**Developmental Core Belief Hierarchy**

(Kiessling, 2010)

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

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| **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…*  |