

Penny Parks was an internationally renowned consultant psychotherapist, trainer, author and motivational speaker. Having suffered abuse herself, Penny subsequently pioneered and developed the first comprehensive ‘inner child’ therapy model that became known as Parks Inner Child Therapy™ (PICT) and went on to offer training to organisations and individuals. She authored two books, *Rescuing the Inner Child* and *The Counsellor’s Guide to Parks Inner Child Therapy*, and was a gifted communicator, presenting Masterclass seminars for professional and personal development. She worked with individuals and organisations, including the NHS, MIND, Relate, Social Services, Police and Probation Services, Universities and Colleges, Psychotherapy & Hypnotherapy Training Organisations, Professional Associations, Private Agencies, Solicitors (as both trainer and expert witness) and many varied professionals. She was privileged to have been given Honorary Fellow Membership of both the National Council of Psychotherapists (NCP) and the National Counselling Society (NCS). Penny was born in America and moved to the UK in 1982, where she gained British Citizenship and lived with her husband until her death in 2020. Her company Penny Parks Training continues to train therapists in PICT.

By the same author

**RESCUING THE 'INNER CHILD': Therapy for Adults Sexually
Abused as Children**

P E N N Y P A R K S

The Counsellor's Guide to
Parks Inner
Child Therapy



SOUVENIR
PRESS

This paperback edition first published in 2022

First published in Great Britain in 1994 by
Souvenir Press,
an imprint of Profile Books Ltd
29 Cloth Fair
London
EC1A 7JQ
www.profilebooks.com

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10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

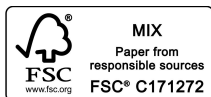
Printed and bound in Great Britain by
CPI Group (UK) Ltd, Croydon, CR0 4YY

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A CIP catalogue record for this book is available
from the British Library.

ISBN 978 1 78816 784 0
eISBN 978 0 28564 158 7



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Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my closest friend and colleague, Pamela Hayes, for her creative expertise and contributions to the book, for her help with editing and for her loyal and caring support.

My thanks also go to Clare Rushworth and Pippa Smyth—both are very special and valued friends who cheerfully took the time to plough through the manuscript to anglicise and edit.

I would also like to express my sincere appreciation and respect to those individuals who have contributed their personal work as sample material, in order to give counsellors a clearer understanding of PICT.

Introduction

Psychotherapists and counsellors in Western society who work in the field of childhood abuse have recognised the positive value of 'inner child' work. Parks Inner Child Therapy (PICT) is a flexibly structured approach to inner child work, which works through the 'today' adult to assist resolution of trauma within the 'past' child part to create inner harmony and balance.

PICT is a powerful and versatile therapy model package that can be most easily described as an evolving form of rapid cognitive therapy with a foundation in Transactional Analysis that incorporates Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) to aid rapid positive change. PICT was originally created to specifically help people recover from the trauma and damage of sexual, physical and emotional abuse during childhood (such harm may have been caused deliberately, caused by neglect, or by inadequate parenting which was not intentional), but it has been found that PICT is equally effective for a wide range of emotional problems such as ritual abuse, food/drug/alcohol abuse, depression and anxiety, phobias, Dissociative Identity Disorders, CBD, self harm, PTSD & more.

In 1990 I published the book *Rescuing the 'Inner Child'* (Souvenir Press) which introduced the PICT model. It was designed to be a self-help book to assist people who had experienced childhood abuse. In the introduction I described the people who should use the book in collaboration with a counsellor and advised them not to attempt to tackle their problems alone. This second book is designed for counsellors who wish to work with clients using aspects of the PICT method. Of course, those counsellors who wish to be fully qualified PICT therapists and use the full array of 'tools' will attend the PICT Advanced Practitioner Training. By virtue of its purpose, the self-help book

only contained information that could be used independently by a layperson. It was PICT in its most basic form. Consequently, additional information and tools that can be used by counsellors who wish to utilise some aspects of the PICT method outside of the full training. It does not contain the full form of PICT that is available in the training course, nor the advanced features that do not require disclosure of traumatic details.

PICT is an evolving model of therapy with ongoing refinements and changes. Since 1998, the most significant feature of PICT is that it can bring about change compassionately because there is little or no need to disclose the details of traumatic events. No longer are specific techniques required to recover repressed traumatic memories, which in some cases re-traumatise clients and, at the least, are time consuming. PICT addresses the effects of the trauma (whether the trauma is in conscious memory or not) rather than focusing on the detail of an event and therefore allows the client to retain their privacy, dignity and to work comfortably to bring about beneficial changes in their lives. PICT contains thorough, quick and effective techniques that can lead to lasting change.

Most clients enjoy the methods and are quickly aware of their achievements. PICT therapy can be relaxing and satisfying, with times for laughter to counterbalance the more serious moments.

Although this book is entitled *The Counsellor's Guide*, it can still be of use to people wishing to use it as a self-help guide (with the obvious limitations) or simply as an information source. It is not, however, suggested as a replacement for counsellor training. The intended use of the book is for trained counsellors to gain insight and tools to add to their repertoire; for people who are struggling to reach recovery on their own and wish to learn more about what they can do for themselves and what they will need help to achieve; for those needing more information about the effects and treatment of childhood abuse; as a reference tool for those completing the PICT Advanced Practitioner Training (see details at end of book).

1 Effects of Childhood Trauma

When children experience trauma at the hands of trusted adults (especially family members) their emotional link with the adult world is severed, creating an emotional 'stop on time'. They are then left with three companions: guilt, fear and feelings of inadequacy. These three companions can stay on throughout their adult life governing part or all of their decision making.

(Penny Parks, *Rescuing the 'Inner Child'*)

Upon hearing this information, most people who have experienced abuse will readily agree and verify to you the presence within of guilt, fear and feelings of inadequacy. Explain to your clients that to remove the 'three companions' you will need to access the Child part of them where those feelings originated and are still trapped. Accessing the Child part will enable them to reconnect that 'severed emotional link' with the adult world. This reconnection can assist your clients to repair the damage done during childhood and consequently begin to experience a better quality of life. The reconnection is between the person's Child part and Adult part.

WHAT SORT OF TRAUMA/ABUSE?

The information in this book applies to those who have experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse. Contrary to common assumptions, a person who experiences emotional abuse can suffer from the same problems and symptoms as someone who has suffered sexual abuse. In some cases, that includes sexual dysfunction. For instance, if a person's parents were sexually restricted, their verbal and

behavioural messages would mirror that restriction. Their children would receive the message that just thinking about bodies, let alone sex, is bad. Those children may easily have grown up with some sort of sexual dysfunction or restriction simply as a result of emotional abuse or poor parenting.

There is little difference between the symptoms and problems of people who were emotionally abused and those who were physically or sexually abused—their exact experiences differ, but their limiting symptoms are similar. The information and techniques in this book can be used for a broad spectrum of abuse, from poor parenting to ritualistic abuse.

WHAT IS SELF-TALK?

The following is an excerpt from the Written Assessment of one of my students on the PICT Training Course, Kath Teasdale, from Liskeard, Cornwall. Her task was to write an explanation of self-talk, the thought processes involving inner dialogue between Parent, Adult and Child parts. She did such a beautiful job of explaining it, I felt it was an appropriate introduction to explaining our Parent, Adult and Child parts.

Kath Teasdale

Self-talk

Every person has three aspects within themselves—the parent, adult and child, which develop as we grow up. The adult is our reasoning part, which gathers information, enables us to manage our life, to make realistic assessments and to be assertive. To do this it needs sound information available. When working well, the parent is our teaching part. Modelled on our memory of our own parents and elders, it monitors our actions, protects us from harm, teaches about life and acknowledges our efforts without criticism or judgment. The child's job is to be spontaneous, curious, creative and fun, thus

enabling us to experiment, innovate and play. Together these parts are intended to function as a balanced team, meeting the challenges of life.

If a person has experienced traumatic childhood events or inadequate parenting the inner messages will be damaged, preventing the team from functioning correctly. The damaged adult will be ill-informed, unassertive, and a poor, indecisive manager. The damaged parent will be full of blame and criticism that disables us and undermines our efforts. We will punish ourselves for any deviation from the high standards we set ourselves with this critical parent voice. We can often recognise it as a sarcastic 'Jiminy Cricket' that sits on our shoulder. The damaged child will feel fearful, guilty, angry and become locked in self-sabotaging patterns that leave us feeling helpless and inadequate.

In this way we develop incorrect pictures of ourselves and others. We may expect too much or too little of ourselves, fail to recognise our genuine achievements and underestimate our good qualities. Our thought talk (self-talk) becomes full of confusion and self-criticism. Our relationship with ourselves and with others becomes problematical.

PICT acts to reconnect the broken emotional link with the adult world by correcting the information in the adult. The adult in turn can correctly inform, support and love the inner child. This process corrects mistaken beliefs, frees the child from fear and anger, enabling it once again to experience the spontaneity and fun it was intended to. With correct information the adult functions more strongly and supportively, the child learns to trust and the parent can take up its correct non-judgmental role. Together they learn to identify and diffuse unhealthy parent messages as they arise.

ADULT, PARENT AND CHILD

Transactional Analysis, as developed by Eric Byrne, is built on the basic model that every person has three aspects within—the Adult, the Parent and the Child. When I first

began my search for healing I found Transactional Analysis familiar because I was very aware of my Child part and also very aware of the damaged Parent part. Unfortunately, my Adult part was fairly insignificant. I immediately applied the Transactional Analysis form of therapy but found that it did not extend far enough for me. So it was at that time that, armed with the knowledge of the Adult, Parent and Child, I began my pioneering route towards healing and ultimately developed PICT.

The three aspects of Parent, Child and Adult can be recognised by listening to our self-talk—our thought talk. The Adult and Parent are often hard to distinguish apart at first, because they are both coming from thoughts that sound ‘grown-up’, whereas the Child is fairly easy to identify because the thoughts sound ‘childlike’. In other words, our self-talk containing the Adult and Parent parts will be structured and worded in ‘grown-up’ terminology; the Child talk will be structured and worded as a child speaks. Each of these three aspects or parts have a job.

Adult

The Adult’s job is to be an information gatherer, have a strong assertive voice, be a strong manager (of our life circumstances), make realistic assessments (of self and others) and be executor over the other two aspects.

Parent

The Parent’s job is to teach, monitor actions and behaviours and to give acknowledgement of accomplishments. (All of these are done with a non-judgmental tone or attitude in the healthy Parent.) Teaching pertains to self and others. We ‘teach’ ourselves each time we try a new recipe or follow directions to put together a bookshelf and we ‘teach’ others each time we explain to someone else how to prepare the same recipe or assemble a similar bookshelf. Monitoring actions and behaviours pertains to our awareness of things needing to be done; in our thoughts we say, ‘Remember the keys.’ ‘Oh, it’s raining, bring in the washing.’ ‘It might rain, bring the umbrella.’ Acknowledgement of accomplishment pertains to recognising our efforts, whether successful or

not. The Parent part can express acknowledgement by saying to self, 'Good job!', 'Well done!' when a goal is achieved, or 'Great effort!' when a goal is tried but not attained. The Parent part expresses similar comments to others concerning their efforts.

Child

The Child's jobs are spontaneity, creativity, curiosity and a sense of fun. Individuals who say aloud, and in their thoughts, 'I'll try it!' 'Let's go and see!' are expressing typical spontaneous Child statements. 'Look what I've made [discovered].', 'I want to try this new way' are typical Child creative statements. 'Let's see how this works.' 'I've got a good idea to try' are typical statements made by the curious Child part. A sense of fun comes in many shapes but is characterised by a great pleasure in laughter and in sharing laughter with others.

Damaged Adult

If an individual has experienced very poor parenting or had his emotional link severed by trauma/abuse (emotional, physical or sexual) during childhood, the Adult, Parent and Child aspects become damaged and are not able to function in a healthy manner.

The damaged Adult will be ill-informed, be either aggressive or passive, be unable to manage or change life circumstances, make unrealistic assessments of self and be unable to take charge of the other two aspects (Parent and Child). Decisions will be taken by the most powerful aspect at any given time or 'voted' on. Voting may work for our general society but it is not useful for our inner emotional functioning, which needs the appropriate aspect (Adult) to be in charge or confusion reigns. [Your clients will be very familiar with feelings of confusion.] It is part of the Adult's job to be in charge, to make the final decision, to veto suggestions by a damaged Parent or Child part—it is easy to see why an ineffective Adult aspect would be unable to function properly in these areas.

Damaged Parent

The damaged Parent will send messages that are accusing, blaming, punishing and name calling. These messages came from the significant adults in your client's childhood, i.e. parents, teachers, relatives or childminders. Generally speaking, the bulk of influence comes from parents. The messages (heard in our thought talk/self-talk) will sound very much like the exact things parents, for instance, actually said—even to the use of 'you' statements rather than 'I' statements, i.e. 'You are so clumsy!' 'Look what you've done now!' 'Did you think they would really like *you*?!' The tone will be either sarcastic or judgmental. A damaged Parent aspect can make life miserable and hopeless, robbing your client of his or her individuality and potential. The three tasks of the Parent will be executed in a damaging, sarcastic and judgmental attitude.

Note: The Parent and Adult are always difficult to distinguish between at first, but one rule of thumb to use is this—the damaged Parent message is *always* accusing, blaming or name calling. No matter how convinced clients may be that it is their 'Adult' which dislikes the 'Child', that is *never* true. The Adult can only be non-judgmental towards the Child, it is the damaged Parent who 'dislikes, hates' and consequently makes accusing, blaming statements about the Child. It will be vital to establish this truth for your clients and you will no doubt need to repeat it, and help them re-identify it, many times.

Damaged Child

A damaged Child is fearful, angry and self-sabotaging and carries the guilt, fear and feelings of inadequacy previously mentioned. When challenges face your client, the damaged Child self-talk will contain messages reflecting fear such as: 'I can't, I'm afraid.' 'I want to hide.' 'Don't ask me. I can't do it!' When faced with disappointments your client will feel angry and the damaged Child self-talk will be messages such as: 'I'll get back at you!' 'Everyone hates me!' 'Hurt people before they hurt you!' 'I hate everyone!' Disappointment can also activate damaged Child self-talk in the self-sabotage area with statements such as: 'I deserve it—I'm bad (dirty,

ruined, contaminated).’ ‘I shouldn’t be happy.’ ‘I’ll never be happy.’ Most often self-talk contains fluctuations between the three: fear, anger and self-sabotage.

See the self-talk chart (p. 18) for more examples of healthy vs. damaged Adult/Parent/Child messages. Use it also as a handout to clients or as a quick checklist to remind yourself of the jobs each part does and how to recognise where damaged messages are coming from (which part is manifesting).

RECONNECTING THE EMOTIONAL LINK

The severed emotional link with the adult world can be reconnected, but not with the person’s actual parents. Instead it will be with the Adult your client is now. The person’s Adult can give correct information, support and love to the damaged inner Child, subsequently changing the Child’s mistaken beliefs about self and desensitising traumatic memories. The Child aspect can then become healthy and happy, enabling the person to experience more spontaneity and fun, thus developing his or her creativity and curiosity.

The Adult part will receive the information, to be given to the Child, from you, the counsellor. The information should then be immediately written to the Child (or planted directly into the unconscious mind if using visualisation techniques), so that you actually witness the Adult gaining strength, knowledge and stability simultaneously with the Child. The Parent part of your client will change and develop by witnessing the exchange between Adult and Child, with just the occasional letter written to the Parent part when an issue is particularly difficult.

These three aspects, Parent, Child and Adult, are a part of everyone, although most people are never aware of how they operate or that changes can be made in that operation, if needed. In order to implement change, your client will first need to understand the individuality of these aspects. In other words, the aspects will need to be separated out and addressed individually, but once healthy functioning is achieved, the Parent, Child and Adult aspects will blend

SELF-TALK EXAMPLES: DAMAGED VS. HEALTHY

Damaged parent voice	Ineffective adult	Damaged child voice
Accusing, blaming, punishing, and name calling.	Ill informed, unassertive voice, and no control.	Fearful, angry and self-sabotaging.
Look what you've done now! You ruin everything. I shouldn't expect anything different from you! Did you think you could really do it? You made your bed, now lie in it. You will never be any different. Stupid! Clumsy!	I guess kids who are abused asked for it, that's what people say. Mum and Dad must be right. Other people know more than me. I don't like what they say, but I can't stop them. I don't know my rights.	I can't, I'm afraid. Don't be angry, I'll do it. I want to hide. I'll get back at you! Don't trust anyone! Hurt people before they hurt you! Everyone hates me! I'm bad, dirty, ruined, and contaminated so I deserve it. I'm bad, etc., I shouldn't be happy.
Healthy parent voice	Effective adult	Secure child voice
Teaching, monitoring, acknowledgement (non-judgmental voice tone).	Information gatherer, strong assertive voice, strong manager, makes realistic assessments.	Spontaneous, creative, curious, fun.
That works like this. Give this a try. Here is a good way. This may be useful. Don't forget the keys. It's raining, do you have the umbrella? You have worked hard, good job. You did your best, good effort. You were very assertive, well done!	If I don't know, I shall find out. I enjoy learning. I respect others rights. I respect my rights. I am responsible for myself. I soon recognise damaged parent and child messages and defuse them. I am in charge of my life, and I feel happy and strong doing so.	I'll try it! Let's go and see. I've got a good idea to try! Look what I've made (discovered). Let's see how this works. I want to try this new way. Let's be silly. I like making you laugh. I like laughing.

back into smooth, appropriate and natural behaviour, with their individuality being only occasionally apparent.

THREE DIVISIONS

There are three other divisions within your client that need to evolve back into one.

First—A damaged, problem-ridden person, resulting from the abuse.

Second—The ‘coping’ person he often pretends to be in order to function in the world, i.e. hold employment, manage social interactions.

Third—The person he would have been if the negative effects of the abuse had never happened.

Clients will be very familiar with the first, damaged person and also familiar with the second, ‘coping’ person. The ‘coping’ person is experienced as a sense of wearing an emotional mask which enables the client to appear normal, rather than problem-ridden—a pretence. The mask-wearing time will vary with individuals, some having it in place for much longer periods of time than others can manage. Those able to keep the mask in place for longer periods of time may not even be seen by their colleagues as having any problems, whereas the person who cannot wear the mask for very long will be well known as problem-ridden.

Explain to your client that your work together will be to reach in and draw that third person forward—the person he would have been had the negative effects of childhood abuse never happened, the person he would have developed into had he experienced healthy parenting. Usually the client will have very little awareness of the third person’s presence, but that should grow as you work together. What you are aiming for is the person he should have been, to be the total person he is—no longer experiencing damage and consequently no longer needing the ‘mask’ behaviour.

Making the reconnection between Adult and inner Child, and giving the Child the information, support and love that should have been received when the traumatic events happened, frees the person to be who he or she would have been if abuse had never happened.

EXAMPLES OF THE EFFECTS OF CHILDHOOD ABUSE

Letters

I received a letter from a man named Stephen, who is on his recovery journey. He wanted to share what he had written about his feelings and experiences, with a view to educating and/or assisting others. He called this written piece 'Climbing from the Darkness'. Often those who are beginning to come out of their pain feel a need to help others who are even further behind. Stephen's written piece mirrors this feeling. It also demonstrates the most difficult part of the journey for him—acknowledging and facing the memories. This may not be every victim's difficulty. His piece also assumes that there is skilled help available when people do come forward, which is, sadly, not always the case. Stephen's letter clearly states the confusion and emotional pain victims of abuse (emotional, physical or sexual) experience and demonstrates their silent cries for someone to intervene. It is a clear picture of the long-lasting effects of abuse.

Climbing from the Darkness

PREFACE

The words written herein are those of a male victim. They try to express my beliefs and fears. The aim is to help others and by so doing ease some of my pain. I am now 38 years old and am now being helped. Please read the words with an open mind and heart.

One Touch into Hell

Sexual abuse starts with the first touch. That touch can send the victim into a hell of pain, fear and isolation. Leaving a victim to feel alone; that there is no way out; that he is the only one; and that he will not be believed.

Nobody has the right to begin this pain for the victim—it only takes that one touch. All children have a right to be and to feel safe. Society needs to find a way to protect them. Those who are already victims, whether still a child or now an adult, can and must be helped to overcome the pain, fear and confusion.

The body can be hurt, the mind numbed. The horror lives on in the mind even long after the touching has stopped. The victim must know that he can get help, the body repaired, the mind unlocked. Many feelings can be lost: the ability to love and be loved. How can a victim grow to love and make love when sex and touch were used to torture him? Unlocking the mind can be achieved by talking, by someone listening and believing. If not, the victim can begin to believe that he is sick, a freak, worthless, when it is the abuser who should feel this way.

Abusers come in many forms: father, mother, brother, sister, uncle, aunt—anyone who has access to the child inside or outside the family. If the abuser is within the family, the victim is caught in many ways: to talk may hurt others in the family, he may not be believed, he may be put in care. The fear of breaking up the family makes the victim feel that in some way he is the one who is wrong and not the abuser. This is not so. The victim begins to keep more and more silent and may start to act badly (e.g. staying out of school, causing trouble, etc.). These are all signs of a troubled mind (not necessarily of sexual abuse). When nobody asks what's wrong, then the victim starts to feel even more isolated and betrayed. The sense of betrayal deepens with time and itself becomes confused, thus creating even more self-doubt and a weakening of the spirit. If the child is not listened to, or is too frightened to get help, as the years go by the world seems to gang up against him, each failure in his life compounds the self-doubt. Feelings become even more difficult to unlock. If one is a male, things such as media profiles of potential abusers help to create self-doubt, e.g. adult males most likely to abuse are those who were themselves abused as children and are now unable to form adult relationships. This describes male child victims, while female victims are

portrayed as likely to become promiscuous or to turn to prostitution out of low self-esteem. These stereotypes, although sometimes true, only serve to keep the victim from coming out of his shell.

So where do the answers lie? Prevention is always better than cure, prevention can only come through education and understanding. Teachers could be trained to look for the signs, e.g. children who skip school, who are sullen or withdrawn, too quiet or causing trouble, in poor physical health, misusing drugs, etc. The media could help to create a more open attitude so that victims and those who may feel likely to abuse can seek help. Many charitable organisations now offer counselling, but governments (not just in the UK), seem to lack the courage to deal with these areas of human behaviour. It seems that we, the victims, are not worth the investment. This itself hurts the victim.

*From One Touch into Hell
Two Steps back to Life*

The beginning of the return from childhood sexual and other abuse takes two steps: the first is to cry out for the help you need, the second is to have the courage to face the past. The help is becoming more available, the courage must come from within. You do have that courage—to have survived this far proves this. But the victim is entitled to more than just survival, you have a right to be happy and fulfilled in your life.

Others do care; so take your courage and contact the helpers (e.g. doctors, counsellors, helplines, etc.). You will overcome the pain, trauma and fear. You have a right to your freedom and life, so do it, do it now! You can have the courage. It is not easy. Be patient. Give yourself the time to release the pain, it will ease. Then you can take back control of your life and go forward and attain the peace of mind and joy that is your right.