

# **Dealing with Fear in the Therapeutic Setting: A Guide for Healers and Therapists Working With Clients with Schizoid Wounding**

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## **Abstract**

Schizoid wounding occurs very early in life due to trauma or lack of emotional contact with a parent. The infant develops an impression of life as being frightening, cold, hard and isolated from others and has the desire to escape from this experience. One of the results of schizoid wounding is that the individual experiences anxiety staying present in life and making contact with others. This anxiety can be triggered in a client with schizoid wounding during therapy or healing sessions. Working with this wounding in clients requires sensitivity and understanding from the healer or therapist. This paper discusses schizoid wounding and why the therapeutic setting can be a trigger for schizoid defenses. It offers a clear picture of what the schizoid experience is like and explains how to identify this wounding in clients. Also included are specific guidelines on how to support clients in the healing of this wounding.

## **Dealing with Fear in the Therapeutic Setting: A Guide for Healers and Therapists Working With Clients with Schizoid Wounding**

### **Introduction**

The general experience of the schizoid client during therapy and healing sessions is often full of anxiety. Even if mentally they believe that it is a safe setting for them, they may have an emotional or bodily experience of fear, perhaps a vague feeling of anxiety or discomfort, or body tension or trembling. They often display strong will to keep going, despite the fear. Often they are trying to stop the fear, push it down, ignore it and continue on. Commonly they have a deep sense of shame and embarrassment that they are feeling so much fear, which leads them to try and hide it. Many times the clients are actually unaware of their own fear or even believe they have no fear. It may be so familiar for them to experience fear that they struggle to identify it. It may feel normal. Also, the schizoid client often has well-developed means of compensating for the fear, ways to function through the fear and hide it from others. This is often happening constantly, without the schizoid client even knowing he is doing it.

The experience of fear and anxiety associated with making emotional contact with oneself and another, such as in a therapeutic or healing situation, is a common experience for a person with a schizoid character structure. I would like to discuss how we as healers or therapists can become more aware of this process in our clients. I am going to include ways of identifying the schizoid character in clients and offer a full description of the schizoid experience. I will also discuss means to best support a schizoid client. I believe the goal is to help the client learn to create more safety around contact.

I will begin by describing the schizoid character structure as defined by Barbara Brennan in Hands of Light<sup>1</sup> and Light Emerging.<sup>2</sup>

### **The Main Aspects of the Schizoid Character Structure**

The central issue behind schizoid wounding is existential terror. The schizoid character structure develops very early in life, before or during birth or in the first few days after birth. It could result from some sort of trauma, such as trauma in utero if the mother is unwell, stressed, angry, feeling hostility toward her unborn child. The trauma could be a birth trauma or a lack of emotional connection to the parent in the first few days of life.

It is the way the child perceives reality that ultimately creates the schizoid character defense, not necessarily the actual events, although they may be similar. Sometimes the actual trauma or wounding experienced by the infant may be slight or even a misperception. This may not cause wounding in another child. Sometimes the incoming soul's choice of parents will support the soul's belief that human beings are hostile, in the case of aggressive or abusive parents. The degree of wounding is determined by the life task chosen by the incoming soul.

People with schizoid wounding have usually experienced many life times of physical pain or torture for their spiritual beliefs. People with this experience have the belief that life in a physical body is painful and terrifying and do not have a strong desire to incarnate into the physical world. The response to the trauma is for the soul to withdraw, to pull back into the spiritual realm. They are afraid to fully incarnate in the physical world, to fully inhabit their body, to embody life and bring in their energy and consciousness into the physical world. They fear that they do not have the right to exist.

They do not want emotional contact with other people. They expect to receive hostility from others. They perceive people as hostile, even if they are not, because of their prior experiences and beliefs. As they do not develop healthy third and fourth chakra cord connections to their parents,

<sup>1</sup> Brennan, *Hands of Light*, pp. 110-116.

<sup>2</sup> Brennan, *Light Emerging*, pp. 207-216.

they never learn how to connect with other people. They are afraid of people and have difficulty connecting. During interactions with others they tend to talk in a depersonalized manner and to intellectualize a lot. This reinforces their experience of being separate from the world.

Withdrawing into the spiritual world is the habitual defense of schizoid characters. They do with by splitting, twisting and pulling much of their energy consciousness out of the top of the body, vacating the physical body. The schizoid usually runs his energy up the spine and out the back of his head at the occipital region. This is a way of avoiding being present and making contact in the physical plane. Leaving the body in this manner is habitual and occurs from early childhood or even before birth. It results in the energy field having perpetual twists and being uneven on the left and right sides. The energy field of schizoid characters has imbalances and breaks. Schizoid characters also never form a strong outer boundary for their energy field, the 7<sup>th</sup> level “eggshell” of the field. Because they have such weak outer boundaries, they tend to be very easily penetrated by other energies. The schizoid character is ungrounded and hyperactive and as a result may come across as being flaky. The schizoid character also compensates for his tendency to fly away by holding himself together on the emotional level.

Alexander Lowen tells us that schizoid characters function in life as is life is a matter of survival. They lack control over their reactions and are more at the mercy of outside influences than other character structures. They respond to affection quickly but just as quickly freeze up in a situation they believe is threatening. It is not that schizoid characters can't feel themselves, it is that they can't relate themselves to physical reality. They have a great ability for spiritual feelings, for tenderness and sympathy. It is difficult for them to relate these feelings to others over extended periods. They can relate briefly, but extended contact causes great tension. They have no feeling of being in their bodies, rather view them as the means to house their thoughts and feelings.<sup>3</sup>

### **The Schizoid Defense within the Therapeutic Setting**

Based on the description of the central issues of the schizoid character, it is understandable why a schizoid client might find the therapeutic setting anxiety provoking. Therapy and healing sessions require the schizoid client to presence themselves, talk about themselves in an intimate way with the therapist or healer. There will be an attempt at making contact with the therapist and forming a relationship. This will be challenging for the schizoid client. It will probably evoke fear or discomfort. The schizoid client has the expectation that contact with another, especially close contact, is unsafe. He is not expecting to be received in a way that is gentle or nurturing. Because of the way he holds his emotions together, he may have resistance in becoming emotionally vulnerable in the therapeutic setting. Contact with the therapist will tend to be superficial, or intellectual, rather than emotional.

Schizoid clients' anxiety in this situation may not lessened over the years unless it is directly addressed. The anxiety may even increase as they begin to address the issue. As their personal process deepens and they become aware of more parts of themselves, they will most likely be able to identify their anxiety more clearly. It may have been so familiar that it is hard to identify initially. Schizoid clients also have well-developed ways of defending against feeling the fear. They might try to keep themselves and everything around them under control. They tend to avoid feeling emotions that are overwhelming, knowing they will not be able to maintain the control they want if they experience the emotions.

Sometime schizoid clients feel exhausted and drained of energy after sessions, especially ones that have been full of anxiety or fear. They might experience lower backaches in the area of the adrenal glands. I believe this is because the anxiety causes adrenal stress in the body. This seems to happen specifically when they use a lot of will to avoid feeling emotions or fear or to attempt to remain in control of the situation.

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<sup>3</sup> Lowen, *The Language of the Body*, pp. 371-372.

The way a schizoid client presents himself to a healer or therapist will depend on many things: the degree of schizoid wounding he has and how much he associates his identity with the wounding, the amount of personal spiritual or psychological growth he has had over the years, his life situation and support system. The client may not present with anxiety or existential life issues as his primary complaint! The client may not appear to be a particularly spiritual or sensitive person. Most people have a degree of schizoid wounding, even if it is not their primary character structure. The wounding lies underneath other later developed character structures. As a therapist or healer we may be fooled into thinking that a client has no schizoid issues because of their high level of compensation around the wounding. As our clients grow, or as we work with them over time, they tend to become more willing to lessen their control of themselves and their surroundings. They may become tired from trying to control everything! They may lessen some of their other defenses that they developed at a later stage in childhood and have clung to thinking they needed them in order to function through life. They may need to grow in other ways before being able to begin to deal with their underlying schizoid wounding. When the timing is right, the client will be ready to begin healing this wound. This time may arise when their desire to make authentic contact increases, or they become more aware of the desire for contact. Perhaps they will reach the point of wanting to allow their emotions to flow more freely during interactions and this will trigger their schizoid issues around contact. Be aware that each step of their journey might be full of fear. The contact they want feels terrifying.

It is very helpful for the therapist to have an awareness of the schizoid wounding and the dilemma around making contact. I believe that it takes a skilled, compassionate therapist with a strong intention to stay present with this situation.

The more interactive the session, the more present the healer or therapist is and the more present the client is required to be, the greater the likelihood of the client experiencing anxiety. Schizoid clients often anxiously anticipate therapy and healing sessions with a sense of dread, even when they are willingly choosing to be there. Their cellular experience is of impending death, of waiting to die. The sessions begin long before a client and a healer meet. They begin when the client decides to come for a session, and schedules one. It intensifies the days before the session, then with the travel required to come to the session and waiting for the session to begin. By this time the schizoid client is often totally anxious!

When the client meets with the healer or therapist his sense of discomfort or anxiety increases. You may be able to sense the client feeling awkward and uncomfortable trying to make contact. You may sense your own sense of discomfort or anxiety increase! The schizoid client experiences feeling frozen, unable to feel himself. He might feel lightheaded and his body may feel clumsy and awkward. At this point the client is in poor contact with himself and with the other. His usual ability to read or scan the other disappears. He does not have a good grip on reality and really doesn't know what is going on for himself or the other.

This is a moment full of healing potential. The schizoid client's issues around making contact are triggered and we have many possible ways of addressing this. I believe that commonly we ignore all of this and make a few minutes of small talk. Yet by doing this we are not yielding to the moment of the now, or the flow that is naturally occurring. We have not surrendered to the present. The client may not be comfortable to do this, may feel uncomfortable with his or her feelings of fear. He or she might continue talking as a way to try hide them and move over them. The healer can help to bring presence to the moment. The client may move in and out of defense throughout the session, and you can help him move back into contact with himself. This may mean that you help the client contact himself while he is experiencing fear, to make contact with the fear.

Brennan says, "Learning to connect in relationship is essential for schizoid characters because it is only through relationship that they can fill their deepest spiritual need to experience their own individuality as godly.... They can only learn that through communicating with other human beings." The main energy of the schizoid character is held deep within his core of his being. It is

usually frozen, until he begins healing work to release it.<sup>4</sup> Alexander Lowen similarly describes how, in schizoid clients, the free energy of the embryo withdrawing to the center, while the outer edges become frozen. “The warmth that the patient needs is the heat of the energy flow in his own tissues and musculature.” He describes the eyes of the schizoid client have a faraway look to them, due to their lack of contact with the present. Their eyes seek the eyes of the healer. “One is struck by this desire for contact as if it were the dominating principle of their personality.”<sup>5</sup>

## Supporting a Schizoid Client

Schizoid characters have a great sensitivity. In my experience the client may feel particularly vulnerable to being abandoned around these sensitive parts, fearful of losing your loving contact. He or she may respond positively to constant reassurance that you are still there, still present and in contact. A simple statement like “I’m still here” or “I’m still with you” could be enough. Statements like “That sounds really painful,” or “Is that sadness/anxiety/grief I notice?” can also support a client experiencing some painful emotions. Remaining in an emotional state yourself, feeling your own emotions and your heart will encourage the client to stay with the painful emotions longer. This is to be encouraged because of the tendency to avoid feeling fear or other painful emotions. The schizoid client may want to rush into a mental explanation or justification and perhaps a “rational” healer or therapist may be tempted to quickly offer some advice or an intellectual comment. It is not in the intellectual realm that the healing is required! It is in the emotional realm. Be patient with yourself and your client. It may not be all that comfortable witnessing your client experiencing fear or emotion. The greater ability your clients develop to remain in contact with parts of themselves that they usually avoid, the greater their sense of self and their wholeness. Healing happens when you hold more of yourself, your experiences, and your different aspects consciously, with compassion, in your heart. Bear in mind that the emotional territory your clients are in may feel very young and not yet well developed. Your clients may feel very vulnerable and tender at emotional moments. Hold them emotionally with tenderness in your own heart. Gentle emotional support may be something they have felt little of before.

Your client may also feel resistance to experiencing vulnerable, sensitive or fearful parts of themselves. The schizoid character’s high level of sensitivity also may result in the client feeling pressurized easily. It is a delicate balance, as the healer’s presence may feel too hard and willful, or too soft and not solid enough for the client. However, underneath this is a longing for a more solid consistent contact.

Healing the schizoid wound involves choosing to share more of your emotions with others, to allow them to see more of you. This can be frightening and uncomfortable. The discomfort is mainly due to the newness of the experience and the images you hold (for example, expecting hostility from others.) Identifying the images and loosening your hold onto them can lessen this, but the discomfort may be something you need to walk through, not try bypass. Schizoid characters may not be well able to differentiate when it is a good time or safe to begin sharing of themselves. This may be due to lack of skill or experience, or negative intention (to perpetuate the wounding.)

As a healer we may notice our clients brush over important issues. They might be experiencing uncomfortable feelings and not want to stay with them. Yet your clients will appreciate when you as therapist or healer notice these moments. They will value the support and gentle encouragement to experience or share these parts of themselves more fully. It is usually the parts they avoid or defend against feeling the most. Even though they often do hide these parts, they long for them to be seen and recognized. They don’t want for them to slip past unnoticed. There often seems like there is nothing to say or do about these tender parts of the self, gentle presence and recognition is enough.

Schizoid clients may long, consciously or unconsciously, for you to notice their fear, and remain in soft, stable presence with them as they experience it and allow it to flow. It may be a new

<sup>4</sup> Brennan, *Light Emerging*, p.216.

<sup>5</sup> Lowen, *The Language of the Body*, pp. 378-383.

experience for them to allow another person to witness their fear. The fear may be so familiar and habitual, or so well compensated for, that schizoid clients may not be aware of it at first. Consciously feeling fear may be a new experience for the client.

### **What are the human and spiritual needs of people with a schizoid defense?**

Brennan teaches us that schizoid characters need to learn how to connect to other people in relationship. They need to learn how to feel safety in the physical body. They need to learn how to experience time in the moment, in the present. Spiritually, the schizoid character needs to learn to experience the God within and to realize that this inner God is their unique core essence. In a way to avoid physical existence, schizoid characters tend to spend much time in the higher spiritual levels, in a diffuse state of unity. In this state their individuality is not experienced. Life in the physical world is a process in which we can recognize our own individuated divinity. So people using the schizoid defense are avoiding this individuation process of incarnation in which they could recognize their own core.<sup>6</sup> I notice this in a way in which some schizoid clients seem to almost avoid, or surpass, their own humanity in an attempt to be spiritual. It is through this human experience of the physical world that we recognize our divine qualities in our human qualities.

Brennan continues by saying that the schizoid character uses his defense system to avoid experiencing his inner terror, his terror of being annihilation. He could not deal with it as an infant. He experienced hostility or abandonment from one or both of his parents upon whom he was totally dependent. He had no way of dealing with his terror. As an adult the schizoid can learn to release the terror of annihilation. He will learn it has more to do with his inner rage. This rage is comes from continuously experiencing the world as a cold, hostile place, where you need to isolate in order to survive. The schizoid holds onto this belief about the physical world with much rage. Underneath this is the pain of needing warm, loving and nurturing connection to others. Many times the schizoid has not been able to create or sustain this in his life.<sup>7</sup>

The terror of the schizoid client is that his own rage will cause him to shatter into pieces. He needs to let in out a little at a time and to feel it without going into defense and leaving. If he can remain grounded while allowing the terror and rage to come out, he will be releasing his inner pain and longing for connection with others and allow for self-love to come in to him.<sup>8</sup> I have noticed some schizoid characters using an attitude of peacefulness, of avoiding confrontation or anger as if this is a better or more spiritually advanced choice. It may come across with a degree of aloofness. Yet we learn that, although the schizoid character may strongly identify with this pacifist approach, it is somewhat a façade. Underneath lies a terror of anger and confrontation. Great compassion is needed when working to begin release some of this.

Lowen states that the schizoid client has great conflict what to do with his aggressive tendencies. In all conditions of trauma, there is an unconscious struggle to restore unity. In a warm emotional environment, thawing may occur. This may produce a flooding of aggressive emotions. The flow of these emotions will be in the direction to destroy the object that hurt and threatened him, that is, the mother. He may have so much fear of his aggression that he will resist mobilizing it. Yet hatred freezes the individual and the relationship with his mother. It is as if they are frozen in a mutual bond of hatred. The schizoid may be unaware of his resistance, but it will materialize in the form of distrust or fear of the therapist or therapy. The therapist can only offer his or her sincere effort, humility and honesty in response to this resistance.<sup>9</sup>

Brennan describes schizoid characters as very spiritual people. They have a deep sense of purpose to life. They often bring spirituality into the mundane aspects of life around them. They are very creative people, with many talents and creative ideas. The different aspects of their being tend to

<sup>6</sup> Brennan, *Light Emerging*, p. 209

<sup>7</sup> Brennan, *Hands of Light*, pp. 112-113.

<sup>8</sup> *ibid*, p113.

<sup>9</sup> Lowen, *The Language of the Body*, pp. 385-387.

be separate from each other. The schizoid needs to learn to integrate the different parts of himself, to have easier access to all parts of his being. His terror and rage blocks his ability to utilize his creativity. He has fear of the powerful integration of his parts and creative talents. This is part of his life task, to materialize his spirituality in the physical world.<sup>10</sup>

### **The Process of Healing the Schizoid Wounding**

The presenting complaint of schizoid clients coming into therapy is often anxiety. There exists the inner turmoil: To feel fully alive one must have contact with oneself and others in a real human, emotional and physical manner, but the schizoid client feels the need to escape from the world and from others, to be separate to survive. So to live feels like you are dying or facing death. The schizoid client needs to recognize these as images that are not based in reality and to slowly begin to challenge them and replace them with healthier and more accurate beliefs. Learning to make contact may be an on-going life-long experience. The schizoid client needs help and practice in recognizing himself, who he is in the physical world and identifying and strengthening his boundaries.<sup>11</sup>

My experience is that schizoid clients try to feel safe by feeling what is around them. They look for information outside of themselves. They track your energy, even if they are unaware that they are doing this. Their high level of sensitivity that makes this easy for them. They have good awareness of the higher spiritual levels of the field, but less contact with their own sense of self, their emotions or body. They have difficulty bringing the information into their self or center. I have noticed this to be a potential source of anxiety to the clients. When they are feeling ungrounded and little contact with themselves, for instance when they are feeling anxious, they really struggle to assess what is happening within the person they are interacting with. They are not sure what is really going on with the interaction. The healer needs to help the client to bring the information inwards. Even though the schizoid mind works fast, it takes time for the information to be processed on a more intimate, personal, bodily or emotional level. Actually the mind can work so fast it floods with thoughts, judgements, images so fast that the client is not aware of them. This leads them to feel unsafe and in a separate state. You can help your client by giving them reality checks. You can tell them what you are experiencing or thinking to bring clarity if there is confusion. You can ask them to explain what they are experiencing to help them define for themselves what is happening in the moment. A tremendous amount can happen in a few minutes and this process of clarifying your own individual experiences can be very reassuring to a schizoid client.

Schizoid clients do have the ability to pick up subtle experiences in the therapist or healer, some of which may be unconscious to the healer. They can read the therapist quickly. For this reason, the therapist must know himself well, and his limitations. The therapist should be able to track himself. Obviously you cannot be a “perfect” therapist, so don’t pretend to be one! You can be real with your clients – honest, sincere and present. You can also be emotionally warm. “The therapist’s warmth is the therapeutic agent by means of which he can bring the patient more deeply into reality. To the degree that it is freely given is it freely accepted.”

Brennan describes various stages a schizoid client may go through in therapy. After an initial period of being nice, his mask of blame will come out. The message of this mask is “I will reject you before you will reject me.” Once he moves deeper into his personality, he will encounter his lower self. The schizoid lower self or shadow says, “You don’t exist either.” Once the client reaches some resolution to his dilemma, the more developed, higher self, of his personality emerges with the knowledge that “I am real.”<sup>12</sup>

I believe that it is helpful to be aware that clients’ experiences or emotions may be outside your own comfort zone, or may trigger your own reactions. How can you be with a schizoid client

<sup>10</sup> Brennan, *Hands of Light*, pp. 114-116.

<sup>11</sup> Brennan, *Hands of Light*, p. 111.

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*, p. 111.

experiencing anxiety around the attempt to make contact? With compassion and a willingness to be uncomfortable or in an unknown territory!

There are ways to help oneself or a client move more into themselves. Ask your client the following questions:

1. "What is happening within you? What are you experiencing?" This encourages the client to move more inward, to bring information in. It allows the client to better define his reality and his sense of self. He will also be strengthening his boundaries, becoming better able to separate what is self and what is other.
2. "What are you feeling?" This question brings the client out of the mental arena into the emotional arena, and more into himself.
3. "What can you feel in your body?" This teaches the client greater awareness of his body sensations. This is important in the treatment of schizoid clients. The healer can help increase the client's identification with the body and its sensations. It also shows the link between particular physical sensations and emotions he is experiencing. You could suggest the client gently breathes into this area and allow it to follow its natural course. Emotions and sensations are not static; they flow and change as we bring our awareness to them.
4. "How can you take care of yourself now and not abandon yourself?" This is a way to encourage your client to take responsibility for his well being and identify what it is he could give himself to feel safe and nurtured. He will be very specifically healing the wound where he tends to split into separation and abandons himself. He will learn to identify ways to move into unity with himself and the world, making healthful choices for himself.

It may be useful for your client to close his eyes briefly when he is tracking himself, his emotions and sensations. While you don't want him to drift off or separate, closing his eyes will limit the amount of external stimulation he receives and allow him to focus on sensations in himself. Ask him about his experiences after a while, when you sense the timing is right. This will encourage him to share himself, bring himself into contact with you.

When you notice a client experiencing emotions, you can encourage them to stay with the feelings. This gives them the permission they may feel they need, and may help them have more awareness of them. If you notice them moving out of the feelings, you can also gently comment on this.

It can be very helpful to reflect back what your client is saying. Listen and absorb the information, then reflect it back to the client. This gives your client time to let them experience themselves more. They can clarify for you and themselves what they are experiencing. It allows the client to feel heard and felt. The information sinks in for the client and they can become more real to themselves.

### **Relating to Schizoid Clients**

Brennan describes some possible negative reactions to the schizoid defense. I believe it is very useful to notice and pay attention to your way of responding to someone in a schizoid defense. These are some possible negative reactions:

- 1.) To get angry because they're not paying attention, maybe try to push them into attention.
- 2.) To feel abandoned and to try pull on them, to grab them back to you.
- 3.) To stop flowing your energy and sink within yourself.
- 4.) To go into denial and carry on as if nothing is happening, as if you are contacting each other.<sup>13</sup>

These don't work! They do not help the schizoid character come out of defense!

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<sup>13</sup> Brennan, *Light Emerging*, pp. 209-212.

This is how Brennan describes you can to help someone in schizoid defense (a positive healing response):

The goal of the healing response is to bring both of you out of fear and defense and into reality and communion with each other as soon as possible.

1.) Don't send out any bioplasmic streamers through their fragile outer boundary. Feel the eggshell of your field, your own boundary in all directions and keep it contained. Do not focus your mind on any one thing, don't go anywhere with your mind.

2.) As schizoid characters tend to have a lot of their consciousness in the higher levels of their fields, you must raise your own vibrational frequency to meet them there. You can do this by experiencing your highest spirituality through all your senses. If you can do this without sending out any bioplasmic streamers the schizoid character will feel safe.

3.) It may feel safer for the schizoid character if you do not face them directly or look them in the eye.

4.) Once you have made contact on the higher levels of the field, you can begin to lower your frequency. Through harmonic induction the schizoid character's frequency will begin to lower too. Relax and feel calm, imagine a pleasurable walk in nature. This will bring both of you, through harmonic induction, down to a balanced earth frequency.

Once you both have a feeling of safety you may ask permission to touch. You can ask the schizoid character to bend his or her knees. Place your right hand on the rear aspect on the second chakra, holding a calm vibration in your hand and not sending out bioplasmic streamers. Gently allow a streamer to flow from your hand, directing it with your intention down the center of the person's body and into the earth, strengthening this connection. Then allow cords to connect from your heart chakra and solar plexus to theirs. You may need to send them all the way from you chakra into theirs, as they may not know how to connect them.<sup>14</sup>

This requires the healer to have a clear understanding of his or her energy field and the work with it. There are some other ways of interacting with a client in a schizoid defense that can help them through the defense and into contact with themselves. I believe the most valuable thing you can do is to soften yourself and treat your client with great tenderness. Remember that the defense develop in the earliest phases of infancy. There is a way to be with your client, who is probably an adult, that can meet both his adult and infant aspects. Hold in you the tenderness you would use with an infant, but meet your client's adult ego too. This interaction does not need to be infantile or patronizing, just tender.

It is very helpful to acknowledge your clients' fear. Reach out to your client in some way and make contact. Hold your own grounding solidly as you interact. Let your clients know you can notice and feel their fear and that it is okay for them to feel the fear. Give them permission and encouragement this way. Let them know there is safety in feeling their fear and letting it flow at this time. Let yourself feel their fear as it runs through their field.

Your clients' experience of fear may intensify as they allow it to flow through their field. They may shake or tremble as it runs through the body. It can help them if you stand or sit close to them. The solidity of your energy field next to theirs will be very reassuring and comforting. If it is appropriate, you may hold your client as they release fear. Holding from behind or from the side of their body usually feels most comforting and appropriate to the client, as it feels safe, without feeling invasive. Always ask your client for permission to touch before doing so. Check with your client, as you touch, that the touch feels right to the client. Notice their response to the touch. Ask if there is a better way to touch, for instance to move closer or further away, or to hold a different part of the body, or with greater or less pressure. This allows the client to feel safe in controlling the touch and also to learn about their reaction to touch. Touching is only appropriate in some forms of therapy or healing, so be aware of this.

Helping your client to make safe contact with you, especially at a time when they are feeling fear or isolation, is a great gift. You will be teaching them that there can be safety in contact and in

<sup>14</sup> *ibid*, pp.209-212.

relationship with others. Many schizoid clients have not felt safety or intimacy in relationships, even with their parents. They do not know how to create this safety in a close, loving relationship or interaction themselves.

### **How to take care of yourself when you are in a schizoid defense**

One first needs to recognize what it feels like to be in schizoid defense. Your energy field is going to be pulled upwards and out of your body and it will be twisted. You will have little energy in your limbs. You may first notice this as a sense of discomfort in your body, a very unsettled feeling. You may feel a little edgy or nervous. There may be a sense of irregularity, chaos or panic in you. You will probably notice that your breathing is shallow. If you try and feel the sensations in your body, your abdomen may feel numb, as it is around the energetic emotional centers that are freezing up. Your sense of time will be disturbed, usually feeling that everything is speeding up, or a sensation that time is not flowing smoothly, rather in jumps and starts. Your limbs, especially your lower legs, might feel a little tingly, numb or weak. You will not have refined control of your limbs – they will be a little shaky or unsteady in their motion. You may have the sensation that you are floating off the ground rather than walking on it. You may also get the sense that your arms or legs are somewhat separate to your body, moving without you having control of them. You will feel a little light-headed and unable to focus clearly. In more intense situations, possible during a therapy or healing session while working with healing this defense, you may actually feel your spine twist and your head jerk to the back or side, following the strong flow of energy out of your body. The desire to leave your body and retreat into the spiritual realm may be experienced several ways: as a desire to leave, to go somewhere else, a desire to escape, or just a sense of not wanting to be where you are, a sense of discomfort being where you are. The desire to leave your body and retreat into the spiritual realm may be experienced several ways: as a desire to leave, to go somewhere else, a desire to escape, or just a sense of not wanting to be where you are, a sense of discomfort being where you are.

Be very gently with yourself. You are experiencing this because of fear. You are experiencing a habitual pattern of leaving or abandoning yourself. Try to avoid having judgement about this defense. Deliberately begin to slow everything down for yourself. Breathe deeply and slowly. Feel your body sensations as the air flows in and out of your body. Feel into your abdomen. Feel your feet on the earth. Keep reminding yourself that you are safe. Try saying something like “This is me, I am here, I am safe,” to yourself. Is there someone close to you who might be able to offer you support? You could ask yourself, “What can I do to stay with myself, to not abandon my needs?” Sometimes just asking that question creates the environment of nurturance that allows your energy field to sink back into your body. We can teach ourselves self-nurturing responses.

There are some techniques that someone with awareness of their energy field can do. By focusing your consciousness onto the top of your head, you can deliberately bring your energy down into the body all the way down to the feet. You can feel your grounding in your feet. You could try using the image of roots growing out of the soles of your feet, anchoring you to the earth and drawing energy up from it.

Once you feel more grounded and in contact with yourself, you can begin to make more contact with those around you. Feel the other people around you. They might feel much less threatening, even friendly now! If you want to make more contact with them you can open your heart and solar plexus chakras.

## How to tell if someone is using a schizoid defense

There are several ways to notice when people in a state of schizoid defense. You may be able to sense the fear around them. You may notice that you become more anxious or ungrounded around them. One of the first things you might notice is their eyes. These may look blank or expressionless and you will get the feeling that there is “nobody home.” They look at you, but don’t really see you. Some people using the defense can get a wild, nervous look in their eyes and their eyes move in a quick, darting manner. When they speak to you their voice can be flat and lacking character, or nervous and breathy. Their head is often held to one side, out of the main flow of energy of the body and the head may seem somewhat disconnected from the neck. The expression on the face can be a bit mask-like and lifeless or lacking warmth and joy.

Sometimes you can notice the imbalances in their bodies, such as a twist in the spine, uneven shoulders, or unequal left and right sides. You may see that the sides of the face appear uneven. Often people with a strong schizoid defense are tall and thin, but this is not always the case. You will also be able to see a sort of disjointed aspect to their body. Their arms and legs are not that well coordinated and their body does not flow like a whole unit, rather like parts put together. Their gait may seem a little uncertain, because their feet are not well connected to the ground. They have weak joints that can be frozen and stiff. Their calves and ankles are thin and weak, and they have cold hands and feet.

Lowen teaches us about the tensions and separations in the body of a schizoid client. The neck muscles hold much tension and there is significant tension at the base of the skull. There is a corresponding block at the small of the back, where the spine and pelvis meet. There is lack of movement in the hip joint and immobility of the pelvis. The diaphragm is frozen and relatively immobile. This causes a division of the body into two halves, upper and lower body. Various parts of the body are separated from each other. These can be summarized as the separation of the head from the body, the splitting of the body above and below the diaphragm and the separation of the extremities from the trunk.<sup>15</sup>

Barbara Brennan gives information on the energy field of schizoid clients. The first level of the field (related to physical functioning and physical sensation) will not be as strong or developed as it could be, resulting in a weak and sensitive physical body. It leaks energy at the joints. The habitual defense of leaving the physical body thus has the effect of making the body less safe to be in! It helps to create life experiences that support the belief that life in a physical body is unsafe, because they are so sensitive and vulnerable. The second (emotional) level is also less developed and it is held tight and frozen, or moving randomly in an unbalanced way. The third (mental) level is also tightly held, or moving without balance. There tends to be more energy on one side than the other, and usually there is more energy around the head, especially at the back. The levels above these, the spiritual levels of the field, are well-developed and brightly colored. The seventh level is brightly colored, but more silver than gold. It has a diffuse boundary and is narrowed at the feet.

She explains that the imbalances of the aura are mainly on the lower three levels of the field. A schizoid who has not done any process work is likely to have many chakras spinning counterclockwise, sending more energy out than in. The chakras that are usually open are the rear aspect of the second chakra (indicating the schizoid’s tendency to function through will), the front aspect of the sixth chakra (related to mental understanding) and the seventh chakra (connection to spirituality). Tension is held in rings around the body. There is a large energy block at the neck, at the base of the skull. It looks dark gray blue. There is often energy leaking out the base of the skull.<sup>16</sup>

We can also learn about the haric dimension of schizoid characters. The haric dimension is the level of our intention. What is the schizoid intention in life, moment to moment. From what we know about the schizoid wounding, we know the schizoid dilemma is about life and living life fully

<sup>15</sup> Lowen, *The Language of the Body*, pp. 376-377.

<sup>16</sup> Brennan, *Hands of Light*, pp. 113-114.

– to live means to face death, because living fully means unity and the schizoid holds the belief that he needs to remain separate to survive. So in terms of intention, the schizoid wounding is perpetuated by the negative intention to avoid life, stay separate or escape from the physical. An energy healer will be able to work with the different points on the hara line of a client. These are the ID point (where we have our direct connection to God), our soul seat (our longing for this lifetime, what we long to create in every aspect of our being), our tan tien (our connection to the power of the earth, the point that holds us in a physical state) and continuing into the earth's center. The largest distortion of the schizoid client's hara is often in the tan tien. It may be held back and misshapen or torn. This means that the client will not be drawing as much energy from the earth as is possible and the client will be weakened. The amount of energy that is available for life will be reduced. The client is holding himself back from life. The connection to the earth's center is often weakened too, again reducing energy in life. The client will have difficulty manifesting what he wants in life (located in his soul seat,) even if he has a clear connection to this. He does not have the energy to bring it into physical reality. The schizoid client often has a strong ID point, with a strong connection to divinity.

While an energy healer can work to strengthen the tan tien of the client, there are also ways to encourage the client to make life affirming decisions for himself. These will also work to strengthen his hara and his commitment to living, his intention to want to exist.

I am including a list of things to consider as life-affirming choices. Some may seem profound and others simple and obvious. There is a lot we can do in our basic daily living that creates the message "I am here, I am alive, I want to be alive and maximize my physical existence!"

### **Hara strengthening/life-affirming choices**

1. In terms of physical bodily comfort and pleasure there is much for the schizoid client to learn. Begin by taking care of basic bodily needs: eat when you are hungry and eat what your body is asking for, drink water throughout the day to avoid thirst (which can feel like death on a cellular level), go to the restroom as soon as you need to. Wear comfortable clothing that doesn't bother you in anyway. Dress according to the weather so that you are always at a comfortable temperature. Make sure your hair doesn't feel uncomfortable, like when it hangs in your eyes. Rest and sleep when your body calls for it and exercise in a manner that feels pleasurable to you. Make living in your body as comfortable as possible!
2. Slow your pace down! Take a while to regroup yourself before you continue your activities. Make sure you only do one thing at a time, to avoid feeling scattered in several directions. Plan enough time into your schedule to avoid rushing or being late, as these can create panic. Structure can help you to unify, to reduce fragmentation and chaos.
3. Resist the habit of isolating yourself. When you feel despair or loneliness or fear, make the choice to reach out and be with another. Consciously make the effort to contact and share with others in all different times of your life, not only when you feel good.
4. If life begins to feel dark and hostile, access that part of you that is able to support yourself. What choices are you able to make that help you through a challenging time? What can you do to add pleasure into your life, even if you are going through difficult circumstances?
5. Pay attention to pain or other discomfort in your life. Avoid the urge to ignore it. Realize that you may need to change something in your life to improve this situation. This may mean facing what you have been procrastinating! When you align with the intention to take care of yourself more fully, you may have some more clarity on how to make healthful choices.

### **Conclusion**

A therapist or healer's role in working with a Schizoid client is to be a consistent, gentle presence. It is not to fix or change anything, but to be the holding and support, the emotional container the

client needs to unfold and experience more of himself. The healer can be an unconditional presence, allowing the client to learn safety in contact with others. The healer can hold the template to encourage the client to increase his physical and emotional presence. The healer can help the client to witness and experience the parts of himself that he has rejected and avoided the most. Allow the discomfort or anxiety to be present. Welcome it. The most difficult step for the client might be to acknowledge his fear and let it be seen by you. While the ultimate goal is to reduce fear and anxiety, healing it is not by suppressing it. It is not the wounding that causes so much pain, but it is our defenses to avoid feeling the wounding. Help create the safety the client needs to begin to experience the fear and to start dissolving it. Be present to what is. There is no magical answer or perfect thing to do. Just be open, be gentle and be present. Expanding our level of contact ourselves and another is a tender sacred process.

## **Bibliography**

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