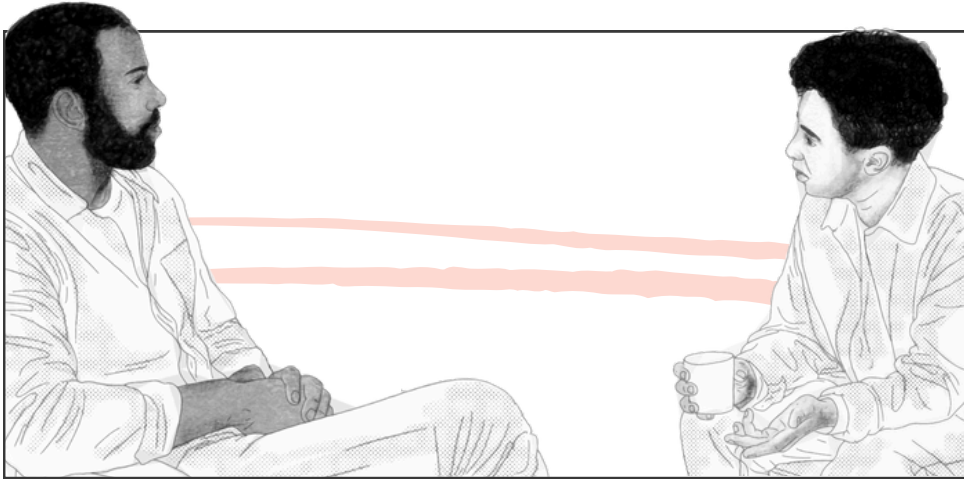
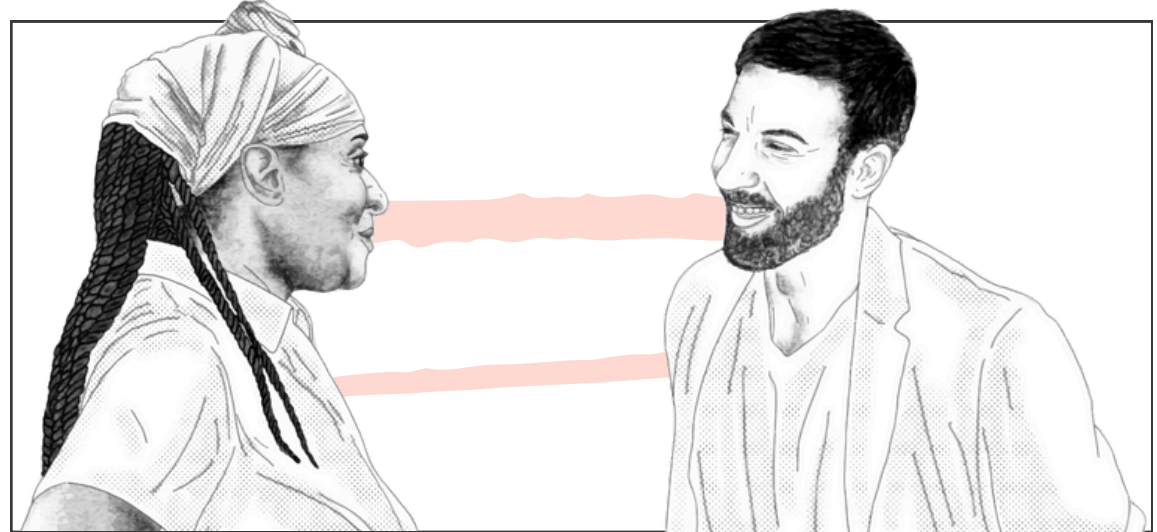


PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION



Projective identification happens all the time and is a normal part of human interaction. It happens in families, at school, in friendships and in therapy.

Have you ever been with a friend who hasn't said anything but you suddenly feel really sad and can't work out why until you find out that this is actually how they're feeling?



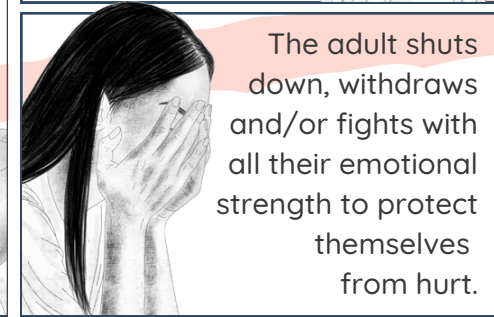
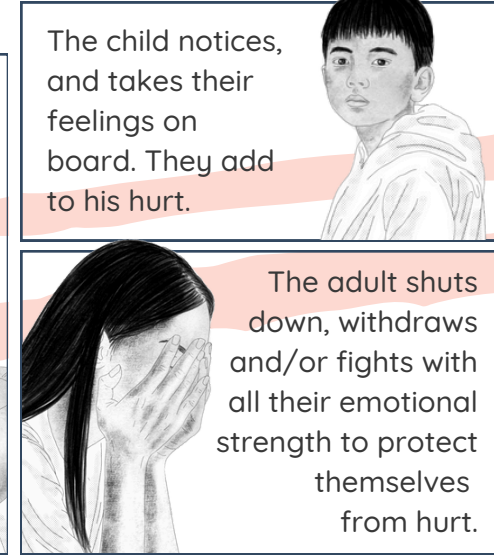
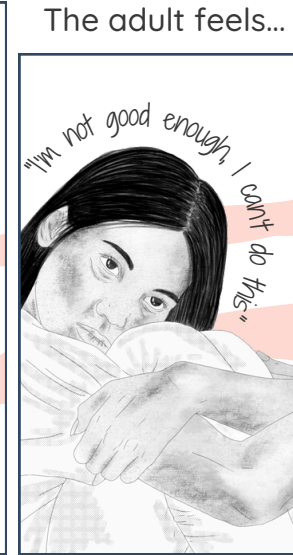
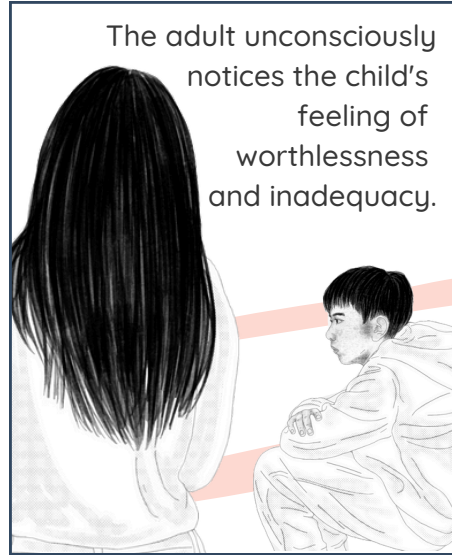
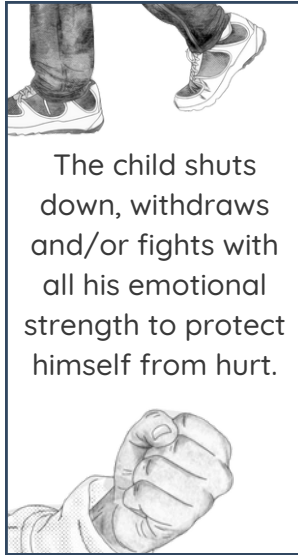
So why is this important to consider when you have a relationship with a vulnerable child or young person?

By being aware of what belongs to you and what belongs to someone else, we can create opportunities for a clearer, more balanced and grounded relational approach to our care, parenting, teaching, play or work.



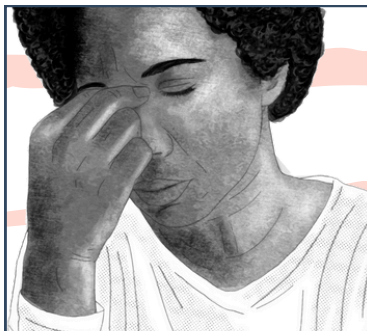
WHEN PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION MIGHT BE UNHELPFUL...

The child feels...



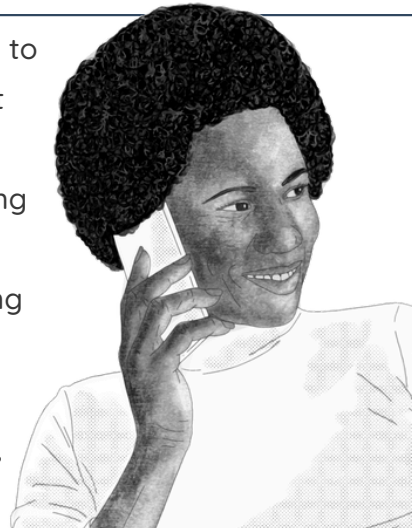
WHEN PROJECTIVE IDENTIFICATION MIGHT BE HELPFUL...

When you notice or suspect that this is happening, take a moment or longer to ground yourself back to you.



Observe your own body responses, feelings and thoughts, what is happening?

What do you need to do to help connect you back to you? This might be taking some time, deep breathing, nurturing food, talking to a friend, having a bath, watching TV, walking the dog...



Then turn your attention back to the hurting child. Meet their distress with your more grounded body, heart and mind. Stand alongside them, bear their pain - and know that it belongs to them and not you.

If words can be tolerated, check out your experience

"I felt xxx and I'm wondering if that's how you're feeling right now?"



It is really important to clarify that it would be impossible to do this all the time and in every situation. By recognising when projective identification is happening within our relationships with vulnerable people just some of the time, we may be able to offer ourselves more compassion in moments when we feel overwhelmed by unexplained thoughts and feelings, and allow ourselves the time to come back to ourselves before responding to the hurt.