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*Different ego states  
are "a 'family of self'  
within a single  
individual"*

*~ John and Helen  
Watkins*

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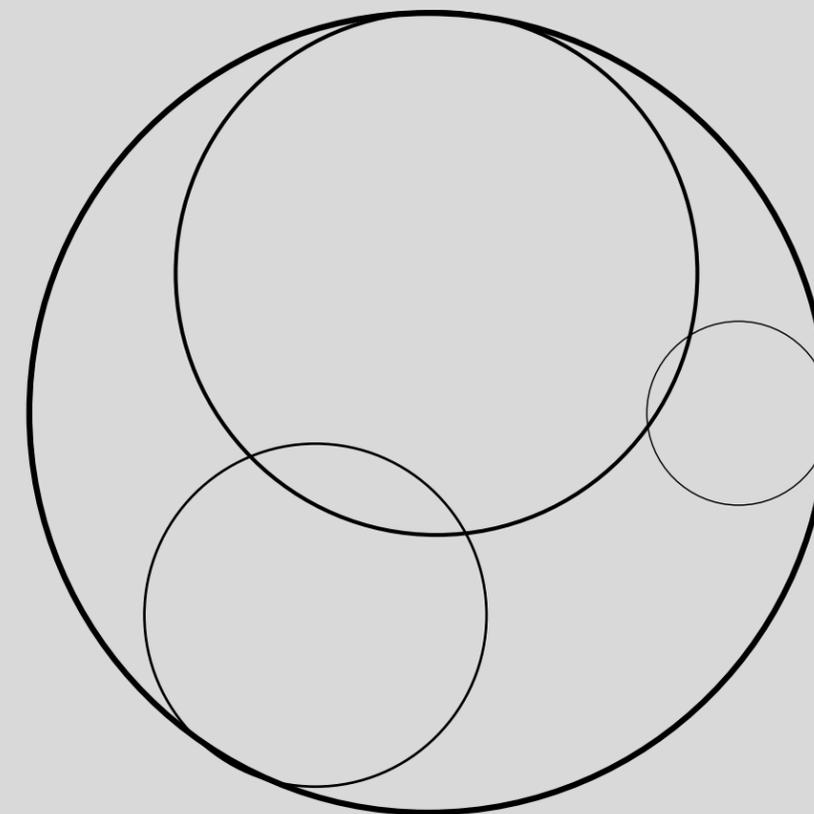
## Where Can I Find an Ego State Therapist?

Ego State Therapy North America (ESTNA) maintains an online directory of therapists who have completed ESTNA training in Ego State Therapy, are ESTNA certified EST Therapists, and are ESTNA certified EST Consultants.

**[www.estna.info](http://www.estna.info)**

Ego State Therapy International (ESTI) maintains a global online directory of ESTI certified Ego State Therapists and has a wealth of resources about Ego State Therapy.

**[www.egostateinternational.com](http://www.egostateinternational.com)**



## Ego State Therapy

Written by Cynthia Good for  
Ego State Therapy North America

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## What is Ego State Therapy?

Ego State Therapy (EST) is based on the recognition that all of us have multiple aspects to ourselves. We hold different roles in life, such as employee, parent, or friend. We have conflicting thoughts and feelings at times. We may have a rational side and an emotional side, or a serious side and a fun-loving side. These aspects, roles, thoughts, feelings, and sides are all “ego states.” EST allows us to learn about our ego states, understand their important purposes, resolve inner conflicts, and find better balance, cooperation, and integration within our whole selves.

EST is a psychodynamic therapy that was originally developed by John and Helen Watkins.

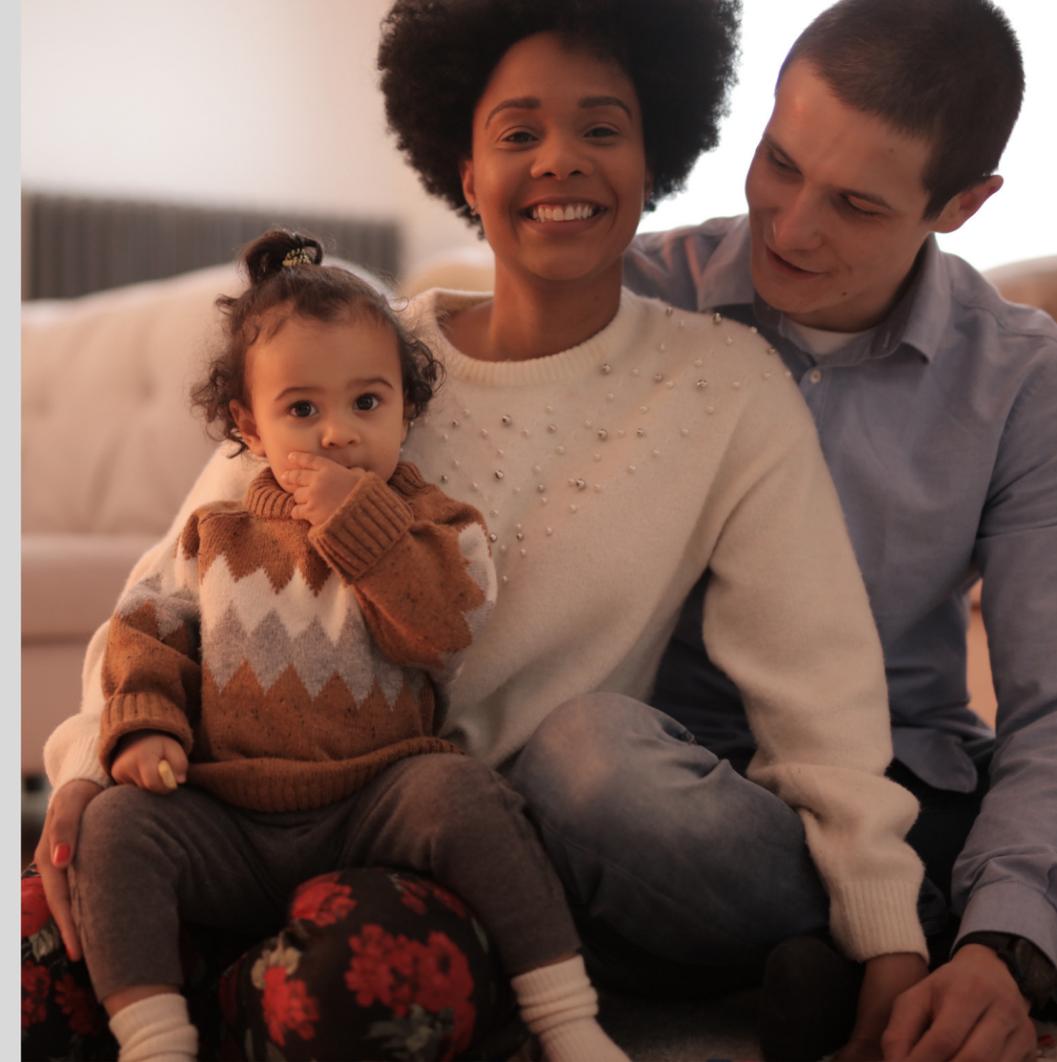
## When is Ego State Therapy Helpful?

EST is helpful when we are experiencing inner conflict, pain, or feeling stuck; having a hard time finding words for what we’re going through; struggling to understand who we are and what we need; and carrying loss, grief, or trauma from recent events or experiences in the distant past.

EST can be used to treat a variety of challenges, including stress and conflicts in relationships, the workplace, or parenting; anxiety and depression; eating disorders; post-traumatic stress disorder, dissociative disorders, and personality disorders; and more.

EST can be used as a stand-alone therapy or can be combined with other forms of treatment, such as clinical hypnosis, EMDR, and family therapy. Clinical hypnosis is often used during EST to more easily access and work with ego states.

EST can help a person with an ego state that was developed due to trauma have the opportunity to process that trauma, support opposing ego states to resolve a conflict, and help ego states that are useful in a specific context learn to be active only in that context.



## Why Do Ego States Develop?

Ego states develop automatically during life when we repeatedly behave in a particular manner and the behavior somehow “works”. These states get “wired in” because they are helpful and adaptive in certain situations. In a future situation where an ego state would be helpful, we can tap into the knowledge and skills that it holds. Sometimes ego states develop because they help us survive trauma or other very difficult experiences. They can carry emotions or memories that were too painful for us to be aware of earlier in life.

*On the one hand....*

*On the other hand....*