

Ego State Therapy was originated by the husband and wife team (now both deceased) **Dr. Jack Watkins and Helen Watkins**. They found that giving a voice to disowned or dissociated aspects of self enabled resolution of long-standing internal conflicts. Although it is sometimes practiced with formal hypnotic induction, it need not be. Dr. Paulsen uses an imaging method called **Dissociative Table**, which was developed by George Fraser, to quickly access ego states. (Between Michael and Sandra, Michael is inclined to use Ego State Therapy in the context of formal hypnotic techniques.) Notably, Dr. Paulsen has also collaborated with Dr. Watkins, presenting on EMDR therapy and Ego State Therapy in several international professional venues, including the ***Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing International Association (EMDRIA)***, the ***American Society of Clinical Hypnosis (ASCH)***, the ***Society for Clinical and Experimental Hypnosis (SCEH)***, and the ***International Society for the Study of Trauma & Dissociation***.

Ego State Therapy typically involves identifying key parts of self involved in internal dynamics related to “stuckness”, inner conflict, self-sabotage, child-like behavior, avoidance, criticalness, and/or many other presenting problems (certainly, anxiety, depression, anger, shame, trusting others, attachment, are all on the list). Using a powerful method called dissociative table and other methods (hypnosis is sometimes used), it is possible to identify and work directly with the younger emotional parts that are mobilized around these long-standing issues. Ego State Therapy honors those functions and their reason(s) for being; hears and validates their concerns, needs, and fears; appreciates their survival function; and, when indicated, helps them update their “job description” to exist more in the present. We don’t get rid of parts, though they sometimes choose to blend with other parts as the work progresses. Containment of memories and other emotionally charged material, as well as “tucking in” of parts, at the end of a session is key to helping life move along smoothly between sessions, so the healing work can continue.

Ego State Therapy is about appreciating all of our clients’ parts-of-self, known or unknown, who contribute to survival by being protectors, even fierce protectors. Their work is important, and we understand that we can’t accomplish a thing without their being on board. For information about the integration of and safe use of Ego State Therapy and EMDR therapy in working with dissociative individuals, refer to Dr. Paulsen’s groundbreaking, informative, and therapist and client friendly book, ***Looking Through the Eyes of Trauma and Dissociation***.