

# Group Schema Therapy

For complex trauma



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by Healthscope

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Community  
of Care



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# Schema Therapy

## What is complex trauma?

Complex trauma is a condition that develops due to some form of abuse during childhood and/or adolescence. This abuse can be physical, sexual, emotional or neglecting behaviour. Due to this abuse occurring at a time when an individual is young and vulnerable it can have life-long lasting effects including long standing emotional and interpersonal difficulties.

These difficulties are often reinforced and maintained by trauma related schemas that are developed and are influenced by the trauma that the individual has experienced.

## What is a schema?

A schema is an extremely stable, enduring set of beliefs that develop during childhood and adolescence. These schemas influence how we see the world and provide a template for not only our own sense of self, but how we view others. Our schemas act as an 'emotional button' and when triggered an individual can experience emotions that are painful and distressing.

These emotions tend to become overwhelming and often the individual is left to engage in dysfunctional coping strategies to manage the trigger. This experience of emotion and coping is often described as an 'emotional rollercoaster' and leads the sufferer feeling confused, lonely, exhausted and helpless.

## Aims

The Victoria Clinic offers both inpatient and outpatient group schema therapy programs designed to help participants understand and manage the effects of complex trauma. It does this by helping participants to:

1. Understand how schemas have developed and how they relate to their mental health symptoms
2. Understand how their past experience has led to the development of their individual schemas

3. Understand their emotional states (modes) and reactions related to complex trauma
4. Learn more adaptive affect regulation strategies to manage emotional states and trauma symptoms
5. Develop safe connections with others within a therapeutic space and explore interpersonal dynamics to help heal interpersonal trauma.

## Who

The program is designed for individuals with long-standing emotional and interpersonal difficulties, in particular those with a diagnosis of traits of Borderline Personality Disorder or individuals who have a complex trauma history.

## Structure of the program

- **Introduction to Schema Modes Day Program**  
one day per week for six weeks.
- **Inpatient Schema Therapy for Complex Trauma Program**  
four week inpatient intensive.
- **Advanced Schema Mode Work Day Program**  
one day per week for six weeks.

It is recommended that participants enrol in the Introduction to Schema Modes Day Program and then enrol in the four week inpatient intensive prior to enrolling in the advanced program.

## How do I take part in the program?

In order to be assessed for the program you will need to be under the care of an accredited Psychiatrist at The Victoria Clinic.

Once the schema team has received the referral, you will be contacted to discuss the assessment process. For more information regarding the assessment process please visit [www.thevictoriaclinic.com.au](http://www.thevictoriaclinic.com.au).