**Developmental Core Belief Hierarchy**

(Kiessling, 2010)

**Age Plateau Negative Core Beliefs Adaptive Core Beliefs**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **0 – 2** | **Survival**  **Existence** | *I should have been aborted*  *I’m a mistake*  *I’m unwanted*  *I’m invisible*  *My needs don’t matter*  *I’m defective*  *I’m flawed*  *I’m damaged*  *I don’t deserve*  *I’m discarded*  *I’m betrayed*  *It’s not safe to be me*  *I’m different*  *I don’t fit in*  *I’m going to die* | *I’m okay as I am and can get my needs met*  *I can survive regardless*  *I can accept myself, my strengths and challenges, and get my needs met*  *I can learn when, how, how much, and with whom I can be authentic* |
| **2 – 4** | **Control** | *I’m powerless*  *I’m helpless*  *I’m trapped*  *I have to be in control*  *I’m overwhelmed* | *I can control what I can even when I’m….*  *…powerless*  *…overwhelmed*  *…helpless*  *…trapped*  *I can begin to learn to let go of some control* |
| **3 – 5** | **Responsibility** | *I’m responsible for everything*  *I’m responsible for taking care of others*  *I’m not good enough*  *I’m a failure*  *I’m incompetent*  *I’m inadequate*  *I’m overwhelmed* | *I can recognize appropriate responsibility*  *I can begin to learn that I am not always responsible for others’ feelings* |
| **3 – 6** | **Worthiness** | *I’m unlovable*  *I’m worthless*  *I’m unimportant*  *I don’t matter*  *My needs don’t matter*  *I don’t fit in* | *I’m lovable regardless*  *I’m worthwhile regardless*  *I have value and self-worth regardless*  *I have value and can get my needs met*  *I can learn with whom I can get my needs met*  *I can survive/thrive regardless* |
| **4 – 7** | **Competency** | *I’m not good enough*  *I’m incompetent*  *I’m a failure*  *I’m inadequate*  *I’m overwhelmed* | *I’m good enough*  *I’m competent*  *I can learn from my mistakes*  *I’ll do my best to handle things under the circumstances* |
| **7+** | **Vulnerability** | *I’m vulnerable*  *I can’t trust my judgment*  *I don’t fit in*  *I’m different*  *I’m trapped/helpless/*  *powerless* | *I can find ways to protect myself*  *I can begin to learn to trust my judgment*  *I can find ways to survive/thrive regardless*  *I can accept my differences and survive*  *I can control what I can even when…* |