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**FAQs**

ACOA/IFS Group

* **What is ACOA?**
  + In 1983 author Janet G. Woititz listed, in her book “Adult Children of Alcoholics”, thirteen characteristics most adult children have in common. This list is also known as the “A.C.O.A. Characteristic List” by many adult children.
  + These are often recognized by people who grew up with a parent, or caregiver (sometimes a close relative) whose substance use affected them. Sometimes, people had grandparents whose substance use affected their parents, so they didn’t live with that substance use, but the behaviors that create these characteristics apply.
* **Do I have to know IFS?**
  + Yes and no. It will be most helpful to the group, and probably to your benefit if you have some working knowledge of IFS. It is preferable also, but not required, that you have or have had an individual therapist or practitioner that you have worked with using the IFS model. There are 2 reasons for this: 1. You will be able to follow along with the language and practices of the group which leads to 2. It can reduce your overwhelm and discomfort in group if you have a working knowledge of your system and the IFS model.
  + If you have limited experience using the model, that’s ok! We will be doing some overview of it and have some discussion to get people to some common understanding.
* **Is this a therapeutic group?**
  + No. This is a group that will explore and discuss characteristics related to ACOAs. By using the IFS model as a framework, members will identify areas of their lives that are related to this experience. This will provide insight that can then be explored with a licensed professional.
* **How many weeks is the group?**
  + The group will meet for 10 sessions; if there is a holiday or other event, they may not be consecutive weeks.
* **How much does it cost and how can I pay?**
  + The group cost is $300 (this breaks down to only $30 per session!) You will be asked to pay in advance as that helps to create a stronger commitment and involvement in the group.
  + There will be a payment plan available of 2 payments, $150 each. The first will be due 2 weeks before the group starts and the second one after the 2nd group.
  + Payment can be made using a check or debit/credit card. I will be using Square for payment purposes.
  + No refunds will be offered for missed sessions or discontinuation. (We can discuss this in the event of emergency)
* **How long does the group last?**
  + We will meet for 90 minutes. It is important to me that we begin and end on time so please be prompt. I know that you have other obligations, and it can help with planning to know that we will work to stick to those timeframes.
* **What can I expect in each group?**
  + We will follow the same format for each group. This way, you can be aware of what will come next. We will start with a brief meditation to help us settle into the space together, followed by a brief general check-in. There will be a learning piece which might include a visual aid using powerpoint or a clip of a video. We will review the designated characteristic for that session and discuss how your experiences connect with your Parts using the IFS framework. We will close with a quote, poem, or reflection to end the group.
* **What if I feel overwhelmed?**
  + It is natural to get overwhelmed at times. This can be a place for you to learn more about your internal system and practice bringing deeper connection with your Parts. You will be encouraged to and learn to speak for your parts during group. Often, overwhelm is due to more than one Part bringing you thoughts, sensations, memories. It could also be an attempt to process information that is taking place around you.
* **Will there be discussion in the group?**
  + Yes. We will be practicing speaking for our Parts by noticing the ways they show up as we review the material. We will also practice self-led discussion which means we will check in with another group member before offering feedback.
* **What if I am uncomfortable in the group?**
  + Groups can bring up a lot of emotions, memories, and it makes sense that you have Parts that get activated at times. I will offer you a half hour ‘session’ at no additional cost, if needed, to address discomfort. This will be a last resort, as you will be encouraged to work with your Parts in the group and use the group energy as support to you.
* **About me:**
  + I am a Certified IFS Therapist. I possess a license, Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor, in the State of Maine. I also have earned a Certification in Addiction Counseling. Other trainings and experience include EMDR, Mindfulness based Stress reduction, and DBT. All of these contribute to and inform my work, though the model and way that I view myself and others is through the IFS lens.
  + The first part of my career was spent as a correctional counselor; I worked in 3 different prisons over 20 years. It was here that I began my path working with people who have struggled with and experienced consequences because of their substance use.
  + I currently live in Maine; I love to hike, camp, travel, and am currently working on training our dog to become a therapy dog.