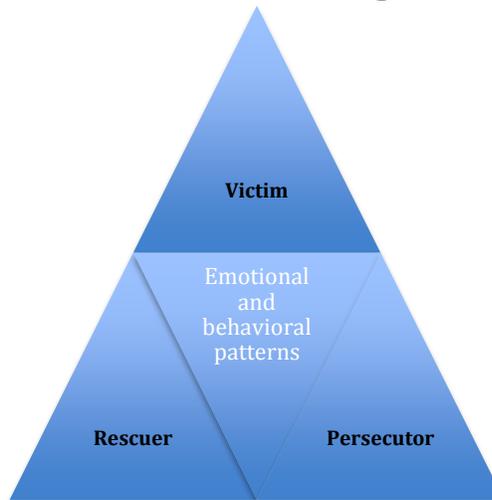


# The Drama Triangle



*This is not about blame but learning how some of these patterns might emerge. No one fits all of these pieces and people can move into all the different roles. See what can apply.*

## Victim

*Pathetic Victim* – Poor me I don't know how this happened

*Angry Victim* – Pretends to be powerful, yet at same time denying responsibility, "Look what you've done to me."

- Takes little responsibilities for actions or feelings.
- They discount their capabilities: there is nothing I can do I am not strong enough everyone is against me
- Places the majority of responsibility of success and failure onto others
- Complains about all the reasons why something cannot be done. Often plays the "yes-but game."
- When you suggest a change, they will say yes that is a good idea, but it "won't work for me."
- Predominant feelings—helplessness and hopelessness.
- Victims use blame and guilt to manipulate others into doing what they want. Victims hook up with people they can blame for their sorry state of affairs.

## Rescuer

- Rescuers discount the ability of others to solve their own problems
- They are the proverbial knights in shining armor, selflessly putting their needs aside to come to the aid of others.
- They feed victims with information they want to hear, such as "You know it's not your fault or things will get better, just you wait and see."
- Rescuers have few boundaries, presuming that others simply cannot survive without them.
- Rescuers believe, often subconsciously, that they are saints and martyrs, acting unselfishly for other's good. This lofty position can create a high which can make the Rescuer position addictive and all encompassing.
- The main message they send to others is: "You are inept. You cannot take care of yourself. You are not good enough. Therefore I will be in charge. I will take care of you."
- They may see themselves as a rescue-martyr and then end up as a victim-martyr  
Predominant feeling—guilt

## **Persecutor**

- Plays the bad guy
- Act largely out of anger and rage
- By criticizing, demeaning, and discounting others, the persecutor keeps the other two positions in motion—the victim abdicates responsibility for what is wrong and the rescuer tries in vain to fix it.
- They maintain control by playing off of the helplessness of the victim or the guilt of the rescuer. This ploy contributes to their control, which generates a feeling of omnipotence not unlike the high the rescuer gets from aiding and abetting the victim's hopelessness
- Persecutors will criticize others without giving guidance how to improve. They also tend to remind others of their past mistakes.
- Predominant feeling—anger

## **Getting Out of the Triangle (Key word is Empowering)**

- **Learning about the triangle—bringing the roles into consciousness**
- **Discuss how it shows up in families**
- **Discussing the pro's and con's of giving up the roles**
- **Identify when you play the roles**
- **Tell the truth about you feelings and motives**
- **Recognize that you do indeed have options, choices (albeit tough ones)**
- **Explore these options without reacting to others in the triangle**
- **Ask for feedback**