



International Society of
Schema Therapy

The Schema Therapy Bulletin

The Official Publication of the
International Society of Schema Therapy

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IDENTIFYING AND HANDLING OVERCOMPENSATION MODES BY ODETTE BRAND- DE WILDE & MARIA ROCHER

REVIEW BY ROBIN SPIRO (USA)

Odette Brand-de Wilde and Maria Rocher identified overcompensating modes which they encounter in their group therapy with personality disordered patients. The most common modes are Self-Aggrandizer, Bully-and-Attack, Paranoid Overcontroller, Perfectionist Overcontroller, Attention-Seeker, Deceiving Manipulator and Predator. Although overcompensating modes are characterized by disconnection and either hostility or control, they may be experienced as positive because they provide a sense of power.

These modes are very challenging for therapists to respond to, both individually and in a group setting. Based on training by Ida Shaw, Odette and Maria described their pre-therapy work with patients with these modes, where the patient attains a shared conceptualization, agrees to a mode management plan, and to group rules.

Maria and Odette demonstrated the principles of limit setting combined with limited reparenting in a co-facilitated group. A few colleagues were enlisted to play scripted roles in a "group session," augmented by audience volunteers who were able to jump into impromptu roles very convincingly! The group work was inspiring in the sense that participants repeatedly were refocused on the message that their emotions were all valid and important to the leaders, but that their habitual modes could be problematic and needed to be challenged. Empathic confrontation was necessary to create a safe environment for all group members.

This very dynamic workshop provided pearls of learning which can be applied in individual therapy with overcompensators as well as in group settings. The leaders were wonderful role models of tenacity, focus and caring.

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