

Interpersonal Beliefs And Styles

When you experience problems in your relationships, it can have a negative impact on your mental health and well-being. Unfortunately, it's sometimes difficult to understand what causes these problems and why they keep happening.

People tend to fall into relationship 'patterns' that are repeated over time. These patterns are influenced by our past relationships, our beliefs about other people, and how we make sense of other people's responses to us. Exploring these patterns can help you understand where relationship difficulties come from, why they repeat themselves, and what you can do to change them.

Therapists use tools called *formulations* to create a 'map' of how a problem might have started and why it might be 'stuck'. By working through the *Interpersonal Beliefs And Styles* worksheet with a therapist, you can reach a shared understanding of how your relationships with other people operate, and how you might change them for the better.



How could this tool help me?

The *Interpersonal Beliefs And Styles* worksheet can help you:

- Explore and understand your role in relationships and social situations.
- Clarify your 'style' of relating to others, including how you protect yourself in your relationships.
- Understand more about problems that keep occurring in your relationships.



How should I use it?

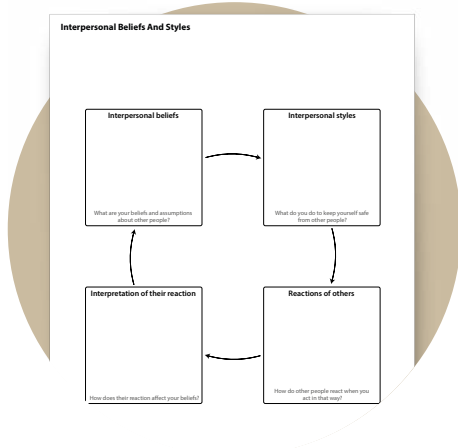
The tool will guide you through a series of steps:

- **Your interpersonal beliefs.** Think about the beliefs you bring to your relationships. They might include global judgments about people (e.g., "Everyone is out for themselves"), your expectations of others (e.g., "If I show my vulnerability, people will use it against me"), or thoughts and images that tend to show up when you're with other people (e.g., "I remember how other kids used to make fun of me").
- **Your interpersonal style.** How do your interpersonal beliefs influence your behavior when you are with other people? How do you try to keep yourself safe, make yourself feel comfortable, or prevent bad things from happening?
- **Reactions of others.** How do other people react to your behavior? Note down what they tend to say or do, or how they might interpret your interpersonal style.
- **Your interpretation of their reaction.** How do you make sense of other people's reactions to you? Do their responses seem to confirm or disconfirm your interpersonal beliefs?
- **Reflect on the cycle you've drawn out.** What are the advantages and disadvantages of your relating style? Can you think of new interpersonal beliefs and/or relating styles that would help you break out of this pattern? How could you find out whether your old beliefs and assumptions about other people are truly accurate?

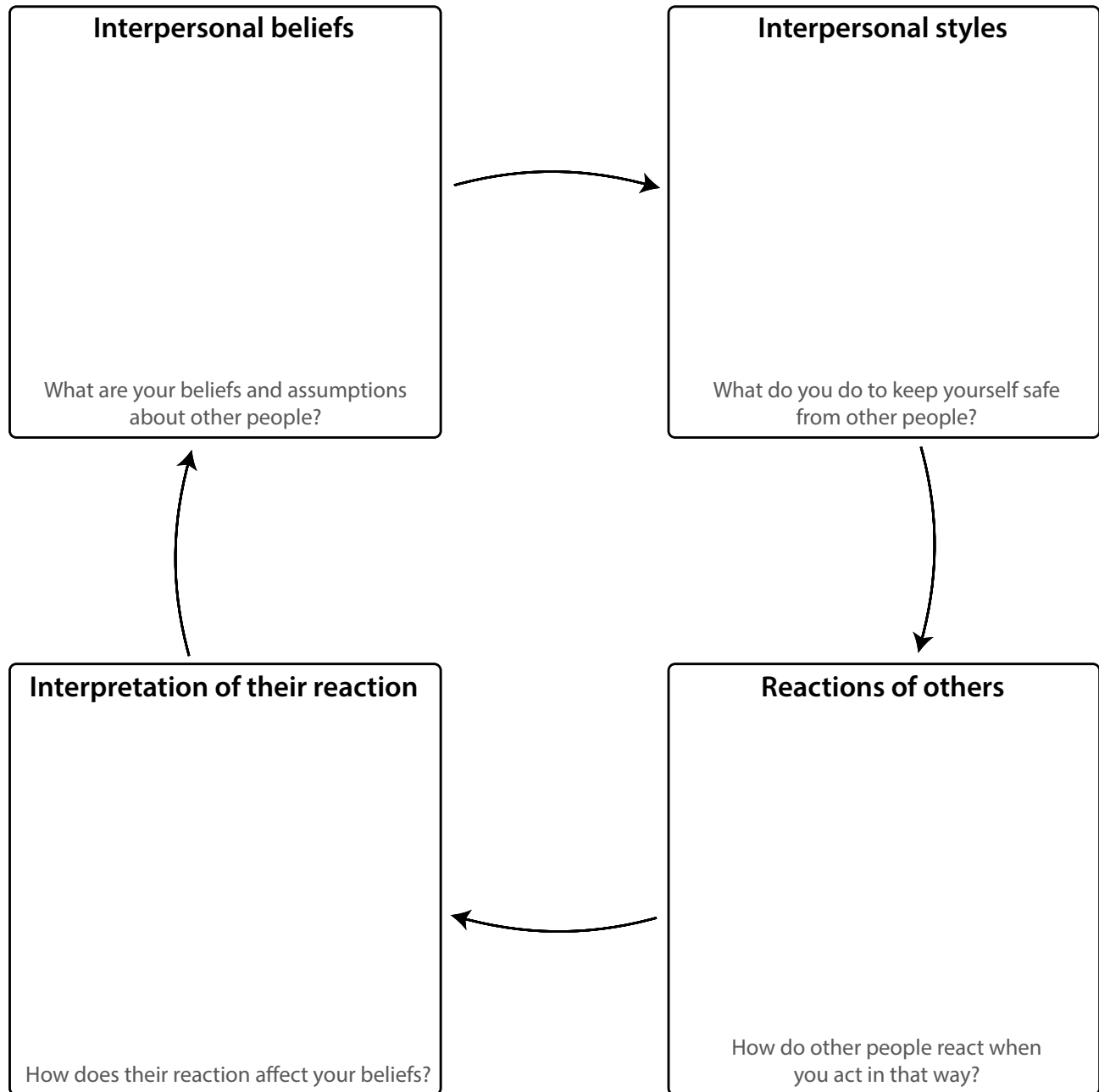


Helpful tips

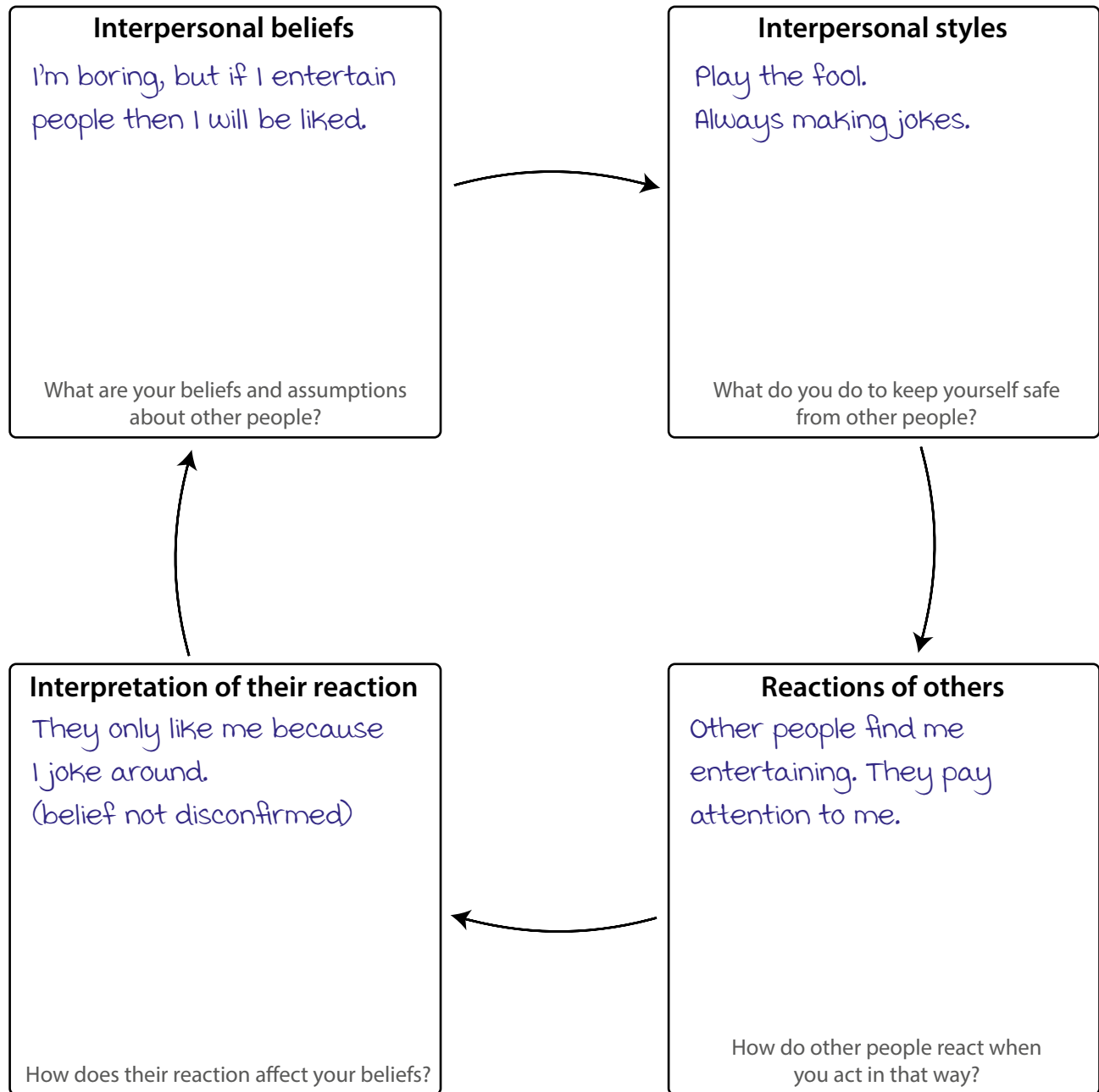
- Practice completing this worksheet with your therapist at least once.
- You can use this worksheet to explore patterns in any of your relationships – with friends, family members, work colleagues, or even with your therapist. You may notice that the same pattern plays out in several relationships or with certain types of people.
- If you're unsure of how other people might experience your relating style, try putting yourself in their position. If someone related to you in the same way you relate to others, how would you react and make sense of their behavior?
- Exploring where your interpersonal beliefs and relating style come from can give your relationship patterns more context. What events and experiences led you to see other people in this way? How did your relating style help or protect you in these past relationships?



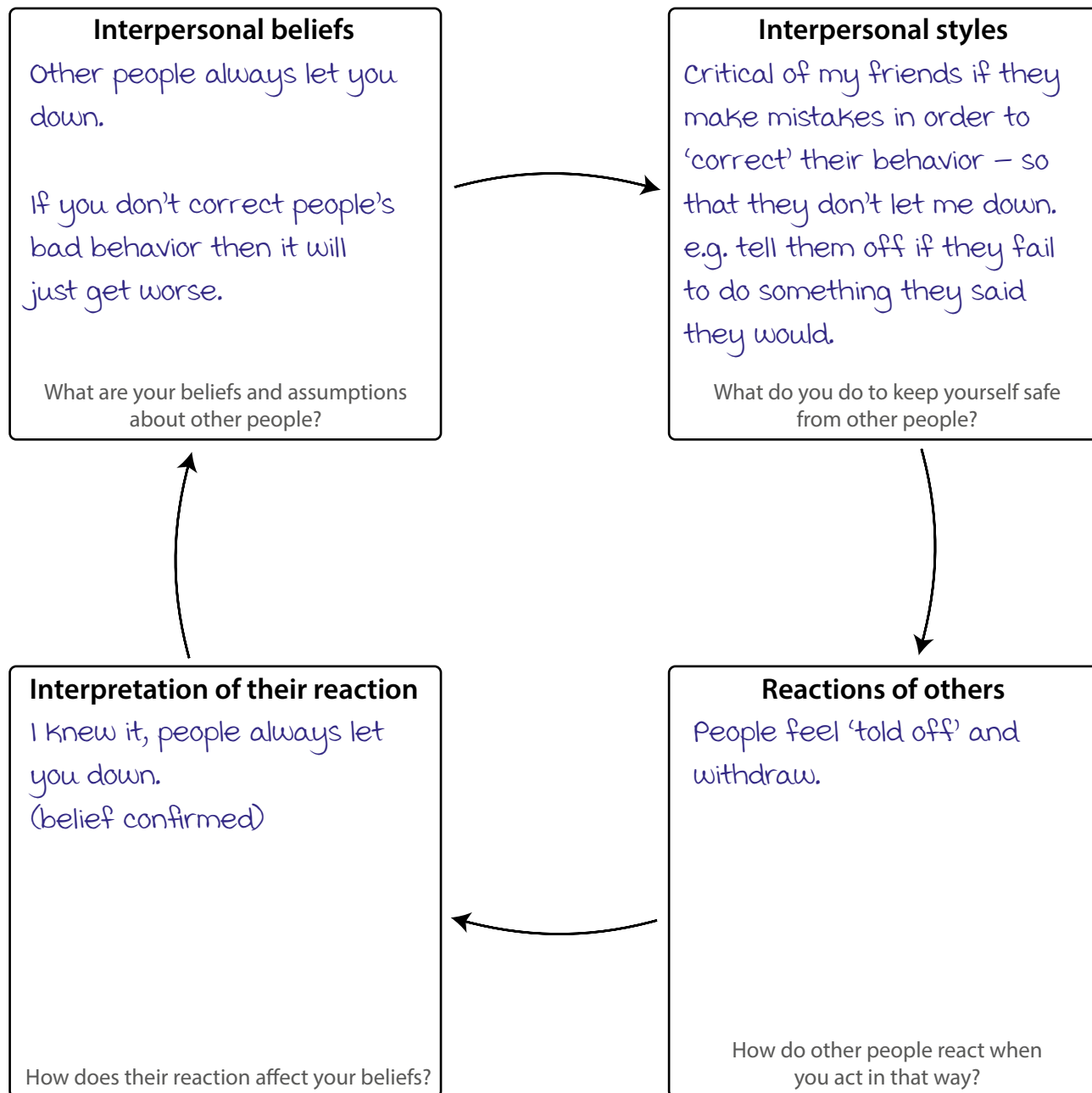
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History

many experiences where my own feelings were invalidated.
my parents had mental health problems - I'm aware of the stigma.

