

# ENHANCING SCHEMA THERAPY WITH SECURE NEST

**Transforming Your Therapy Toolkit**



## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

At Secure Nest our mission is to increase the accessibility of schema therapy to enrich the wellbeing of individuals.

Secure Nest is an eHealth platform containing tools designed specifically to complement schema therapy. Secure Nest provides a collaborative workspace for you to support your clients using schema therapy based on the schema mode model.

This guide aims to support therapists to integrate Secure Nest into their clinical work with a wide range of clients who are using schema therapy.

## HOW EHEALTH TOOLS ENHANCE THERAPY

Clients and therapists have reported benefits of Secure Nest, which include:

- Meeting clients' needs between sessions
- Providing a sense of ongoing contact, connection and sharing
- Facilitating mode awareness and reflection in the moment
- Self-monitoring and tracking therapeutic progress
- Ease of access to therapy tools and organisation of information
- Contributing to collaboration and a sense of togetherness



## HOW IMPORTANT ARE EHEALTH TOOLS TO SCHEMA THERAPY?

We live in a time of diminishing healthcare resources, where the mental wellbeing of individuals is often impacted by session limits imposed by public healthcare systems. Although clinical guidelines recommend longer term and intensive treatments, services are frequently underfunded with many clients unable to access the treatments they need, leading to serious repercussions for their mental health.

eHealth tools could pave the way for improving the mental health of clients who have been negatively impacted by the limitations of public healthcare systems or their financial capacity to afford treatment.

Given this environment therapists need to leverage use of the tools available to them, maximising benefits of treatment, as well as minimising time and delivery costs where possible. As schema therapy is an approach often used for clients with complex psychological disorders requiring long term therapy, it is important that we continue to innovate and find new ways of improving client care within current constraints. We need to trial these innovative methods to ensure the benefit is proven and an evidence-based approach is used.

One of the innovative approaches being used is Group Schema Therapy. Group Schema Therapy provides an effective and practical solution to increasing demand for the accessibility of schema therapy in mental health care systems around the world.

Another emerging innovation for schema therapy has been the introduction of eHealth tools. At this time very few eHealth tools are designed specifically for the needs of

clients who are receiving schema therapy. Secure Nest currently provides the broadest set of online tools available for schema therapy.

The development of eHealth solutions has the potential to add significant value to face-to-face treatment at minimal cost. In turn, this has the potential to reduce the number of face-to-face sessions required, whilst improving the experience of support and connection between therapist and client outside of session. eHealth tools have several advantages over traditional forms of delivery; they can save therapist time, enhance treatment potency, reduce stigmatisation, and increase client access to evidence-based care. They cut traveling time, allowing clients to work at their own pace and help them to balance occupational and family duties with therapy. eHealth tools which operate on mobile devices can place therapeutic tools in the hands of clients when they need them most.

## SOME SIMPLE STEPS TO GET STARTED

Maybe you are thinking to yourself "*..this all sounds wonderful, but I'm still not sure where I begin..*", and that would be perfectly understandable. For most therapists, using online tools specifically designed to support the therapy process will be something new, but it doesn't need to be difficult to take the first steps.

Use these practical steps to start using Secure Nest ([here is a video walkthrough](#)):

1. [Create a free therapist trial account](#) on Secure Nest.

*It is easier to understand how Secure Nest works if you have a client that can trial it with you. Perhaps you can think of a client who is curious and technology savvy to start with? Any client who links to your account at the time of registration will receive a 1-month free trial.*

2. [Send an invite to a client](#) so they can create their account, linking your accounts.
3. Once your accounts are linked, begin by adding modes in **My Modes** (case conceptualisation). If your client [begins the Self- Education Program](#), they complete two assessments which can populate their modes automatically.
4. As you and your clients begin to feel comfortable with each feature, you could slowly introduce more through the stages of schema therapy (see our guide below).

We are here to support you and would encourage you to let us know if you have any questions or would like to arrange a video conference session where we can screen share and introduce you to some of the tools you could start with. Reach us at [littlebird@securenest.org](mailto:littlebird@securenest.org)



## ABOUT OUR SELF-EDUCATION PROGRAM

Secure Nest is a flexible eHealth application that can be personalised based on your clients' needs. Secure Nest provides a platform for a dynamic process over time, linked to the course of schema therapy.

Individuals can complete the self-education program (as homework) to promote connection and engagement between sessions or while on a waiting list, so they gain an understanding of schema therapy's core concepts before beginning therapy.

The self-education program describes the schema mode approach in an understandable way for anyone who is interested in learning about themes in thinking and the related emotions and behaviours. The program aims to encourage individuals to change negative life patterns in such a way that they can respond to painful feelings and give more space to positive feelings in their life. The program can be used independently or as assistance to schema therapy with a therapist.

The self-education program guides individuals through a set of sixteen modules over three weeks. A range of exercises including imagery exercises and mindfulness recordings will help individuals to understand themselves, their feelings, schemas and core emotional needs.

**Are negative thinking patterns keeping you from obtaining your personal goals?**

*Self-Help for Schema Therapy*

Secure Nest is designed for anyone who is interested in understanding what drives emotional, thinking and behavioural patterns, and how patterns can be changed.

## STAGE 1

In the first stage of therapy the focus is on exploring emotions, schemas and modes, guiding your client and doing the editing of the application.

## MY MODES

[Dashboard](#)
[Workshop](#)
[My Modes](#)


Information specific to each client's individualised modes can be included to help to re-activate the knowledge from the session and encourage processing between the sessions.

Clients can attach individualised images of their modes to reflect their personal experiences of modes, to help them to identify their modes and to increase awareness of their modes. It is recommended that the language used in **My Modes** should fit the personal experience of the client rather than a description as the therapist would give it.

You could encourage your clients to watch our videos demonstrating modes ([find them in this playlist on our YouTube channel](#)). You will find other schema therapy videos on this channel which may be helpful for your clients.

My Modes	
Mode Name	Actions
Shamed, Lonely Little Sam	<a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">Delete</a>
Angry / Avoidant Protector	<a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">Delete</a>
Punitive / Demanding	<a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">Delete</a>
Perfectionistic Overcontroller	<a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">Delete</a>
Healthy Adult	<a href="#">View</a> <a href="#">Edit</a> <a href="#">Delete</a>

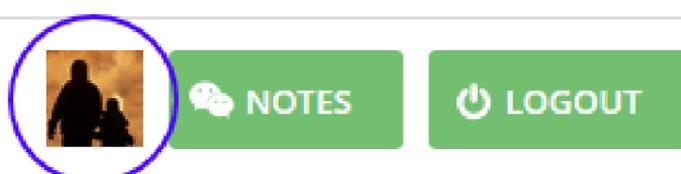
We encourage you to name your clients modes with your clients. For example, the Vulnerable Child (Little...) can be named using other emotions that are linked to it e.g., Lonely Little...).

## MY GOALS

[Dashboard](#)
[Workshop](#)
[My Goals](#)

In **My Goals** we encourage goals to be linked to the basic core needs of the client/positive qualities that they long for and have been missing out on.

**My Goals** are a constant factor on the mobile/desktop eHealth application as every page that they see has a reminder of the goal (e.g. an image, a statement or a word chosen by the client).



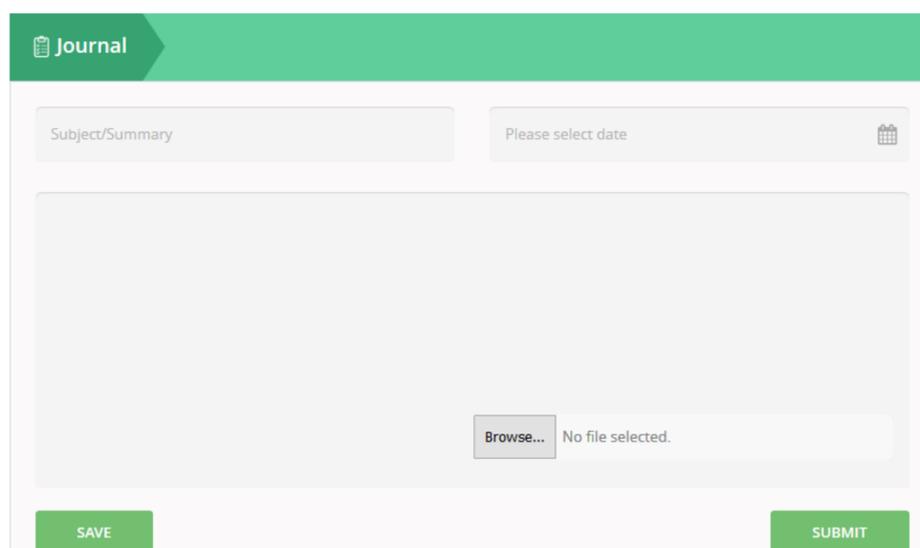
Examples may include: connection, validation, autonomy, freedom. Some goals could be based around strengthening the Healthy Adult/Good Parent.

## JOURNAL



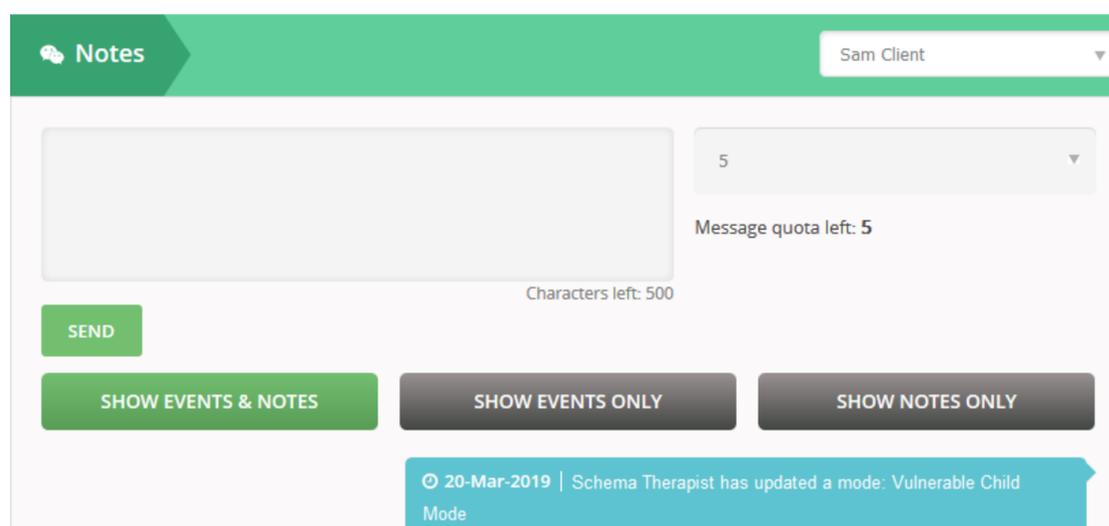
**My Journal** provides a secure space for clients to keep an online journal, with the option of uploading audio files, text documents or images. You could invite your clients to get in touch with the feelings they had as a child? They could make a drawing to illustrate their childhood experiences or draw their Vulnerable Child and upload their illustration.

**My Journal** offers an additional forum for the expression of feelings and needs and your connection can continue between sessions as you can see your client's journal entries and respond. This feature could also further increase understanding of experiences and reflection.


 A screenshot of the 'Journal' form interface. At the top is a green header with a 'Journal' label and a folder icon. Below the header are two input fields: 'Subject/Summary' and 'Please select date' with a calendar icon. A large text area for writing is in the center. At the bottom of the text area is a file upload section with a 'Browse...' button and the text 'No file selected.'. At the very bottom are two green buttons: 'SAVE' and 'SUBMIT'.

**Notes** allows you to communicate with your client through messages in the structured environment that Secure Nest provides, including settings to support limit setting.

You could encourage your client to try to be aware of their own Vulnerable Child and Healthy Adult, and think of concrete ways in which their own Healthy Adult can begin to validate their own Vulnerable Child more. Your client could share this with you in **Notes**.


 A screenshot of the 'Notes' form interface. At the top is a green header with a 'Notes' label and a speech bubble icon. To the right of the header is a dropdown menu showing 'Sam Client'. Below the header is a large text area for writing. To the right of the text area is a dropdown menu showing '5' and the text 'Message quota left: 5'. Below the text area is a 'SEND' button. At the bottom are three buttons: 'SHOW EVENTS & NOTES' (highlighted in green), 'SHOW EVENTS ONLY', and 'SHOW NOTES ONLY'. At the very bottom is a blue notification banner that reads: '20-Mar-2019 | Schema Therapist has updated a mode: Vulnerable Child Mode'.

Are you looking for an online platform to support clients receiving schema therapy?

*Secure Nest for Individual Therapy*

Secure Nest provides clients and therapists with tools to support the therapy process. It assists to strengthen the client-therapist relationship, centralises access to therapeutic resources and offers support to clients between sessions.

## STAGE 2

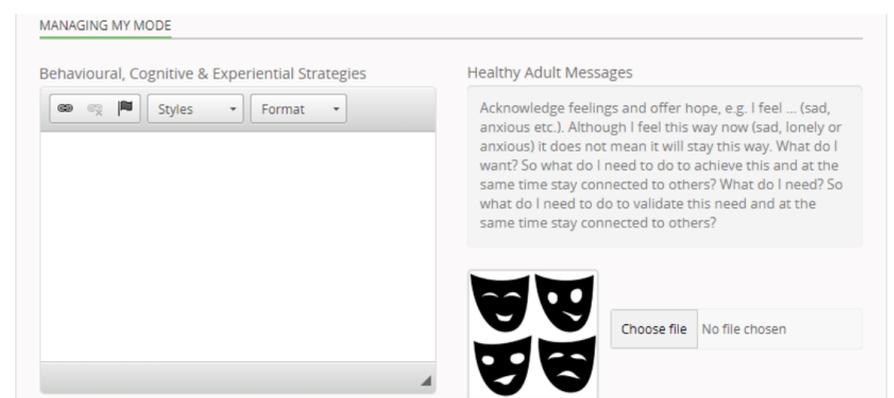
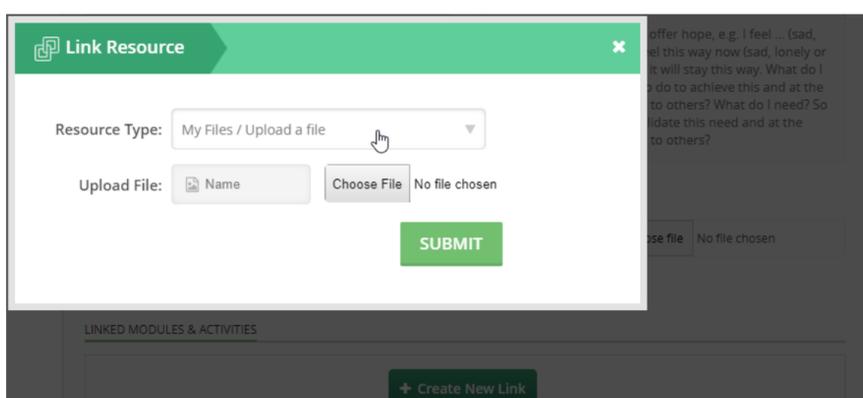
In the middle stage of therapy, the focus is on connecting with painful emotions, imagery and situations from the past and you can coach your client to strengthen the Healthy Adult mode. You can also coach your client to edit the application.

### MANAGING MY MODE

In **Managing My Mode** (a section of each mode added to **My Modes**) clients are supported to identify the messages linked to their modes and identify where they learnt these messages. This section helps clients practice being the Healthy Adult in a practical way by managing their life. This section could link to a specific audio and visual file for dealing with a particular mode. For example, pictures of transitional objects to develop object permanence. We encourage therapists to match limited reparenting strategies to the developmental stage that the client is in when in the Vulnerable Child mode.

In built schema mindfulness files, imagery exercises and a range of modules based on core schema therapy techniques can be linked below **Managing My Mode** or assigned as homework exercises in **Homework**. For example, you could link an in-built audio recording of a safe place image and ask your client to practice visualising their Vulnerable Child in their safe place once each day.

Or, you can record your own files... for this, we recommend uploading it in **Linked Modules & Activities** (at the bottom of each mode in **My Modes**). For example, you could include everything that goes against the Punitive Parent, e.g., audio flashcards, written flashcards, completed schema diaries, Healthy Adult songs, etc. You can also pre-prepare Healthy Adult messages with your clients with regards to each mode.

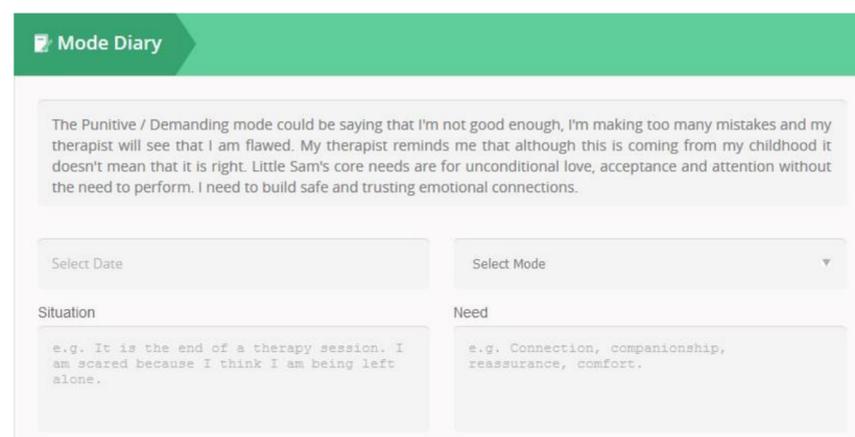


## MODE DIARY

[Dashboard](#)
[Workshop](#)
[Mode Diary](#)


You could ask your client to try to fill out a **Mode Diary** and notice when they are in touch with their Vulnerable Child. If possible, ask your client to check in to see if they can find out what they need. You can help your client by responding to their mode diaries.

In an interactive way Secure Nest aims to make the link to the case conceptualisation and to shift the attention from the trigger event to the deeper pattern or theme which dominates your client's life when they experience repetitions of harmful situations that are similar to those that harmed them in childhood.



The Punitive / Demanding mode could be saying that I'm not good enough, I'm making too many mistakes and my therapist will see that I am flawed. My therapist reminds me that although this is coming from my childhood it doesn't mean that it is right. Little Sam's core needs are for unconditional love, acceptance and attention without the need to perform. I need to build safe and trusting emotional connections.

Select Date

Select Mode

Situation

Need

e.g. It is the end of a therapy session. I am scared because I think I am being left alone.

e.g. Connection, companionship, reassurance, comfort.

## STAGE 3

In the final stage of therapy, the focus is on the ways in which modes impact interpersonal relationships, with a focus on current relationships or desired relationships. There is more responsibility for your client and the focus is on further developing autonomy. Your client could access the application him/herself between sessions alongside in-session reflection on how they are using Secure Nest. This resembles the greater emphasis on teaching your client how to be in the Healthy Adult. Greater ownership over the application encourages your client to reflect on what a Healthy Adult is, what a Healthy Adult does and how a Healthy Adult manages life.

You could ask your client to write a [Schema-Coping Awareness Plan](#) that describes which kinds of situations trigger their modes. Ask your client to include the signs that make them aware a mode has been triggered, as well as how they might exit the mode. They could describe how they might prevent modes from being triggered and taking over the situation. Encourage clients to upload the completed document to a **My Journal** entry.

You could ask your client to add **Calendar** entries in Secure Nest to provide a daily or weekly email reminder and use these moments to reflect on their awareness of their inner emotional world, and whether or not they are sharing it with others. Are their core emotional needs visible to the people around them?