



MODULE SIX

Coaching with the Protector



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Introduction

In Module Six we support our clients to meet, understand and transform their relationship with their protective self-doubt.

In this module we'll:

- Learn some of the common misconceptions of the 'inner-critic' including its relationship with trauma.
- Explore how to bring creative curiosity to support your client to identify, understand and heal the relationship they have with their self-doubt.
- Discover how to evolve The Protector into a trusted advisor to develop a sense of internalised psychological safety.

Consider:

- What is my experience of working through these approaches on my own? With my Practice Pod?
- How might these ideas be incorporated into my client work?
- What is unclear to me?
- What questions do I have?

Self-belief Coaching tools + approaches

The tools and approaches referred to in this Module are available for you to download as unformatted word docs for you to add your own branding.

REF.	NAME	NOTES
SBCAM6A	Meet Your Protector	Guided visualisation to help characterise and bring this concept to life.
SBCAM6B	Four Faces of The Protector	How to support clients to a deeper understanding and healing the relationship with their Protector.
SBCAM6C	Experiments with The Protector	How to support client's to heal their relationship with their Protector.

Coaching with The Protector

KEY MESSAGE: Characterising self-doubt as The Protector helps clients to see self-doubt as just one aspect of their psyche. We want to take the Protector of the decision-making seat so the client can achieve the goals they have for themselves.

PURPOSE OF THIS MODULE:

The Protector is a composite of all the ways we have devised to keep us psychologically safe. The Protector's entire job is to stop you from repeating past hurts, to maintain safety and belonging. This is a profoundly important role, inherent to our experience of being human.

There are three core tools the Protector uses:

- **Inner-drama:** how The Protector shows up – the 'voice', the beliefs, and the behaviours that the Protector tends to embody. In this module, we'll explore the model I have developed for this, called The Four 'Faces' of Protector: The Critic, The Martyr, The Scapegoat and The Bystander.
- **The Six P's of Resistance:** what we do to avoid the discomfort of self-doubt: procrastination, perfectionism, proving yourself, passive behaviours, paralysis, placating/pleasing other people.
- **Seeking evidence to support Self-doubt Stories:** how we convince ourselves that The Protector is right and we do need to hold ourselves back from the risk.

WE HAVE THREE AIMS IN THIS MODULE:

1. Help our clients to 'meet' their protector through guided imagery.
2. Support our clients to identify the ways their Protector shows up and creates their inner-drama.
3. Help our clients to begin to transform their relationship with their Protector through experiments.

AS SELF-DOUBT COACHES:

- We know self-doubt is our in-built protection mechanism with an important purpose to warn us of the implications of perceived psychological risk.
- While mainstream thinking focuses almost exclusively on the inner-critic, we know that the Protector *may* show up as The Critic, but it

can also take on other faces – namely: The Martyr, The Scapegoat and The Bystander.

- We support our clients to develop a relationship *with* their Protector. We don't infantilise or dismiss the Protector.
- We know that helping clients to identify their Protective strategies, and transforming how they respond them, is the fastest way to loosen the grip of the Protector.
- We believe the Protector has an important, *minimal* role to play – it should **never** be in charge of the client's decision making. We need the support of the Protector to keep courageously developing and growing.
- We help clients to form a bond with their Protector from a place of deep compassion and robust boundaries.

THE PROTECTOR AND TRAUMA

It can be helpful to see trauma as a spectrum. The Protector is the part of the psyche that gatekeeps over small 't' traumas.

Small 't' traumas are the accumulation of smaller every day or less pronounced events - "*events that exceed our capacity to cope and cause a disruption in emotional functioning.*" Examples of small 't' traumas include:

- Unmet needs as a child
- Unhealed hurtful experiences
- Unresolved or ongoing conflict with loved ones
- Infidelity or divorce
- Work stress
- A sudden or extended relocation or move
- Starting a new job/business or being promoted
- Having or adopting a child
- Financial or legal worries

While one small "t" trauma is unlikely to cause significant trauma symptoms, they can cause us to feel overwhelmed and the accumulation of such traumas over time, can compound and cause distress.

Often these traumas are overlooked or minimised by the person experiencing them, who may avoid processing the impact of the event.

These are the kinds of traumas the Healthy Self of the client is most likely to bring to coaching!

Things to remember:

- **Seek consent.** Introduce these approaches gently and with client consent. The idea is to bring creativity into the clients relationship with their Protector.
- **Expect resistance!** It can be helpful to think of resistance as the survival strategies of the Protector. Get to know the client's Protector alongside them.
- **Stay in your Healthy Self.** We are lovingly detached from the client reaching any conclusion.

The Healthy Adult Self

The Healthy Adult Self sits at the centre of your being — it is your undamaged core, your true nature, your essence. It is the part of us that is awake, aware, wise, loving and compassionate.

As Self-belief Coaches we see the Healthy Adult Self as the co-ordinator of the Self-belief Compass – the four core resources of our expanded model of Self-belief.

The Healthy Adult Self:

- Creates **Leadership**, through setting **Vision + Goals**, and offering compassionate **Encouragement** (self-belief)
- Develops **Connection** with others, a sense of **Belonging** to yourself, and is open to all **Needs + Emotions** (self-acceptance)
- Honours **Boundaries**, and the **Space** we take up, takes **Action + Advocacy** of behalf of what's ok and not ok (self-worth)
- Accesses our wisdom through **Intellect + Intuition**, helps us to know through **Discernment + Decisions** and can see different **Perspectives**.

This is NOT a Higher Self, nor is it a fantasy or best self.

The Higher Self is regarded as the part of us that is in union with a divine source – the part of us that is 'above' our humanity. This concept is hard for many of us to hold. Because we *are* human; we have a personality, an ego, understandable strategies, beliefs and behaviours that we don't like or feel some shame around (even if they make sense).

Our Healthy Adult Self, however, is something most of us can comprehend and build a relationship with.

It may be helpful to imagine the Healthy Adult Self as an ideal loving parent – the can see what might best serve us to make 'good enough' choices in the moment.

The Healthy Adult Self faces reality, sees through all the ways the client holds themselves back and wants only the best for them.

This builds on Ruppert's Three Selves model of Trauma. For Ruppert, the Healthy Self is all that existed before the split in the psyche. Characteristics: can think clearly, seeks truth, is grounded, calm, capable of self-compassion and self-care, faces reality, knows what the self needs, has rounded memory of the past. Includes a functioning Protector.

MEETING THE HEALTHY ADULT SELF

A simple, easy introduction to the Healthy Adult Self:

- Put your hand on your heart and speak to yourself as you imagine your healthy adult self would: *'sweetheart, how are you feeling right now?'*
- And simply listen to what comes up - you don't need to 'do' anything.
- Respond from your Healthy Adult Self: *'That makes so much sense. What do you need to hear right now?'* Again, just listen.
- And repeat what you need to hear back to yourself.
- Allow yourself to absorb the compassion and wisdom from your Healthy Adult Self.

The reason this is so effective is because you are acknowledging your emotions and your needs. Even if they are not what you really want to be feeling, you are acknowledging yourself - telling yourself the truth.

So, practice calling on your Healthy Adult Self in the moment you find yourself defaulting to that voice of your Protector.

It's a simple way to begin treating yourself with compassion. Four questions I encourage clients to ask:

- *How am I feeling right now?*
- *What do I need to hear right now?*
- *What are my choices?*
- *What do I need to do next?*

ACCESSING OTHER RESOURCES

Secondly, you can also use your Healthy Adult Self to bring out often unconscious personal resources into the open. Acknowledging and reminding you of the resources you ALREADY HAVE! These might be related to:

- Relationships (family, friends, pets, co-workers, community, etc.)
- Beliefs (what is the most helpful belief that feels true for you right now?)
- Joy (from crosswords to crossfit.)
- Spirituality (anything that gives you deep meaning.)
- Purpose (what fulfills you?)
- Values (what matters to you?)
- Talents (what do you enjoy?)

- Strengths (what helps you feel strong?)

It can be helpful to remind clients that they have a Healthy Adult Self that can act as a gatekeeper for these resources.

COACHING FROM THE HEALTHY ADULT SELF

As Self-belief Coaches, when we are with clients, we are doing three things:

1. We coach from our Healthy Adult Self
2. We coach with the client's Healthy Adult Self
3. And we reassure the Protector – the self-doubt – of the client.

We always assume the client has Healthy Self resources, even if they are not always readily available – or they haven't conceived of this before.

Remember it's the client's Healthy Adult Self that has brought them to coaching. This is evidence of resourcefulness!

Some part of the client has decided they want to understand and heal the root causes of their self-doubt. They want to uncover who they are underneath their self-doubt. They want to be braver.

What does it look like when you have a well-developed relationship with your Healthy Adult Self?

Clients describe this quiet power that comes from having their own back, no longer needing so much external validation, feeling brave to voice their opinions, ideas and preferences and saying yes to the projects that excite them.

They can face the reality that life is messy and imperfect. Take responsibility for what they believe and the outcomes they create in their lives.

They have a wider capacity for compassion and are able to offer themselves support and encouragement.

They are discerning, and able to advocate for themselves.

Start small, just check in – invite your healthy self to contribute to your life.

We will focus on this in Module Nine – Coaching with the Client's Inner Compass.

SBCA Coaching Tool: Meet your Protector - guided visualisation

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

- To help the client develop a personal connection to their Protector.
- To bring compassion to themselves where there may only have ever been judgement and abandonment.

EVIDENCE-BASED CONTEXT:

Voice dialogue is a therapeutic modality to address specific parts of the psyche by engaging those parts in dialogue.

It can foster healing by allowing us to communicate with aspects of ourselves through guided imagery (among other creative approaches).

This is a non-pathological approach that aims to uncover what is present, not what is "wrong" or missing.

BENEFITS FOR THE CLIENT:

- Gentle, creative and compassionate approach to deepening the client's connection with the Protector.
- Because we are not attempting to negotiate with, change, or encourage the Protector to agree on something, we can bypass a lot of resistance.
- Client can begin to understand the job the Protector has had in their life. They can begin to make peace with their Protector by honouring the good intentions of the Protector.
- The process helps the client to visualise a specific entity that means something to them.
- Helps the client develop a more balanced awareness of their self-concept.
- Client's may also report experiencing improvement in their personal relationships and become better able to express themselves freely.

TOP TIPS:

Encourage the client to be lovingly detached to any outcome – neither of us know what will happen – this is an experiment.

I have included the script and offered some guidance for this guided visualisation – feel free to record it in your voice - you may want to tailor this for your specific clients.

Some clients will get a clear visual on their Protector – it will take the form of some entity (often an animal), for others it will be a beam of light or something else. There is no right answer.

If clients cannot access the Protector in a session with you – invite them to listen to the visualisation as homework using the guidance.

Please listen to the downloadable audio ‘Meet Your Protector Guided Visualisation’.

SBCA Coaching Tool: The Four Faces of the Protector

The Critic, The Martyr, The Scapegoat and The Bystander are characterisations of our protective self-doubt. Each seeks to describe how the Protector tends to show up as our internal 'drama'.

By getting a feel for the most prevalent 'face' of their Protector, we can help our clients to understand why they may believe, feel and act a certain way (even if this runs counter to who they believe they *really* are).

Knowing how our Protector manifests is also very helpful for designing specific experiments that challenge the validity of the Protector.

INTENDED OUTCOMES:

To help the client begin to 'thicken' the Protector's narrative and develop a more nuanced relationship where the client is in the driver's seat.

EVIDENCE-BASED CONTEXT:

Transactional Analysis (TA) is a psychological theory, developed by Eric Berne in the 1960s, that helps explain why we think, act and feel the way we do in relationships with others.

TA is about becoming more conscious of your beliefs and behaviours, to have better, more constructive transactions with the people closest to you.

Karpman's Drama Triangle (1968) sought to describe what happens in dysfunctional interactions with others. The three roles on the Drama Triangle are Persecutor, Rescuer and Victim. Clarkson (1993) proposed a fourth role of Bystander.

I have found that our internal experience of the Protector correlates to these roles (with some differences).

BENEFITS FOR THE CLIENT:

- Reassuring to find the Protector is a recognisable and shared entity related to our human vulnerabilities.
- Useful 'way in' to developing a relationship with their Protector.
- Understanding the four faces highlights the Healthy Adult Self resources (self-belief, self-acceptance, self-worth or self-trust) that are the least developed in the client.

THE FOUR FACES OF THE PROTECTOR:



TOP TIPS:

- The four faces of the Protector describe our **inner-drama** - the way the Protector tends to show itself to us. These roles are NOT descriptions of personality.
- We might occupy all four roles in one experience of Self-doubt, or we may find we tend towards one role in a specific context (eg: The Bystander shows up when you are running your business).

- It can be helpful to think of the Four Faces – as ‘shadow’ aspects of the Healthy Adult Self:
 - The Critic is the under or over-expressed qualities of Self-belief
 - Martyr is the under or over-expressed qualities of Self-acceptance
 - Scapegoat is the under or over-expressed qualities of Self-worth
 - Bystander is the under or over-expressed qualities of Self-trust.

- There are inter-relationships between the Four Faces:
 - Critic and Martyr are both ‘over-functioners’ – they respond to difficult beliefs and emotions by doing.
 - Scapegoat and Bystander are ‘under-functioners’ – they respond to difficult circumstances by feeling and thinking.
 - Critic and Bystander are focussed on getting things ‘right’.
 - Martyr and Scapegoat are focussed on responsibility ‘poor you/poor me’.
 - Someone who believes they have all four equally have a sophisticated Protector that has found many effective ways to hold them back. Encourage the client to audit their protector – notice the specific ways it shows up – there may be themes (for example) a Scapegoat in their work, a Bystander in romantic relationships.

COACHING WITH THE FOUR FACES MAP:

- Allow the client to choose a recent experience where their Protector was present.
- Take a moment to recall the memory and bring this to life. Invite the client to close their eyes, feel their feet on the floor, remind them they are here, now, safe. They can stop at any time. We want to witness the experience so we can learn from it.
- Ask them to imagine watching themselves from above. Ask questions to help them visualise: *What are the details that you remember? What do you remember sensing or how did you know your Protector was present? What did your Protector say in your mind? What do you remember thinking? What do you remember feeling? What did you do as a result?*
- Complete the first boxes as the client shares their memories of what they were thinking and feeling and how they responded.
- *What was the Protector worried about? **This is the important part!*** What was in the worry box at this moment? Give the client space to talk about this. This is about inviting the client to get to know how their Protector operates.
- *What were the key risks?* This can really help quantify why the protector was getting involved. Over time this can help build up a profile of the risk sensitivity (NB: Complexity and disappointment are my Protector's favourites!).
- *What 'face' did my Protector have?* I recommend sharing what you see but let the client name this. Don't dwell too much on the 'right' answer – this is more about building a picture over time.
- We need more than one data point to help the client get to know their Protector, so this makes excellent homework!
- Invite the client to do this once a day before they go to bed/leave work. Choose a moment when their Protector was present and explore it using the map.
- If the memory is still 'alive' for the client in the session, you could take this into a Belief Buster.

EXAMPLE OF FOUR FACES MAP (FROM SAS):

MY MEMORY:

Beginning 2020 realising I had heaps on people on my 1:1 waiting list, but not wanting to coach 1:1.

WHAT I REMEMBER MY PROTECTOR COMMUNICATING:

- You will have to work really bloody hard now.
- This is so complicated.
- You have hit your income ceiling.

WHAT I REMEMBER FEELING AT THE TIME:

- Overwhelmed
- Confused
- Exhausted
- Frustrated

HOW I RESPONDED:

- I sat on the sidelines for months feeling deeply frustrated and envious of other coaches.
- Gave myself the 'Covid-get out of jail free card'

WHAT WAS THE PROTECTOR WORRIED ABOUT?

- I was protecting myself from growing – from taking the next step in my business.

WHAT WERE THE KEY RISKS I WAS PROTECTING MYSELF FROM?

- Complexity and disappointment.

WHAT 'FACE' DID MY PROTECTOR HAVE?

- The Scapegoat.

SBCA Coaching Tool: Experiments with The Protector

Please see p. 17 of the Module 5 workbook for a detailed approach to experiments.

COACHING A CLIENT THROUGH AN EXPERIMENT:

- *Plan:* Devise experiments with the client in session, to test the validity of what the Protector says is true.
- *Do:* Between sessions, the client should conduct the experiments - try new approaches, take new action, show up differently in order to gather up to date data from their real life. The more action they take, the more they will shift their belief!
- *Review:* In the next session review the client's experiences – What happened? How were they surprised? What beliefs are shifting? What meaning making is expanding? What happened if the risks came true? What internal resources did they call on? What do they make of this?

TOP TIPS:

- Encourage the client to start with small actions that challenge the Protector. Experiments should feel a little bit risky!
- Be curious and interested in the Beliefs of the Protector as the client begins to try new things.
- Expect resistance. There is likely to be A LOT of inner-drama from the Protector as it comes up with seemingly valid and noble reasons why the experiment is just not possible. Disbelieve this!
- Stay in your Healthy Self – *especially* if your Protector is at risk of becoming entangled with the client's.
- Detach from any desired outcome – remember, the point of experimenting is not to hit a target, it's to see what happens when we try new things.

THE CRITIC: EXPERIMENT WITH *COMPASSION AND IMPERFECTION*.

- The Critic is the under or over-expressed qualities of Self-belief. It's helpful to remember that **the Client cannot DO enough for the Critic to feel safe.**
- The Critic Protector is obsessed with things not being good enough and tells the Client they need to do more, be more to be safe.
- Invite the client to speak to themselves with compassion 100% of the time for 24/48 hours – this means embracing encouragement, speaking to yourself as if you were a friend. Whenever you find yourself criticising, judging or bullying, apologising to yourself and starting again. Notice what comes up.
- Consider what purposeful imperfection might look like for your client – go for small, low risk options. Some ideas: stop ironing clothes, [let the kids plan a whole weekend](#), learn an instrument, learn a craft, leave dishes in the sink overnight, stop wearing make-up for a week.

THE MARTYR: EXPERIMENT WITH *ACKNOWLEDGING EMOTIONS AND PRIORITISING NEEDS*.

- The Martyr is the under or over-expressed qualities of Self-acceptance. It's helpful to remember that **the Client cannot GIVE enough for the Martyr to feel safe.**
- The Martyr is going to have excellent reasons why the Client cannot possibly make time and space for themselves.
- It may be that the client begins by spending a few days taking an audit of each time they dismiss their own emotions or sacrificed what they needed for someone else (including kids!). These are likely to be times the Martyr Protector was in charge. Encourage them to use the Four Faces Map to develop more awareness of what comes up. This will help you consider specific experiments to support them.
- Experiment with a practice of acknowledging emotions (see Appendix A).
- Some ideas for experimenting with prioritising needs: decide on a time that is yours – eg: thirty minutes first thing in the morning or Tuesday night yoga - experiment is to notice what comes up (eg: *I don't know what to do, I get distracted as soon as other people want something*). Limit the time you spend doing tasks you don't enjoy (eg: 30 minutes on laundry/accounts, an hour responding to emails). Practice saying no when you don't want to do something. Be completely honest about what you are looking for on your dating profile.

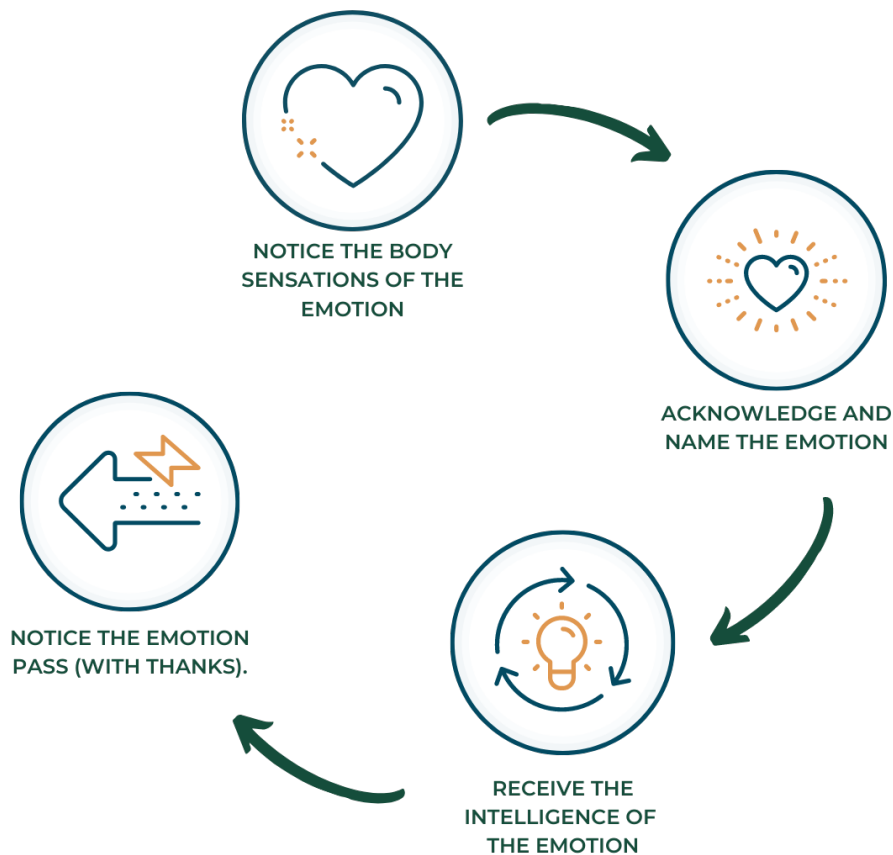
THE SCAPEGOAT: EXPERIMENT WITH *KEEPING PROMISES AND TAKING RESPONSIBILITY.*

- The Scapegoat is the under or over-expressed qualities of Self-worth. It's helpful to remember that **the Client cannot QUIT enough for the Scapegoat to feel safe.**
- Because the Scapegoat tells us we are helpless to change things and everything is really bloody hard, experiments are all about making decisions about what we can do, and keeping this as a promise to yourself.
- For example, '*I am always late*' can change to '*I am always 5 minutes early*' and then taking action to make sure this happens – putting your clocks back five minutes/organising your calendar etc.
- Resistance is usually really entrenched when the Protector shows up as the Scapegoat!
- It can really help to anticipate setbacks – build a plan with the client in the session for what could go wrong. Work with the client advocate for themselves *before* they get overwhelmed (*What could go wrong? What choices do you have?*)

THE BYSTANDER: EXPERIMENT WITH *MAKING DECISIONS AND TAKING ACTION.*

- The Bystander is the under or over-expressed qualities of Self-trust. It's helpful to remember that **the Client cannot WAIT enough for the Bystander to feel safe.**
- The Bystander Protector wants us to wait and tends to be future fantasy focussed (*'when all the stars align, then I can do something'*) so be alert to when/then statements.
- I like to invite the client to commit to some doable action, on the spot in the session. It can be really helpful to invite the Bystander to have a say in the session, using the Four Faces Map process.
- Anticipating setbacks can also be super helpful - for the Bystander this is usually about deciding to feel confused. Much like the Scapegoat - build a plan with the client in the session for what could go wrong. Work with the client to trust themselves *before* they get confused (*What could go wrong? What choices do you have?*).
- Because the Bystander is often concerned with looking foolish, it can also help to experiment with creative fun, dancing, play, creative pursuits – anything where the client is able to be *in the moment* can help.

Appendix A: How to experience emotions



1. Acknowledge and name the emotion:

- Notice yourself feeling activated - this might be instantaneous, or it may take some time for you to become aware and to acknowledge an emotion.
- Be curious, see if you can name what you are feeling.

2. Notice body sensations of the emotion:

- We feel our feelings through sensation - this is how our body communicates to us. Scan your body and notice any body sensations.
- Is there a colour, texture, movement associated with this sensation? If you could reach in and touch this sensation, what would it feel like? This will help you to develop a personal language for your emotions.

3. Receive the intelligence of the emotion:

- Our memories are stored in the body so your emotions may offer a message from a different experience, or from a much younger age. Remember: you don't have to act on anything.
- What is the emotion saying? What do you make this mean? Be curious - you can even ask it 'sadness, what are you saying?'. This can help you to process the feeling.

4. Notice the emotion pass:

- All emotions take around 90 seconds to dissipate in the body. Our wise bodies constantly release calming hormones to bring us back to homeostasis - our natural state of peace.
- It can help to thank the emotion for any message you received.

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