



**IFS**  
**&**  
**IDENTIFYING,**  
**UNDERSTANDING &**  
**EXPLORING...**  
**FIREFIGHTERS**

# FIREFIGHTER

REACT WHEN EXILES ARE ACTIVATED

EXTINGUISH EXILES FEELINGS

GROUP OF PARTS

SUBSTANCE  
&  
ALCOHOL  
ABUSE



SELF-HARM

IMPULSIVE PROTECTIVE STRATEGIES

## TYPES OF FIREFIGHTER

- ✦ ADDICTIVE
- ✦ BLAMING
- ✦ RAGEFUL
- ✦ IMPULSIVE

- ✦ SELF-HARMING
- ✦ DISSOCIATION
- ✦ DISTRACTION
- ✦ AVOIDANT
- ✦ CRISIS MANAGEMENT

# TYPES OF FIREFIGHTERS

## THE BLAMING FIREFIGHTER

Manifest through thoughts, emotions, or behaviors that involve assigning responsibility or fault to external factors, individuals, or situations. This blaming tendency can serve as a defense mechanism, shielding the individual from feelings of vulnerability, shame, or guilt by shifting the focus away from their internal experiences or personal accountability. It can perpetuate patterns of conflict, resentment, or avoidance in relationships and hinder personal growth or accountability.

## THE RAGEFUL FIREFIGHTER

Emerges in response to perceived threats, injustice, or overwhelming emotions and serves a protective role by expressing intense anger or aggression as a means of coping with distressing situations or traumatic experiences. Characterized by intense anger, hostility, or aggression. This Part often arises in situations where the individual feels threatened, powerless, or invalidated, and it may seek to assert control, protect boundaries, or retaliate against perceived threats.

## THE IMPULSIVE FIREFIGHTER

Serves a protective role by impulsively engaging in behaviors aimed at providing temporary relief or distraction from discomfort. The Impulsive Firefighter may manifest through impulsive actions, behaviors, or decisions that offer immediate gratification or distraction but may not align with the individual's long-term goals or values. These behaviors could include substance abuse, reckless spending, binge eating, self-harm, or other impulsive actions.

## THE ADDICTIVE FIREFIGHTER

Emerges as a response to distressing emotions or overwhelming situations and serves a protective role by engaging in addictive behaviors as a means of coping with discomfort or emotional pain, providing temporary relief or escape from distressing emotions.

# TYPES OF FIREFIGHTERS

## THE SELF-HARMING FIREFIGHTER

Emerges in response to distressing emotions or overwhelming situations and serves a protective role by engaging in self-harming behaviors as a means of coping with intense emotional pain or internal turmoil. This can include behaviors such as cutting, burning, or other forms of self-injury.

## THE DISTRACTING FIREFIGHTERS

These Parts work to distract the individual from intense emotions or traumatic memories by engaging in behaviors such as substance abuse, compulsive behaviors (e.g. overeating, excessive shopping), or engaging in risky activities.

## THE DISSOCIATIVE FIREFIGHTER

This Part typically emerges in response to overwhelming trauma or distressing situations and employs dissociation as a coping mechanism. Dissociation involves a disconnection from one's thoughts, feelings, memories, or sense of identity, often as a way to escape from overwhelming emotions or experiences.

## THE AVOIDANT FIREFIGHTER

These Parts work to avoid or suppress difficult emotions or memories altogether. They may encourage the individual to withdraw from triggering situations or to disconnect from their emotions as a means of self-preservation.

## THE CRISIS MANAGEMENT FIREFIGHTER

These Parts may take control during moments of crisis or extreme stress, employing drastic measures to ensure the individual's immediate safety or survival. While their intentions are protective, their methods can sometimes be harmful or disruptive in the long term.

## FIREFIGHTER

Getting to know your Firefighter Part involves a process of identifying the origin of the Part, exploration, understanding, and building a compassionate relationship with this aspect of yourself.

Here are steps you can take to begin this process:

### 1. IDENTIFICATION

Situations where you experienced behaviors and feelings associated with the subtypes of the Firefighter. Explore their intensity and identify potential patterns.

### 2. ORIGIN

The first time this firefighter Part formed in your life, identify the initial feelings that the Firefighter Part is protecting you from. Connect this to your present life.

### 3. EXPLORATION

Sensations, behaviors and feelings associated with the subtypes of the Firefighter.

### 4. INTENTIONS & FUNCTION

The role that your Firefighter Part plays in your life. Identifying the Parts' fears and what it is protecting you from.

### 5. DIALOUGE

This process is not about blaming or trying to eliminate these Parts. It's about understanding their roles, appreciating their efforts, and fostering relationships based on trust and mutual respect.

### 6. COMPASSION

Compassion towards the Firefighter Part involves acknowledging its protective role and understanding that its actions stem from a desire to shield you from distress.

### 7. CORE SELF & SELF LEADERSHIP

When working with the Firefighter Part, the Self acts as a source of stability, empathy, and understanding. Providing a safe and nurturing space for these Parts to express themselves and be heard, without judgment or criticism.

### 8. POSITIVE COPING PLAN

Shifting from previous protective, potentially destructive behavior to positive coping mechanisms next time the Firefighter Part becomes active and tries to take control.

# EXPLORING PARTS *Reflective Questions*

## *Identification* **FIREFIGHTER**

Reflect on situations where you experienced behaviors and feelings associated with the subtypes of the Firefighter. Rate the intensity of how these show up for you.

1 – not at all – 10 – frequently and intensely .

1 – 10

**THE BLAMING FIREFIGHTER**

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1 – 10

**THE RAGEFUL FIREFIGHTER**

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1 – 10

**THE IMPULSIVE FIREFIGHTER**

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1 – 10

**THE ADDICTIVE FIREFIGHTER**

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# EXPLORING PARTS *Reflective Questions*

## *Identification* **FIREFIGHTER**

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**THE SELF-HARMING FIREFIGHTER**

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1-10

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**THE DISTRACTING FIREFIGHTERS**

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**THE DISSOCIATIVE FIREFIGHTER**

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**THE AVOIDANT FIREFIGHTER**

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**THE CRISIS MANAGEMENT FIREFIGHTER**

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## EXPLORING PARTS *Reflective Questions*

# Origin

# FIREFIGHTER

Think of the first time these Firefighter Parts formed in your life. Reflect on childhood, trauma, past experiences, situations and experiences. It may help to identify what the Firefighter Part is protecting you from and when you first felt those feelings. Explore further by connecting this to adult behaviors and feelings.

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

For example, I did a speech at school, I stuttered and then froze and the entire class laughed at me. Since then, I have not shared my opinions in important meetings at work. The Firefighter Part protects me from fear of being embarrassed again. My Avoidant Firefighter avoids any public speaking or group activities at work.

# EXPLORING PARTS *Reflective Questions*

## *Exploration of* **FIREFIGHTER** *sensations*

**Note where you locate it in and/or around your body.**

Parts can manifest through physical sensations in the body. These sensations indicate their presence, needs, and/or emotional states. For example, a Part that carries fear or anxiety may manifest as tension or tightness in the chest, rapid heartbeat, and/or shallow breathing. Similarly, a Part holding sadness or grief may be experienced as heaviness in the chest, lump in the throat, or tears welling up in the eyes. By tuning into these body sensations and recognizing them as signals from internal Parts, individuals can gain insight into their emotional experiences and internal dynamics



# EXPLORING PARTS *Reflective Questions*

## *Exploration of* **FIREFIGHTER** *emotions*

What emotions do you experience when this Part is present?

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FEAR

☐

DISTRUST

☐

ANXIETY

☐

ANGER

☐

BLAME

☐

RAGE

☐

IMPATIENCE

☐

DISGUST

☐

FRUSTRATION

☐

RESTLESSNESS

☐

JEALOUSY

☐

OVERWHELMED

☐

DISCONTENT

☐

DESPERATION

☐

SHAME

☐

GUILT

# EXPLORING PARTS *Reflective Questions*

## *Exploration of* **FIREFIGHTER** *behaviors*

Reflect on the intensity of how the subtypes of emotions and behaviors of the Firefighter show up for you. Are there feelings and behaviors the Firefighter Part shows more than others?

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Are there any patterns in how the Firefighter reacts to different situations or emotions?

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What triggers these impulsive reactions?

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# EXPLORING PARTS *Reflective Questions*

## *Exploration of* **FIREFIGHTER** *behaviors*

In what situations or relationships do I become combative or confrontational?

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What perceived threats or vulnerabilities trigger my Firefighter Parts?

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What is the underlying fear or pain that drives these aggressive responses?

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How do my Firefighter Parts affect my relationships and communication with others?

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# EXPLORING PARTS *Reflective Questions*

## *Intentions & function of* **FIREFIGHTER**

Reflect on the role that your firefighter Part plays in your life.

What are the underlying motivations behind my impulsive reactions?

What are they trying to achieve?

What are they trying to avoid or numb?

What are they trying to protect you from?

## EXPLORING PARTS *Reflective Questions*

# Intentions & function of FIREFIGHTER

Reflect on what the Firefighter Part is protecting you from. Fighters are protectors who protect us from our fears. Explore what your fears are. It could be fear of failure or making mistakes, fear of being vulnerable, history of trauma, loss or change, emotional withdrawal isolation, and feeling overwhelmed...

[illegible]

# EXPLORING PARTS *Reflective Questions*

## *Dialogue with* **FIREFIGHTER**

Imagine you could talk directly to your Firefighter Part. Write down what you would like to say to it, and what it might say back to you.

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What do you think they might say in response?

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This dialogue can take place through various means,  
such as talking out loud, journaling, visualization, or guided imagery.

## EXPLORING PARTS *Reflective Questions*

# Compassion Towards FIREFIGHTER

Compassion towards the Firefighter Part involves acknowledging its protective role and understanding that its actions stem from a desire to shield you from distress. Rather than criticizing its actions, recognize its efforts to protect you and extend compassion towards it. Write a letter of kindness and empathy to your Firefighter Part.

[illegible]

# EXPLORING PARTS *Reflective Questions*

## *Core Self* & **FIREFIGHTER**

When working with the Firefighter Part, the Self acts as a source of stability, empathy, and understanding. Use this space to explore your Core Self. Providing a safe and nurturing space for these Parts to express themselves and be heard, without judgment or criticism. Some reflective questions are provided as prompts.

What qualities or characteristics do I associate with my true, authentic Self?

When do I feel most aligned with my Core Self? What situations or experiences evoke this sense of authenticity?

What values or principles guide my decisions and actions in life?

# EXPLORING PARTS *Reflective Questions*

## *Core Self* & **FIREFIGHTER**

How do I respond to challenges or adversity while embodying my Core Self?

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What aspects of myself do I find difficult to accept or embrace?

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How can I cultivate self-compassion and acceptance in these areas?

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# EXPLORING PARTS *Reflective Questions*

## *Self-leadership* **FIREFIGHTER**

Reflect on how you can show up with self-leadership when your Firefighter Part becomes active and tries to take control. What would it look like for Self to take the lead?

What would you do differently? How would you act differently?

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How would you feel?

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What would others notice about you?

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# EXPLORING PARTS *Reflective Questions*

## *Positive coping plan* **FIREFIGHTER**

What behaviors or coping mechanisms do I engage in when I am trying to soothe, escape, or distract from emotional pain?

What positive coping mechanisms can I replace this with to live a life true to my authentic Self? Think about ways to nurture and care for yourself on a physical, emotional, and spiritual level.