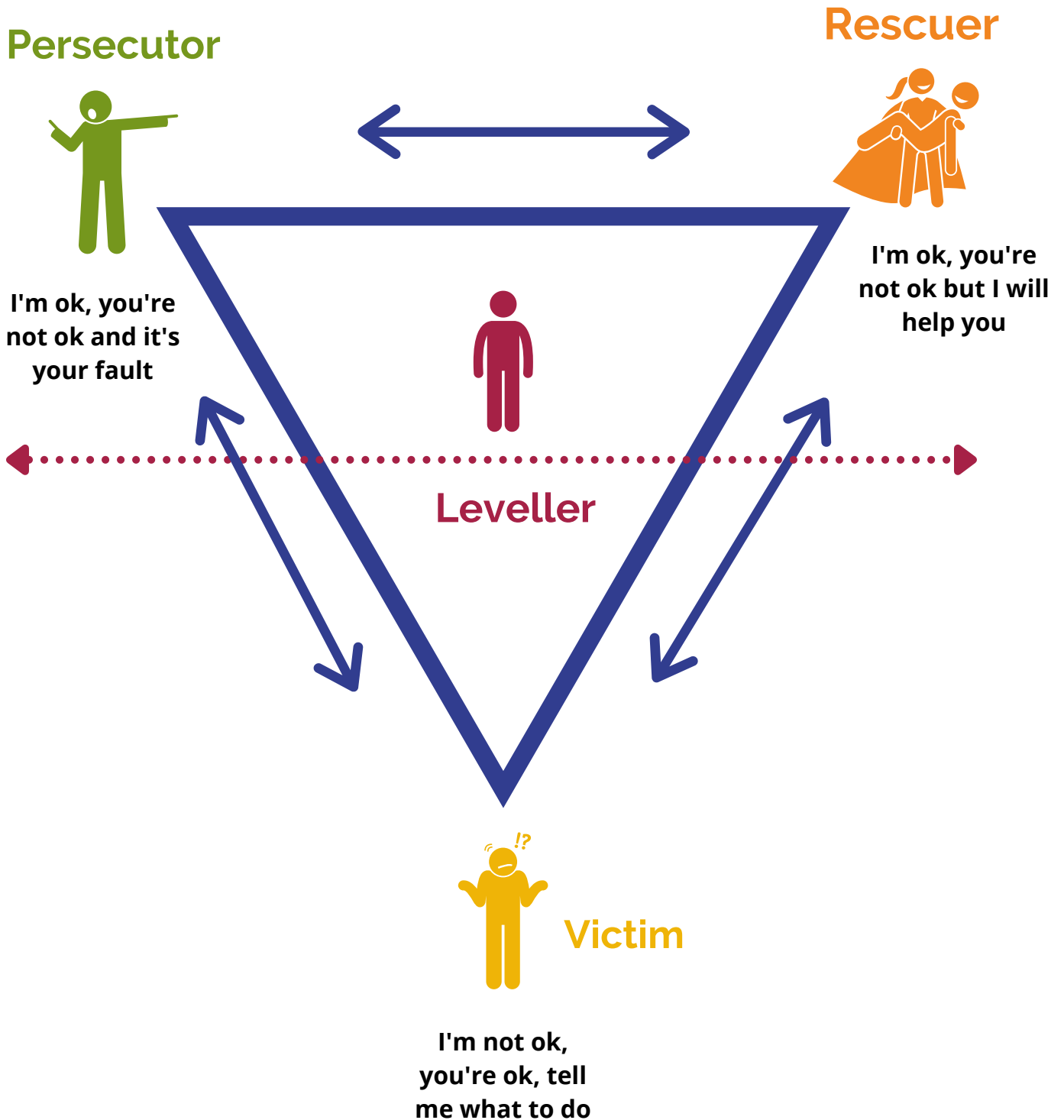


THE KARPMAN DRAMA TRIANGLE



Persecutor

**Persecutor says "I'm OK, you're not OK.
You are helpless and hopeless and it's your fault."**

When in role, the persecutor:

1. Is isolated (independence is vital). Over-bounded, boundaries appear like castle walls.
2. Is critical or aggressive.
3. Rigid, fixed, defines things in black and white.
4. Seeks conflict. Conflict becomes equal to contact. The persecutor doesn't enjoy the conflict itself but is attached to the response (addictive, excited, stimulated).
5. Uses fight and flight as a way of staying distant and not showing vulnerability.
6. Fears that if boundaries soften they won't exist and they (the persecutor) will lose contact and control.
7. Will give up everything to remain intact - all or nothing.
8. Projects negativity and sees no good in anyone.
9. Is paranoid and projects hostility onto others to justify defensive behaviours.
Projects own anger onto others and then defends against it.
10. Puts out "go away" and "I don't need you" messages. Pushing away, distancing.
11. Has active aggression - verbal, physical or emotional as their main behaviour.
12. Attempts to achieve inner peace by going to war.
13. Has no inner stability - always caught up by external stimuli or feelings that they may not even know are there - like a pinball machine.
14. Does not show their pain or other emotions, they may not recognise them.
15. Speaks in sweeping generalisations (non-specific power).

INSIDE the persecutor feels lonely and unloved. The anger comes from thinking that it is not possible for them to get their needs met. They often don't know what's going on inside them; they don't recognise or connect with their anger, fears, sorrow or pain.

To step out of playing the role, with compassion: The persecutor gives an apology



**Rescuer says "I'm OK, you're not OK.
You are helpless and hopeless but I'll help you.**

The Rescuer:

1. Avoids conflict and desires harmony.
2. Mistakes confluence for harmony
3. Feels sick inside when there is conflict.
4. Deprives others of resources by running in with a 'sticking plaster'
5. Attends to the needs of others, loses themselves, becomes selfless.
6. Is often seen as good, warm and caring. Society approves of their behaviour.
7. Has strong adapted parts, tried to accommodate and please people.
8. Feels taken for granted and builds resentments.
9. Projects sadness, seeks and imagines sadness in others.
10. Gives out 'come to me' messages.
11. Ignores negative motivation in others and creates a world of good but helpless people.
12. Has guilt as a dominant emotion due to unrealistic expectation from others to them and of themselves.
13. Has grandiose self expectations which can never be fulfilled.
14. Becomes a syrupy 'yes' person.

INSIDE: The rescuer feels confused, empty, scared and hurt. They think "I feel like nothing without them. I am dead. I am worthless."

Stepping out with compassion: The rescuer gives an appreciation



**Victim says "I'm not OK, you're OK.
I am helpless and hopeless, please tell me what I should do".**

The Victim:

1. Complains but does not take action.
2. Asks for advice and then plays "Yes...but..."
3. Comes from a background which trains out active power and autonomy.
4. Docile in relation to authority and rules . Submissive.
5. Says "Fix me, make me better, you are responsible for me".
6. Says "It's not fair", "You're so lucky", "If only..." Appeals to your guilt.
7. Loves telling hard luck stories.
8. Is a frustrator who leaves you feeling helpless and impotent if you try to help.
9. Needs people - dependance is vital.
10. Thinks the world owes them - this shows up in their behaviour though they do not say as much.
11. Has shame and helplessness as dominant attitudes.
12. Asks for support, often saying "This is difficult for me to ask for".
13. Avoids the struggle to be themselves and colludes with the oppressor, will not assert power.
14. Has difficulty achieving goals (and tends to set unrealistic goals).
15. Craves attention and hates it.
16. Has been trained in powerlessness (learned helplessness).

INSIDE: The victim feels frightened and distrustful, feels nobody cares and that there is no space for them and that they don't have the right to occupy space. The victim doesn't overtly express anger and power.

Stepping out with compassion: The victim gives sympathy



**Leveller says: "I'm OK, you're OK.
We are all adults and each responsible for ourselves"**

The Leveller:

1. Does not pressure themselves to respond.
2. Does not try to fix, hug, smile, advise or decide until they feel ready.
3. Is clear about their time and boundaries and does not respond on impulse.
4. Recognises the role they are playing from their posture, attitude and responses and learns to disorganise these.
5. Thinks "I'm OK, you're OK, even though we both have problems."
6. Asks for permission to help.
7. Calls people in rather than calling people out.
8. Is specific and clear about what they want and don't want (boundaries).
9. Reinforces people's strengths.
10. Speaks in I
11. Takes the initiative to say how they feel
12. Comes with intention rather than expectation.
13. Checks out assumptions.
14. Speaks directly to the other rather than about the other.
15. Stays in eye contact.
16. Is specific rather than general.
17. Acknowledges having heard the other before speaking.
18. Values different opinions and perceptions.
19. Holds an awareness of how much air time they and others take.
20. Willing to wait and pause for the other to respond.
21. Makes positive rather than negative statements.
22. Gives up the need to be right.
23. Invites and requests rather than demanding.
24. Is aware and explicit when they find themselves stepping into the dram triangle.
They can name the role they are playing without shame.
25. Knows that they can choose to step out of their investment in playing the game.
They can choose to change their behaviour.