand the interplay of several of their Parts.

In therapy, I often combine the use of the Youniverse with other activities, since children do lose focus and like to switch what they are doing. One of my young clients, for example, used the orb that represented her "broken heart" in a sand world she had built. She created a safe zone in there and put her "broken heart orb" into the safe zone for healing.

Children are creative and find their own ways to express what they need to work through. They often unburden spontaneously through play and doing. Young children seem incapable of using IFS by doing "in-sight" work exclusively. I believe it is because their prefrontal cortex has not matured towards more abstract thinking. However, children can successfully work with IFS through play and representation. They can then go "inside" and work with their parts. Children have the ability to be self-led. If we help them find ways to get to know and understand their Parts externally, they find a more peaceful, supportive way to live with their Parts internally.

David's book, *The Big Bright Ball Answers the Call*, is naturally a favorite with children. They love the story and love to identify with the faces on the orbs. Children can easily relate to the orbs and I often let them reflect on which pages lend themselves to telling a story about their own lives.

The following case example shows David Cantor working with a ten-year-old client that is struggling with compulsive tendencies. After exploring Peter's issue with him, David introduces the work with the Youniverse:

Therapist: *(Pointing to the Youniverse)* Okay, let's get started. So what you are saying is that you *(pointing to the central yellow orb)* are noticing this part of you that can't stand making mistakes. Could you pick a color that fits that part of you? *(Peter picks out a black ball.)*

Therapist: Great, put it up there wherever you want.

Peter: Anywhere?

Therapist: Anywhere you want - it's your Youniverse, your inner world, your feelings, so feel free to put it wherever you want.

Peter: *(Placing black ball on inner ring)* I want a color that covers everything cuz it completely runs my life. *(Places more balls on ring calling them guilt - blue, anger - red and worry - orange).* These are all my perfectionist parts.



Therapist: Can you give me an example where you made a mistake when the perfectionist part (or parts in this case), takes over really strong?

Peter: When I'm playing my violin.

Therapist: Tell me about it.

Peter: At my last concert at school, I messed up three times. That's a lot for me, and I had this awful feeling in my stomach *(clutching his stomach)* like I wanted to throw up.

Therapist: Would you like it if you didn't have to feel sick to your stomach every time you made a mistake?

Peter: Yeah.

Therapist then explains to Peter that he can help him get to know himself better, so he can find out what his Parts need around this issue. He works with Peter to get to know another part that is polarized with the perfectionism and helps him negotiate access to explore his perfectionist part.

Therapist: How do you feel towards that perfectionist part?

Peter: I don't like it at all.

Therapist: Where do you feel that one in or around your body?

Peter: Right here (*pointing to his heart*) and right here (*clenching his right fist*)

Therapist: Would you mind choosing a color for the one that does not like your perfectionism and putting it on the Youniverse?

Peter: (*Chooses red ball and places it right next to black one*)

Therapist: Do you mind if I touch it? (*pointing to the Youniverse*)

Peter: Sure, it's fine.

Therapist: (*moves black perfectionist part to middle ring and slides red orb that doesn't like perfectionist part to inner ring so that it's blocking or directly between the big yellow orb and black perfectionist orb.*) I'd like you to ask the red one if it would slide to the side or take a seat in the waiting room (*lifting red orb off inner ring and placing it on horizontal "waiting room" bar*



and then returning it to original blocking position) so that YOU (pointing to the big yellow orb and Peter) could get to know it. I have a story here that we can read that will explain to you why we do this.

Therapist reads the storybook, *The Big Bright Ball Answers the Call*, to Peter, showing him through the pictures that the Self wants to and ultimately does help all the Parts that are in distress.

Peter: I really liked the story.

Therapist: So, is it okay to go ahead inside and see if you can get that part of you that dislikes the perfectionist part to relax and maybe go to the waiting room so the "Big Bright Ball –You" can help out the perfectionist part just like in the story?

Peter: Okay.

Therapist: What happened?

Peter: It went to the waiting room.

David and Peter explore the perfectionist part through in-sight. In his internal work Peter realizes that the perfectionist wants him to improve himself, wants to ensure that he never gives up, and also wants for him to always keep playing his violin. David then helps Peter build a trusting relationship between the self and the part. Peter tells the part that when he'll make a mistake he will try to learn from it, not stop playing.

In the next session David and Peter explore what Peter's perfectionist part is afraid would happen if Peter does not improve his playing. Peter tells David that he is afraid that people would be disappointed in him and he would be abandoned without friends. Peter recognizes he had felt like this when he was adopted at age 6 and found out shortly thereafter that his biological mom had died from drugs. A new Part emerges that carries the memories of abandonment.

Therapist: Can you choose a color for the part that is afraid of being left alone?

Peter: Takes a long time looking for the orb, finally chooses a white one.

Therapist: If you want to, you can hold that orb for a while, letting it know you are here with it, it's with you now.

Peter: Holds the white orb in his hands for about a minute, *then places it on the Youniverse.*

Therapist: Do you think the black perfectionist part is worried about that white one?

Peter: Yeah, I think so, definitely.

Therapist: How would it be to get to know the white one better and help it?

Peter: Good.

Therapist: How would the black orb feel about that?

Peter: It would like it.

Peter and David then work on achieving a change in the system, where Peter can care for the lonely, scared part and the perfectionist part is free from his responsibility to protect it. Peter and his perfectionist part are excited about letting the perfectionist choose a role that it likes better.

David's work with Peter shows beautifully how young clients can go from concrete ways of exploring Parts to doing in-sight work and then re-integrating the information visually via the Youniverse.

Working with Teens

When we work with teens, we might rely less on play therapy and steer more towards talk therapy. Yet I often observe that teens also love "doing" more than "talking." Giving teens the option to choose their expressive venue for therapy can be empowering and supports the notion of IFS as a client-led therapy model.

I observe that teens are often initially a bit defended when they meet us. Usually, they are in our office not by choice, but by parental force. They might not want to talk freely about what goes on for them and might not trust adults. The Youniverse can be an experimental tool for them. Most teens want to express their ideas and who they are but are not really sure how to do so. I initially tell teens they can use the Youniverse, but they don't need to tell me what goes on for their orbs if they don't want to. As teens come to trust us, they usually want to explore who they are and what hinders them from feeling free and in control of their experiences.

Some teens can use in-sight work and some teens will depend on concrete ways of expressing their Parts. Drawing, work with miniatures, and writing exercises are tools that my teen clients like to combine with the Youniverse work we do.

The following excerpt describes work with Natalie, a 17-year-old high school student presenting with a tendency towards over-exercising and anorexia. This client readily shared her experience in her second session with me. I used the Youniverse to help her become more curious about her Parts and her internal conflicts.

Natalie: I joined this great new gym and now I am really upset because I cannot go as often as I want to.

Therapist: How often do you want to go?

Natalie: Every day, but I can't, because I have to work and go to school.

Therapist: How often did you go this week?

Natalie: I was there Saturday and Sunday. Then on Monday, but I couldn't be there on Tuesday. I was there Wednesday and Friday as well. I guess five times. But I really want to be there every day and my mom thinks I am overdoing it.

Therapist: The part of you that loves to go to the gym, what color would you pick for that?

Natalie: Pink (*puts orb on inner ring*).

Therapist: Where would you find this energy in your body?

Natalie: In my head; it tells me to exercise.

Therapist: How do you feel towards this voice in your head?

Natalie: I like it.

Therapist: What happens when you let the pink know you like it?

Natalie: It feels good. I feel strong.

Therapist: Great, can you ask it a couple more questions?

Natalie: Okay.

Therapist: What does it want for you by making sure you get to the gym?

Natalie: It wants me to feel powerful. It wants to make sure I stay thin so I get attention. But that's stupid, I already get attention, really.

Therapist: The last thing you said, that you are already getting attention, what color would you pick for that?

Natalie: Yellow – (*puts it on inner rim close to pink orb*) I don't understand why I want attention; my parents do care for me.

Therapist: Hmm. So what the pink wants does not make sense to the yellow?

Natalie: Not really.

Therapist: Would it be ok to get to know the pink a little more?

Natalie: Okay.

Therapist: If you could be as thin as the pink wants you to be, how would that feel?

Natalie: Powerful.

Therapist: So the pink really wants you to be powerful.

Natalie: I guess. But I really would need to lose another 15 pounds.

Therapist: Have you ever been at that weight?

Natalie: Yes.

Therapist: How did that feel?

Natalie: I don't remember. I didn't pay attention then. My mom told me I was going to fill out, but I don't want that.

Therapist: Hmm.

Natalie: That's really weird. I should go to the gym, because I would want to be healthy.

Therapist: What color would you pick for that voice?

Natalie: White. *(Puts the orb on the other side of the pink)*

Therapist: What does the white want?

Natalie: It wants to please others. It wants for my parents to stop nagging me.

Therapist: How do the yellow and white get along with the pink?

Natalie: They don't. They don't like each other.

Therapist: How is it to be the pink then? It wants you to be powerful by losing weight and exercising, but other parts of you don't agree.

Natalie: It feels tired. Sometimes I don't want to go to the gym, but the pink won't let me.

Therapist: There is a part of you that does not want to go?

Natalie: Yes *(picks black orb and puts it on the second rim)*.

Therapist: How do you feel towards the black one?

Natalie: I understand it, but the pink is getting upset when I talk to it.

Therapist: Hmm, why is that?

Natalie: It needs me to be thin. If I don't exercise, and I stay home, I won't be me anymore.

Therapist: What do you mean by not being "me anymore"?

Natalie: I don't know why I said that.

Therapist: That was very interesting, right?

Natalie: I guess I want to be me. I need to be different.

Therapist: Who would say that?

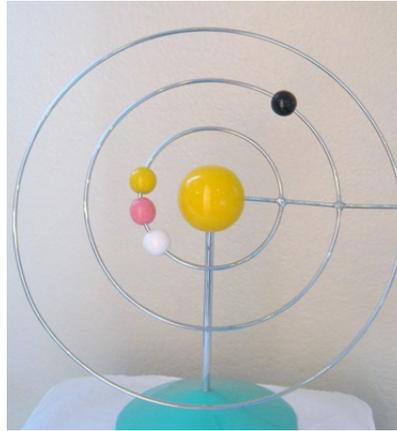
Natalie: The pink one.

Therapist: How do you like working with the Youniverse and getting to know some of your parts?

Natalie: I like it. It's different. I never knew I had all those parts.

Therapist: Hmm. There is a book that's written for kids, but a lot of my adults like it, too, and it explains a bit about our parts and about the way we are working. Would you like to see it? It's called *The Big Bright Ball Answers the Call*.

Natalie: Sure.



The therapy session ended with the therapist explaining the model to the client and letting her reflect on her experience as she looked at the pictures of the walled-off parts and united parts. At that point, the client said it would be nice if all her parts could get along — she just doesn't know how to get there. Therapist replied that she would help her explore those options as they worked together.

Working with Families

As we work with children and teens, we almost invariably work with their family system as well. We know that we need to help the client's family shift into supportive patterns around the child's emotional growth if we want the therapeutic gains to stick.

The more children and their parents can heal their relationships with each other, the more the child can integrate the therapeutic growth and keep healing in their home environment.

When we invite parents and siblings into therapy, we end up with a whole host of parts, ideas, and lots of reactivity. Therefore I have often used the Youniverse with "whole" families in a slightly different way. I let parents and kids choose orbs for what they would like to talk about in therapy, since I find the first task with families is to facilitate a respectful environment for all to express themselves. For example:

Therapist: This Youniverse represents your family and all the things that are going on for you. Since all of you have issues that are important for you, I'd like you to take a minute and think about what would be important for you today. You can take one to three colored orbs to represent issues that you'd like the others to understand about you.

We then take turns talking about the orb, as the therapist helps the family shift into a supportive process (e.g. reflective listening, affirming content, asking furthering questions, refraining from judging or debating ideas). Parts of the clients will emerge naturally at that point.

Using the Youniverse as a holding environment for talking points has calmed my sessions with families. Each member's need for the session is represented visually on the Youniverse and the therapist can guide conversations back to the orbs if the process gets lost or heated.

I also help families find the "big yellow orb inside" — explaining that they are all more resourceful when they can hear each other from the calm within. Sometimes, I guide a family through a short, guided imagery exercise (e.g., light, the warmth of their heart, a gentle afternoon at the beach) that represents feelings the family connects with the "big yellow ball." Those images can be grounding during the session as we can take "big yellow ball breaks" to re-center.

With families that present with an ability to speak for their experiences, the Youniverse can easily be used as described in the couple's chapter.

Opening the Youniverse to your own Creative Vision

David created the Youniverse with the desire that whoever uses it might explore ways to structure their own experience. On David's website, he opens his page with the following rhyme:

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**Here's a way that fits my philosophy and style.
Use it in your way to help your clients smile.**

In the previous chapters, we have outlined how you can use the Youniverse with the IFS model in mind. We've also talked about integrating this tool with other creative techniques. As an endnote, we would like to invite you to use your own imagination and your client's world view, to adapt techniques and ideas to what works for you and your client.

Dave Christensen, a therapist in Montana, writes about his experience with the Youniverse as a way to clarify his view of God and self:

The Youniverse models the Shema pattern having one focal center. But once I tried having the Yellow Ball be God, and it did not work. It was too much limited to place. I am more interested in the action pattern, of thoughts emanating from, or reacting with, my center. Like the name says, it is You and it is the Universe. It can model God's order but you can't make a picture of God. It can model a universe guided by God.

He then used the Youniverse to chart his daily experiences, using it as a tool to check in and have a place for self care.

I used it to document my actions of the day. I paid attention to part of myself that needed attention, and I documented that by putting a black ball next to the Center. Instead of continuing to compartmentalize my needs, or forgetting something constructive I did that day, I see it many times as a reminder that I did something which feels good... a reminder of a positive step.

Dave Christiansen models the way we would like you to “own” your experience with the Youniverse, to adapt it to your worldview, and start experimenting with it for yourself. It is our desire to make this tool available to you and your clients, since we believe it offers a unique way to explore experiences and further an understanding of each individual, internal system. It is our hope that this manual has encouraged you to use the Youniverse for yourself, become comfortable with the applications we outlined and try it with your clients. We hope you will then branch out to use the Youniverse in ways that fit you and your practice.

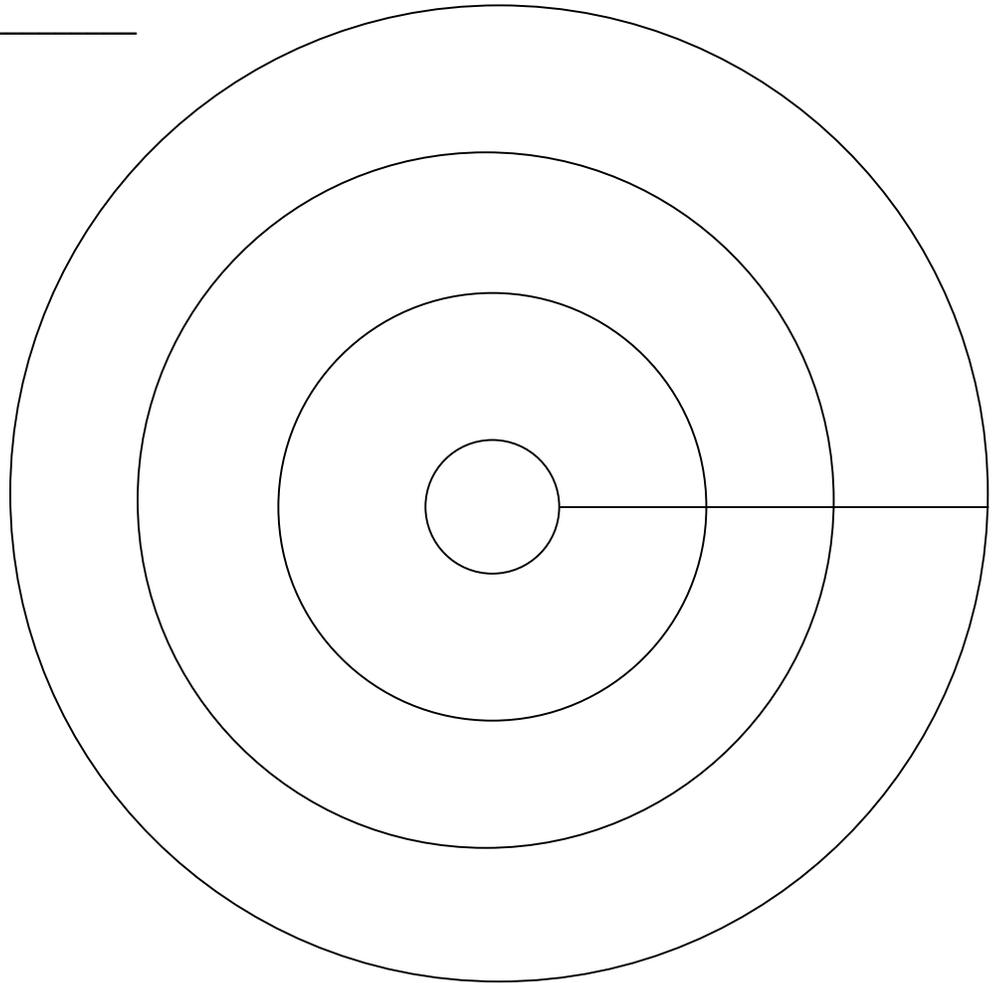
Appendix

Youniverse Session Notes

Therapist: _____

Date: _____

Client: _____



Using the Youniverse With Different Therapy Models

by David Cantor

- **Self-Care Tool** - Place an orb on the Youniverse to reflect the Part of client that needs caring. Ask your client (or for parents, ask your child) how he or she can care for that part of him or herself while pointing to the central sphere as the Caring Self.
- **Internal Family Systems Therapy (elaborated)** - Central Sphere as the Self of the System or Inner Youniverse with three outer rings to hold Parts of client.
 - When working with target part, use ring between target part and Self for Parts that show up in response to question, "How do you feel toward that Part?"
 - Use horizontal line as a "room," "waiting room" or for parts that "step back" or "slide over."
 - Use to introduce model, un-blend, track Parts, show connection/relationship between Parts, build Self to Parts relationship, depict protective blocking of access to Self, depict burdens, achieve and maintain affect regulation.
 - Instill hope through constant visual presence of and reference to central sphere (Self).
- **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy and Bowenian Self-Differentiation** - Place *thoughts, emotions, and behaviors* on separate rings. Explore the connection of thoughts to extreme emotions and behaviors. Central sphere can represent differentiated rational mind, not burdened by or immune to extreme emotions and schemas.
- **Gestalt Therapy** - Rings can represent Life Layer, Death Layer, Impasse Layer respectively with Central sphere representing Spirit. Inner ring can represent "forefront now" and outer ring, the "background." Orbs placed opposite each other can represent polarities and introjects can be represented by magnets on orbs or as orbs themselves.
- **Psychoanalytic** - Rings can represent *id, ego, and superego* respectively with *primal id* closest to Central Sphere or, if repressed, on outer ring. Central sphere as meta-analyst making the subconscious, conscious.
- **REBT** - Central sphere can represent the Rational and a ring each for faulty beliefs/thinking, emotions, and behaviors. Explore influence on each other.
- **Art Therapy** - Can "paint" a self-portrait (or other subject matter) using Youniverse. Paint or sculpt relationships among the parts or represent the parts themselves as explored through the Youniverse. Compare and supplement with a

- self-portrait drawing; Interact with and move orbs to reflect changes in "inner picture."
- **Meditation and Mindfulness, Transcendental Meditation** - Use empty Youniverse to represent meditative non-attachment with Central Sphere as Pure Consciousness. Place orbs on Youniverse as thoughts and limbic brain material to be brought to Consciousness.
 - **Jungian and Archetypes** - Youniverse as holding place for Collective Unconscious with Central Sphere as Witness/Participator or as Whole Greater Than Sum of Parts. Use orbs to represent archetypal beings, entities and/or roles.
 - **Family and Social Atom/ Virginia Satir Sculpting** - Depict family or social group; sculpt family or social group/roles/rules identity. Sculpt how it is now and how you would like it to be. Interview people as if they were the orbs themselves. For example, "What's it like to be this white one out here so far away from everyone else?"
 - **Time-Out Solution and Conversation Starter** - Ask your child to put his or her "big" feelings on their Youniverse while in timeout or as an alternative to timeout. Ask them about the colors and why they placed them where they did — see and listen. You can suggest they place their strongest feelings on the inner ring closest to them, medium feelings on the middle ring and so on. If they reveal a feeling, ask them to expand on the feeling and provide more information about it.
 - **What's On Your Mind Mirror and Head, Heart and Gut Timeout Alternative** — Ask your child to put his or her thoughts and feelings on the Youniverse regarding anything on their mind or any situation that is upsetting them. Ask him or her to use the inner ring closest to them to reflect what their gut feeling is or what their gut is telling them to do, the middle ring for what their heart is feeling or telling them to do, and the outer ring for what their head is thinking or wanting them to do.

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Resources

If you would like to learn more about Internal Family Therapy, buy the Youniverse or *the Big Bright Ball Answers the Call*, go to www.selfleadership.org

Info on the Youniverse: www.youniverse.net

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