Adlerian Theory

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Introduction

Individual Psychology was founded by **Alfred Adler.** It is a cognitive, goal-oriented, social psychology interested in a person's beliefs and perceptions, as well as the effects that person's behavior has on others. It is one of the few psychologies interested in democratic processes in the home, school and work place. Individual Psychology promotes social equality, which means granting each other mutual respect and dignity regardless of our inherent differences. It is not a set of techniques but a comprehensive philosophy of living. The three most fundamental principles are: (1) behavior is goal oriented; (2) humans are fundamentally social, with a desire to belong and have a place of value as an equal human being; and (3) the individual is indivisible and functions with unity of personality (Ferguson, 1984). These principles, which make Individual Psychology unique from other approaches, are described in Adlerian psychology as **purposiveness**, **social interest**, and **holism**. Together, these principles describe the person as moving in unity toward self-chosen goals that reflect a human value for belonging and social contribution.

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The term Individual Psychology (Adler, 1932) is often misunderstood. In his theory, Adler stressed the unity or indivisibility of the person, and thus he named it Individual Psychology. The term "individual" was used to focus on the whole individual at a time when others, like Freud, were focusing on a divided and therefore conflictual personality. In other words, the word 'individual" differed significantly from Freud's concept of duality where everything is in conflict, such as the id, ego, and superego or the conscious, subconscious, and preconscious. Instead, Adler developed a holistic theory of psychology that emphasized the unity of the individual working toward a goal (Ferguson, 2000a). This holistic approach, along with other fundamental components, characterizes contemporary Adlerian Psychology.

Background

Alfred Adler was born on February 7, 1870, in a small suburb of Vienna (Ellenberger, 1970). He was Hungarian by birth and later became a citizen of Vienna, Austria. Alfred was the second son in a family of six children, not counting two who died in early infancy. Interestingly enough, his older brother's name was Sigmund. Alfred seemed to view Sigmund as someone who was always ahead of him, a true "first born" with whom Alfred felt he could never catch up. Later in his life another Sigmund (Freud) would also seem to serve as a rival. Despite the rivalry in childhood between Alfred and his brother, they seemed to remain friendly toward each other as adults.

Adler was a sickly child and suffered from rickets and fits of breathlessness. His illness as well as the death of his younger brother Rudolf, when Alfred was about 4 years old, seemed to strengthen his goal of becoming a physician. In 1895, he graduated from the Medical School of the University of Vienna and established his medical practice. In December of 1897, Adler

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married Raissa Epstein, a woman who had come from Russia to study in Vienna. According to

Carl Furtmueller (1946), Adler met Raissa at a socialist political meeting and was very

impressed with her. Later she continued to be active in the socialist party and the Adlers

frequently entertained the Trotskys, who lived in Vienna from 1907 to 1914. Perhaps because of

his association with socialism and also his wife's influence, Adler was very much in favor of

women having equal rights and the same privileges as men. Alfred and Raissa had four children:

Valentine, Alexandra, Kurt, and Cornelia (Nelly).

In 1898, Adler published the Health Book for the Tailor Trade, a forerunner of health

psychology, which was consistent with a stress/diathesis model of disturbance. This publication

associated the health problems of tailors with the unhygienic conditions under which they

worked. "Adler's purpose in Health Book for the Tailor Trade was clearly not to provide a

dispassionate, scholarly tome. Rather, in a pattern that was to become characteristic of Adler

throughout his career, he explicitly linked his writing to the need for definite action" (Hoffman,

1994, p. 36). It is interesting to note that within this thirty-one-page monograph many of the

roots of Adler's later psychological theory can be found, especially regarding the "role of

physician as social activist and reformer" (p. 37).

In 1902, Adler served for a brief period in the Hungarian Army as a general physician.

Later that year, Adler received an invitational postcard from Sigmund Freud inviting him to join

the Wednesday evening study circle, which eventually became the Viennese Psychoanalytic

Society. Adler was one of the first four physicians to be invited by Freud to attend this group

although "how Adler and Freud first came to know each other has never been satisfactorily

determined" (Hoffman, 1994, p. 41). According to Hoffman (1994), Adler was invited by Freud

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to attend the study group, and it seems clear that Freud sought him out. Thus, it is probably accurate that Adler was never a pupil of Freud's. This one point, alone, became a significant element in the Adler-Freud relationship, which eventually terminated with considerable bitterness. From 1902 until 1911, Adler was a central part of that Viennese Psychoanalytic Society, becoming its president in 1910. Adler published his famous paper on Organ Inferiority in 1907.

Adler came to disagree with Freud over the role that sexuality and social factors played in motivation and development. Adler had developed a social theory that emphasized personal beliefs or "fictional finalism," a concept that is similar to subjective perception. This differed from Freud's view of behavior as being biologically or physiologically determined. Freud branded Adler's emerging social theory of Individual Psychology as "radically false" and insisted that it failed to contribute a "single new observation" to science (Hoffman, 1994, p. 90). Eventually, the differences with Freud became so intense that Adler and several members of the Society left in 1911. They founded their own group, known as the Society for Free Psychoanalysis, which ultimately became the Society for Individual Psychology.

In 1911, Adler became a Viennese citizen. He also read Hans Vaihinger's book, The Philosophy of the As If, which seemed to have a strong impact on his developing theory. In 1912, he produced his second book, The Nervous Character, which was followed two years latter by the introduction of the Journal of Individual Psychology. During WWI, Adler served in a neuropsychiatric unit of the Austro-Hungarian Army. It was his experience in the war that seemed to significantly shape his ideas about human nature.

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Following the war, Vienna was in great turmoil. What once had been a proud city was now full of orphans and in need of establishing order. Adler worked as a consultant in the schools of Vienna, holding clinics with teachers, parents, and students in what has become known as the **Open Forum** model of counseling (Evans & Milliren, 1999). In this model, Adler would meet in an open, public forum with the teachers and parents and ask them about the child. He would then interview the child and eventually make recommendations for the teachers, the parents and sometimes the child. "By involving the audience in the counseling session, Adler emphasized helping the family through education" (Evans & Milliren, 1999, p. 135). These "public counseling demonstrations challenged the then-traditional practices of individual therapy" (p. 135) and can be viewed as a milestone in the development of community mental health programs. Adler "believed that therapy was not for an elite but should be made available to everyone. His public demonstrations reflected this desire to make psychology available to what Adler considered the 'common man'" (p. 135).

In the late 1920's, Adler began to travel to the United States to provide lectures in public and academic settings. He was very well received in the United States and had considerable coverage in the popular press. In fact, he was considered one of the most prominent psychiatrists of his day, and people would flock to his lectures. In 1927, Adler published <u>Understanding Human Behavior</u> and discussed the important concept of Social Interest, which was only suggested in his early writings. His ideas of the inferiority complex, birth order, community feeling and social interest became popular psychological concepts.

The Nazis came to power in Germany in the 1930's and soon became a powerful force in Austria as well. Adler envisioned the upcoming conflict and made plans to leave his homeland.

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He began to spend more and more time in the United States and planned to move there after his lecture tour in the summer of 1937. Adler had a very ambitious tour planned with lectures in The Hague, England and Scotland. He was to be accompanied on this tour by his daughter, Alexandra, who was also a psychiatrist. Alfred Adler died during the first part of that tour in Aberdeen, Scotland, on May 28, 1937 (Hoffman, 1994).

Rudolf Dreikurs was influenced by Adler's teaching and practice in Vienna (Terner & Pew, 1978). Dreikurs, in his early days of practicing psychiatry in Vienna, became involved with Adler and his child guidance centers. Both Adler and Dreikurs were convinced that Individual Psychology should focus on the education of children in the home and school, which would increase the level of the child's functioning, develop his/her citizenship, and be preventive instead of remedial. In 1937, Dreikurs moved to the United States, where he helped to promote and further develop Adlerian psychology.

As much as the popularity of Adler's psychology grew in the United States in the early to mid-1930's, it was Rudolf Dreikurs who "popularized" the approach and contributed significantly to the further development of the theory. In the late 1930's and early 40's, Dreikurs worked in Chicago to initiate the child guidance centers. Open-forum family counseling was practiced, and the concept of democratic family relationships was stressed in these centers. "Dreikurs' dream was to establish child guidance centers all over the world and his understanding of children was of unique importance" (Hooper & Holford, 1998, p. 142). It was the setting of the child guidance centers that "helped inspire one of Dreikurs's most important contributions in psychology, the **four goals of misbehavior** in children" (Terner & Pew, 1978, p. 155).

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In 1962, Dreikurs established the first International Summer School for the study of Adlerian psychology. This is now known as the International Committee for Adlerian Summer Schools and Institutes (ICASSI). After a long career promoting and teaching Adler's psychology and philosophy of life, Rudolf Dreikurs died in 1972.

Human Nature: A Developmental Perspective

Adlerian Psychology is interested in understanding the **lifestyle** or the law of psychological movement of the individual. Each person comes into this world dependent on others for food, clothing, shelter, and nurturance. Our survival as a species depends on our ability to cooperate and be our brothers' and sisters' keeper. Beecher and Beecher (1966) describe how baby turtles are capable of surviving from the moment they are hatched. A turtle never sees his father, only briefly encounters his mother, and is not affected by this lack of contact. Most animals are able to provide for themselves as adults within two years. Homo sapiens require at least twelve years before achieving the minimum capability for meeting the challenges of living. Unlike the turtle, the human infant cannot survive on his/her own. Thus, human beings must develop the skills of cooperation and will always find it necessary to live in a group. In order to develop properly, the human infant must be protected, fed, educated and have human relationships for about a fourth of his/her life span. As the growing child learns to become more competent, he/she begins to gain a sense of mastery over the environment.

The pattern or style that characterizes how the individual "goes about going about" becomes useful in assessing why that individual behaves as he/she does. Understanding the client's life style gives the counselor/therapist a better understanding of behavior and serves as a useful guide as counseling/therapy progresses. Although the emphasis in this process is on

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understanding the individual's behavior, it is always done from the client's subjective viewpoint. The counselor's role is not to establish the facts of the clients experience but to investigate the client's perception of it.

> Early experiences, no matter how dramatic or potentially traumatic, are not specifically causative of personality traits because each child will determine for himself or herself the significance of the experience. The power of subjective interpretation of reality is apparent, for example, if one interviews adult identical twins about some incident that occurred quite early in their lives and that they shared. It is clear from their recollections that the twins do remember the same incident. But when they are asked to pinpoint which was the most vivid moment in the incident and how they felt at that moment, their answers are likely to indicate that they experienced the incident in totally different manners (Dinkmeyer et. al., 1979, p. 26).

Successful counseling will help the individual understand his/her "subjective psychological movement" or "private logic."

Early Development. From the moment of birth, each child acts "as if" he/she is attempting to answer the question, "How do I fit in?" The family is the first social group to which the child belongs. Thus the child begins to make numerous assumptions about who he/she is, how others are, how the world should be, and how the world will treat him or her. The child's ordinal position in the family plays a role in developing this view of self and the world and has a significant impact on the child's developing pattern of living or life style. Because no two human beings have exactly the same reaction to the same situation, each child will interact with

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and interpret experience in the family differently. No two children, born into the same family, grow up in exactly the same situation. Interestingly enough, this is true even for twins.

The perception of the family environment differs from one child to another and can change over time for a variety of reasons. For example, the family structure changes considerably with the birth of each child. Not only is each new child born into an increasingly larger family, the age differences and gender of each of the children can significantly affect the position of every other child. This is even more pronounced in families where a certain child may be accorded a more important position, such as an eldest son or daughter. Ernesto, a sixth grader from a fairly large family, describing himself as the oldest, proceeded to list three or four younger brothers and sisters. Later, when the family was observed while attending a parent meeting, it appeared that Ernesto also had two older sisters. When asked about it, the boy remarked, "Oh yeah, but they don't count!" This "fortunate" young man was the eldest son in a family where such a position was highly valued. It was "as if" no one else counted. The older sisters became "invisible."

Many factors significantly impact the family environment. Parents are older and more experienced as each child enters the family. Family finances may shift and change, and the family may relocate. Extended family members or other significant individuals may move in and out of the family group. Death or divorce of the parents becomes an important factor influencing the family environment. Remarriage of one or both of the parents adds the presence of a stepparent and possibly stepbrothers or stepsisters. Specific family values and the general psychological atmosphere of the family are extremely influential, such as in families where all the children are involved in athletics, are all musical, or all have advanced educational degrees.

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In each case, these specific activities were highly valued by the parents, and it was "as if" one couldn't "belong" without pursuing and developing competence in these areas.

The counselor/therapist should pay attention to health and development issues that exist for different family members. It is not uncommon for the oldest daughter in a family to assume the "mothering" role when the real mother is sickly, out of the home, working full time, or otherwise unable to function in that capacity. A child with developmental disabilities may overshadow brothers and sisters because the family devotes more time to this particular child. The death of a child may create a "phantom" sibling that the other children must live up to in terms of accomplishments because of parental expectations. While there are a number of typical characteristics that seem to be more or less "universal," interpreting birth order is not a cut-and-dried process.

Birth Order/Family Constellation. Although Adler is known for emphasizing birth order, his views are often misunderstood. The position of the child in the birth order is not deterministic. It only provides probabilities that a child will have particular types of experiences (Shulman & Mosak, 1977). Adlerian Psychology not only considers individual development but the social context in which it occurs. The social field of the child includes the parents, the siblings, and other significant individuals that create the multitude of relationships influencing the child. Although there are numerous factors that would indicate exceptions, there are some general characteristics of various birth order positions. Counselors/therapists are cautioned, however, to use this information in the context of what they know about the individual and the individual's family of origin.

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Only Children. Only children are unique; they grow up in a world that is heavily populated with adults. Since there are no other children with whom to compete, they may work extremely hard to achieve an adult level of competence. When the parents are extremely capable, the child sometimes finds it far too difficult to compete with any measure of success, may become discouraged, and either give up or look for alternative pursuits where he or she might be outstanding. Where the child cannot be "good" enough in positive and constructive ways, he or she may become "good" at misbehaving. These children have given up hope of ever being responsible and capable. In contrast, only children sometimes receive so much attention and service from the adults in their world that they attempt to remain helpless and irresponsible. These children have not given up; they just never got started!

It is not unusual for only children to become quite egocentric. After all, they never had to contend with sharing anything. Ed and Sally, a young married couple, constantly squabbled about whose things belonged to whom. She complained that he was far too stingy, while he complained that she was always taking his things without permission. Sally, having grown up in a large family where the general attitude was, "What is yours is ours," saw no need to ask to use things that, to her, were community property. Ed, on the other hand, had grown up in an atmosphere of, "What is mine is mine." He related that on occasions when other children were coming over to play, his mother had a cabinet where he could lock up the toys he wanted to keep away from others. As they grew to understand the attitudes each developed as a result of growing up in their respective families, the squabbling began to cease and each attempted to be more respectful of the other's attitude.

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Another fairly typical characteristic of only children is that they often grow up enjoying being the center of attention. This is particularly true when the child is the first or only grandchild and, therefore, is valued just for existing. In many instances, the only child has developed a talent of one sort or another and expects to be able to take center stage as the star. When only children have been catered to or often been given their own way, they may refuse to be cooperative when others do not give in to them. Barbara, an only child, commented that she would often call her mother to pick her up if, when playing at a friend's house, the other child wouldn't play or do what she wanted. Only children often develop skills for relating only to adults, especially if that is their primary social environment, and not to their peers. As a result, they become content being loners and feel no need to develop relationships with other children.

<u>Oldest Children</u>. Oldest children have had the "good fortune" of being only children for some period of time, whether one or several years. If a gap of approximately five years exists between two children in one family, then each of the children would appear to be more like an only child. Unfortunately, when the birth of the second child occurs, oldest children often feel "dethroned." Sometimes, this generates feelings of being unloved or neglected and the child tries to compensate. Often, they try to regain a position of superiority through good deeds (e.g., becoming overly responsible, serving as the caretaker of the rest of the children, taking on extra chores or activities, excelling at academics, etc). If this doesn't work, oldest children may achieve superiority through being the best of the worst! It is not unusual to find that gender issues become quite significant. For example, when a firstborn male is followed closely by the birth of a female sibling, this can easily lead to a more or less permanent dethronement of the male child.

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Richard, the oldest child in his family, developed into the "responsible" child – almost to the point of being excessive! He took it upon himself to look after everybody and everything, becoming especially involved in this activity after his father divorced his mother when he was nine. Richard then took over the "chores" that had previously been his father's. Richard was already mature beyond his years and this further defined his role as the "man of the house," a role that his mother regularly reinforced since she was so grateful for having such a "good son." Unfortunately, Richard devoted so much of his time and effort to taking care of things at home that he refused to participate in athletics and other social activities at school. As a consequence, he ignored his age-mates and didn't develop the necessary skills for relating to them. As he got older, he complained of lack of friends and closeness in relationships but justified it on the basis that he had to take care of his family.

Juanita was the oldest in her family as well. Since her mother was working two jobs in order to support the family, Juanita's stance in the world was to become "a better mother than her mother." From the young age of five, she recalls numerous occasions where she told the younger children that they had to mind her because she was "the mother in this house!" When she was 12, her mother remarried, quit working, and stayed home to take care of the children. Juanita was not prepared for this change of events, and since she had not developed social skills for participation in activities outside the home, she didn't know what to do. At 14 she resolved to quit school as soon as she could and have a family of her own. She became promiscuous, and by the time she was 16, had given birth to a son and was pregnant with her second child.

Second Born. Second born children often find themselves in an uncomfortable position, and many will adopt the "Avis Attitude" where being second only makes them try harder.

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Unfortunately, during the early years, the second born always has someone in front who is more advanced. This might be mitigated if the oldest is a boy and a second born girl shows up within a year or so. However, if the eldest child is successful, second borns are easily discouraged and give up hope of achieving a place in any area or activity occupied by the oldest. As a result, the second born child usually develops characteristics opposite of the first born. If a third child is born, the second born may feel "squeezed."

Ruth, a second born child in a family with five children, indicated that she always felt that she was in the shadow of her sister. When she was interviewed about her family constellation, Ruth said Emily was twenty-seven months older. The interviewer asked Ruth why it was important to her to be so specific about the age difference. Ruth commented, "Because she really is more than two years older than I am." She indicated that those extra months gave Emily an unfair advantage, which was why Emily was so much better!

Raul, also a second-born, had an older brother, Juan, who was developmentally delayed. Raul excelled academically and became the valedictorian of his high school class, but he never felt as though he was given full attention or acknowledgement by his parents for his achievements. Meeting the needs of Juan's learning differences required considerable time and attention from his parents. Though it would have been quite easy for Raul to revert to the "useless side" and achieve recognition through misbehavior, he found academics to be a means for expressing his capabilities and receiving encouragement outside the family.

Middle Children. Like second borns, middle children have a sibling who is in the lead, but they also have a sibling who is close on their heels. Not only do they have to keep up, but they also feel that they have to run as fast as they can to stay ahead. Depending on the

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capabilities of the other siblings, middle children may often feel like Nathan, who indicated that he was never sure of his abilities or himself. His major strength was being social, with numerous friends and contacts, a characteristic possessed by neither his older brother nor younger sister. However, this led to academic difficulties in high school, which in turn limited his college choice. Consequently, he believes that his undergraduate degree is not the same quality as those held by his siblings. For the most part, he is extremely unsure of how he stacks up, and this plays out in his career, where he has been unable to stay in any one job for more than two years. He has never been fired, but he is always dissatisfied with not being given enough recognition for the things he achieves. Of the three children, however, Nathan, has the most empathy for others.

Youngest Child. Youngest children often find themselves in an enviable position in the family since they are may be pampered and spoiled by parents and older siblings. They often have too many things done for them, including decisions and responsibilities. Because of this unique position, youngest children may easily become discouraged and develop feelings of inferiority. Youngest children, perhaps because there are limited expectations for success, often become the most successful child in the family. Gary conveyed an easy-going, laid-back style of life and seemed never to get caught up in struggles for superiority or accomplishment. The youngest of three boys, he never had a chance to be first at anything, but he maintained a strong, positive attitude about his childhood and the fact that his brothers always seemed to be competing to be first. When asked why it didn't bother him, he explained that he was always the "first" to vote that he would "go last!"

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Youngest children, no matter how capable they are, tend not to be taken seriously by others. Sondra, at age 46, was the youngest child in a family of six children. She regularly complained that no one in the family would consult her or listen to her ideas, even though she was the primary caretaker for her aging parents. Her older siblings would question all of the decisions she made regarding the care of the parents, and when major health issues were to be decided, her input was "always," according to Sondra, discounted. This meant that Sondra, an extremely capable woman, was easily discouraged and harbored considerable feelings of inferiority.

Early Recollections

In addition to collecting the client's birth order/family constellation information, it is important to take note of the memories or recollections that the client holds regarding early experiences. Recollections must be distinguished from reports of experiences; the most significant memories have an "as if" component to them. The individual recalls the experience as if it were occurring at the moment. Again, the counselor/therapist is not interested in the exact nature of the individual's experience but the perception of it. Out of a myriad of experiences, the client chooses to select only certain ones that support or influence current functioning. These memories exist for the individual as little "life lessons" kept available as guides for decision-making about the challenges of living. It is the interpretation of these selected events that the individual carries with him or her as reminders of the goals and limits for participation in life.

Alfred Adler (1931) noted that:

Among all psychic expressions, some of the most revealing are the individual's

memories. Her memories are the reminders she carries about with her of her limitations

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and of the meaning of events. There are no "chance" memories. Out of the incalculable number of impressions that an individual receives, she chooses to remember only those which she considers, however dimly, to have a bearing on her problems. These memories represent the story of her life, a story she repeats to herself for warmth or comfort, to keep her concentrated on her goal, or to prepare her, by means of past experiences, to meet the future with a tried and tested approach (p. 58-59).

Powers and Griffith (1987) state that the early recollections tend to be quite consistent with the individual's current world-view regarding life, self, and others.

To understand this process requires that we recognize it as dynamic, seeing it as an active recollecting in the present moment of recall. Of all our movements, the activity of remembering is the most characteristic. It is in this activity that we reveal the style of our movement in purest form. If hyphenation could make our meaning clearer we would say that in our early re-collections we are re-constituting our world from its beginnings; re-membering the elements of our lives into the one body of our identity; re-calling assertions of meaning out of ourselves against the threats of confusion or despair; re-viewing ourselves in our situations in our practiced way of looking at things (p. 185).

As one's world-view changes, so will the nature of the various recalled memories. Early recollections have embedded in them beliefs about self, others and the world, as well as ethical convictions and plans of action.

From early recollections it is possible to identify the goal toward which the person is directed. In addition to early recollections, recurrent dreams and even favorite fairy tales and childhood stories are considered as part of the database for understanding the life style. When

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working with parents, Walton (Walton, 1996a, Evans & Milliren, 1999) explores their "most memorable observation" or MMO. The MMOs provide clues to the dynamics of the family and are decisions that the parent made in adolescence about how family life was *going to be* when he/she had the opportunity to have his/her own family. "Use of this technique can allow the counselor to help a parent see how he/she: 1) overemphasizes the likelihood of occurrence of a situation the parent guards against; 2) overemphasizes the negative influence of such a situation if it should occur; and underestimate his/her ability to deal with the situation in an effective problem-solving way if it should occur" (Walton, 1996b, p. 4).

Wingett (W. Wingett, personal communication, 11/26/2001) suggests that counselors/therapists listen for key words as the client describes the problem. Often, a client will use the words "lost" or "stuck" to describe the situation that brought them into counseling, i.e., "I am stuck in this mess and don't see any way out," or "I'm just lost in this and don't know where to turn." This is followed up by asking the client about the following experiences: "Tell me about a time in your life when you were lost or stuck. Maybe you were lost while traveling or were lost and could not find your way home or you were lost in a shopping mall" or "Tell me about a time in your life when you were stuck in the snow or sand or mud." By getting the details of these experiences in terms of what the client was thinking and feeling, and how the client proceeded to handle the situation, the counselor/therapist will be able to ascertain the nature of the client's problem-solving approach to life.

Major Constructs

One of the difficulties encountered when attempting to study Adler's theory is the unsystematic manner that characterized his writing. On only rare occasions did Adler present his

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mature theory in an organized or concise form; most of his writings focused on topics or sub-topics related to his theory. However, there is one paper that appeared in the first volume of the International Journal of Individual Psychology (Adler, 1935) wherein Adler presented a short overview of the basic principles of Individual Psychology.

Basic to an understanding of Individual Psychology is the concept that the individual has the *creative power* to interpret experiences, both internal and external, influenced by both heredity and environment, in an individualistic, subjective manner. From these interpretations, the individual develops an "attitude toward life," or *life style*, which is expressed in one's relationships to one's self, others and the world. Adler discussed the belief that the individual "relates himself always according to his own interpretation of himself and his present problems" (Adler, 1935, p. 5). "Man does not merely react. He adopts an individual attitude" (Dreikurs, 1950, p.4).

Though each individual is uniquely different from others with an approach to life that is entirely his/her own creation, no one can escape the necessity of solving a great number of problems. It is here that we begin to see the complications arising from one's inability to solve these problems adequately. There are three general types of problems that arise -- work, friends, and family. **Dreikurs** (1950) describes these as the *three life tasks*:

> "The human community sets three tasks for every individual. They are: work, which means contributing to the welfare of others; friendship, which embraces social relationships with comrades and relatives; and love, which is the most intimate union with someone of the other sex and represents the strongest and closest emotional relationship which can exist between two human beings" (pp. 4-5).

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In the context of meeting these challenges of living there is also a consideration of the *social embeddedness* of the individual. "The individual cannot be considered apart from society. He is inextricably embedded in it. His very thinking, using language as the main tool, is socially determined, since language is a social product and is socially acquired" (Ansbacher, 1965, p. 341). Adler often spoke of the *iron-clad logic of social living*, in essence indicating that all human problems were social problems. To be successful, the individual could not operate in terms of *private logic* but had to function in keeping with the *common sense*.

As a social evolutionist, Adler believed progress could be made only through the conscious efforts of the individual. If people were not willing to contribute, or if they functioned in a manner contrary to the concept of evolution, then "the psychological decline and fall of the individual" (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1964, p. 39) would surely occur. Thus, one's efforts at cooperation and contribution were essential elements of a mentally healthy life style

Adler believed that the whole individual could not be understood by only looking at parts or individual characteristics. Life, for him, was characterized by movement; the *psychological movement* of the individual in pursuit of a goal. In this movement, the whole of the personality is expressed; the individual's mind, body, emotions, perceptions, and all functions move toward this chosen goal. Without recognizing this goal-directed nature of the individual, one cannot see the individual as a whole (Dreikurs, 1950). As Adler described it, the individual functions *as if* he/she were striving to compensate for a *felt minus* situation by attempting to achieve a plus.

Thus, the Adlerian view of the person is that of an indivisible, social being whose behavior occurs as an interaction within the social setting. However, the individual, from an Adlerian perspective, is not just reactive but is proactive – acting on the environment *in order to*

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make things happen or to achieve a desired outcome. There is freedom of choice and **goal-directedness** of behavior. In effect, the individual is perceived as being able to *choose* those behaviors that will move him/her toward a desired objective. Motivation is viewed as more of a pull than a push, with the individual moving toward those immediate and long-range outcomes or objectives that are important in the frame of reference of the individual.

There are as many variations of personally acceptable goals of *success* as there are individuals. "In my experience I have found that each individual has a different meaning of, and attitude toward, what constitutes success" (Adler, 1935, p. 6). As long as the individual has a feeling of belonging and is prepared to meet the tasks of life, he/she will have a positive or healthy view of life and behaviors will be directed toward the *useful* side of life. It is only when the individual is ill-prepared to meet the challenges of living that he/she switches to the *useless* side. In these latter instances, the individual will have a negative view of life and will behave in a manner in opposition to the logic of social living. What better argument is there for early involvement with children and parent education programs?

Adler was not one to present *typologies* of human beings, for he believed that each individual had to be described according to his own unique pattern. Although Adler did develop some general principles describing the nature of the individual, "his main interest was in the description, understanding, and modification of the unique individual" (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1964, p. 660). Therefore, the focus of Individual Psychology is predominately on the ideographic description of behavior – on the specific psychological movement involved in the individual's personal orientation to life. However, there were several occasions when Adler did

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indicate four different general types, although he did so only for purposes of teaching in order to show "the attitude and behavior of individuals toward outside problems" (Adler, 1935, p. 6).

Thus, we find individuals whose approach to reality shows, from early childhood through their entire lives, a more or less dominant or 'ruling' attitude. This attitude appears in all their relationships. A second type – surely the most frequent one – expects everything from others and leans on others. I might call it the 'getting' type. A third type is inclined to feel successful by avoiding the solution of problems. Instead of struggling with a problem, a person of this type merely tries to 'side-step' it, in an effort thereby to avoid defeat. The fourth type struggles, to a greater or lesser degree, for a solution to these problems in a way which is useful to others (Adler, 1935, p. 6).

Each individual, with his unique orientation to life, retains and maintains this approach "from childhood to the end of his life, unless he is convinced of the mistake in his creation of his attitude toward reality" (Adler, 1935, p. 6). This process is similarly described by Combs and Snygg (1959) in that the individual strives to maintain and enhance the phenomenal self – a self which is a product of the individual's own creation. Thus, Adler not only considered the human being as a totality, he viewed him/her as a *unity*. This unity, or what Adler termed the *life style*, is comparable to what is often noted as the *ego* and is expressed in the individual's "thinking, feeling, acting; in his so-called conscious and unconscious – in every expression of his personality" (Adler, 1935, p. 7).

Of the four types presented by Adler, the first three – "the 'ruling' type, the 'getting' type, and the 'avoiding' type – are not apt, and are not prepared to solve the problems of life. These problems are always social problems. Individuals of these three types are lacking in the

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ability for cooperation and contribution" (Adler, 1935, p. 7). Those who lack in the ability to cooperate and contribute, when meeting up with the external problems of living, are confronted with a form of inadequacy or *shock*. "This shock leads up to the individual's failures – which we know as neurosis, psychosis, etc. Significantly, the failure shows the same style as the individual" (Adler, 1935, p. 7). Thus, these first three types are inadequately prepared for life. Although they may be able to function somewhat effectively as long as they are not faced with a critical situation, they will eventually encounter a problem demanding more cooperation and contribution, or ***social interest***, than they are prepared to offer.

"In the fourth type (the socially useful type), prepared for cooperation and contribution, we can always find a certain amount of <u>activity</u> which is used for the benefit of others. This activity is in agreement with the needs of others; it is useful, normal, rightly embedded in the stream of evolution of mankind" (Adler, 1935, p. 7). It was Adler's belief that the individual was firmly embedded in society. It was only within the social milieu that the individual could be understood; the extent or quality of this relationship, as characterized by social interest, was the measure of mental health. Adler wrote in terms of the iron-clad logic of social living and only those who were able to cooperate with and contribute to the general welfare were capable of achieving *significance* or, in terms of contemporary writers, self-actualization.

For Adler, life was movement and it was the nature of this movement on the part of the individual that was of interest to the Individual Psychologist. For some, this movement might be described as *active* in form; for others, this may be more *passive*. Such movement is quite easy to observe in children. For example, one child may tend to be more energetic in his or her behavior or activity level, while another may be content to sit by and observe what is going on.

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For the most part, this degree of activity remains constant throughout one's life but may only become apparent when the individual experiences favorable or, particularly, unfavorable situations. "But it is the individual shade of interpretation that matters in the end. And when reconstructing the unity of a personality in his relationships to the outer world, Individual Psychology fundamentally undertakes to delineate the individual form of creative activity – which is the life style" (Adler, 1935, p. 8).

The Evolution of Adler's Concept of Belonging and Fundamental Human Striving

Adler's theory of Individual Psychology might best be described as a "work in progress," since the development of his theory took place in three separate, though not mutually exclusive, phases (Dreikurs, 1967). The first phase covered the period from 1907 to about 1912 (Shulman, 1951). During this time Adler placed his emphasis on the role of *organ inferiority*. A review of Adler's writings from these earlier years indicates that three basic elements of his mature theory were developed. First, Adler postulated the concept of the unity of the individual, although, at this early time, the context was physiological. He talked about the confluence of drives – that every drive is connected with one or more other drives – though, more directly, he was still concerned with these as physiological processes (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956).

Adler also began to postulate his motivational principle. Originally, in 1908, Adler wrote about the *aggression drive*, which served as the superordinate force that provided the direction for the confluence of drives. Here we see the dynamic nature of his early theoretical development wherein the individual strives for a level of success or satisfaction. In 1910, the aggression drive was replaced by the concept of *masculine protest*, the difference being that the

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physiological, objective psychology of Adler was shifting to a psychological, subjective one.

Adler viewed the masculine protest as "the striving to be strong and powerful in compensation

for feeling unmanly, for a feeling of inferiority" (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 45).

The third element of Adler's early theory, proposed in 1908, was the need for affection –

the goal toward which the confluence of drives is struggling. The need for affection was Adler's

idea that an *inner disposition* of the individual required other people and social relationships to

be satisfied. This described the nature of the striving of the individual; however, Adler cautioned

that the satisfaction or blocking of the gratification of this need should only be done for

culturally useful purposes. Thus, we see the beginnings of Adler's emphasis on community and

the beginnings of his approach to working with children. However, Adler's psychological theory

basically reflected a strong biological orientation, which lasted until around 1912, when his

theory began to shift "toward a socially oriented, subjectivistic, holistic psychology of attitudes"

(Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 76).

The Second Phase of Individual Psychology's Belonging and Human Striving

This next phase of development for Adler and his theory lasted about four years, from

1912 to 1916, when an increased emphasis was placed on the feeling of inferiority. By now,

Adler had established his own psychological "school," having withdrawn from Freud's

psychoanalytic circle the previous year (1911). The break with Freud coincided with the

appearance of Vaihinger's The Philosophy of 'As If" which served as a major impetus to the

direction of Adler's theoretical development (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). With the

introduction of The Neurotic Character in 1912, it was obvious that Adler was considerably

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influenced by Vaihinger and, as a result, a major modification in the theory of neurosis had taken place.

Vaihinger's greatest influence on Adler's Individual Psychology was in respect to the concept of the ***fictional goal***. This fiction is a subjective creation of the individual which offers a basis for action *as if* such were a true and logical assessment of reality. The fictional structure, when combined with a teleological orientation, resulted in Adler's concept of the *fictional goal* (or fictional final goal, or guiding fiction). This fictional goal is an ever-present creative product of the individual and serves as the end state to be achieved by his/her strivings. The concept of the fictional goal also "became the principle of unity and self-consistency of the personality structure (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 90)" and was a means by which the individual could compensate for feelings of inferiority.

Having established the principle of the unity of the personality in terms of a *fictional finalism,* the striving for this goal became the dynamic force in Adler's theory. The general description of this force, from 1916 on, remained predominately the same in that the psychological movement of the individual took place in terms of a striving for perfection, from below to above, from a felt minus to a plus, from inferiority to superiority. It was in these early days, though, that Adler wrote from the frame of reference of "the neurotic patient; it was the neurotic whom Adler showed as striving for enhancement of his self-esteem or for the safeguarding of it. When he generalized from the neurotic, he described the normal individual as behaving in the same way, only less clearly so and to a lesser degree" (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 101).

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Adler, during this second phase in theory development, called the striving for superiority the *will to power,* a will that increased proportionately in strength with the extent of the strength of the feeling of inferiority. "In effect, the pleasure of <u>feeling</u> powerful was directly related to the displeasure of feeling powerless" (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 111). At this time in Adler's theory development, we find the neurotic serving as the frame of reference for describing the normal individual. However, this orientation was to change as Adler's theory continued to mature.

The Third and Final Phase of a Developing Individual Psychology

Upon Adler's return to Vienna in 1916, after serving in the war as a doctor at the front, he presented the concept of ***Gemeinschaftsgefühl,*** *or social interest,* to his old group. Although this was not a totally new idea for Adler, the weight he attached to it was, "for he knew <u>now</u> that it was the one question at issue between man and his fate" (Bottome, 1957, p. 122). The period from 1916 until Adler's death in 1937 marks the last major modification to be introduced into the theory of Individual Psychology. During these later years, Adler's efforts were spent, in part, in an attempt to develop the simple theme of social interest. "What Adler was in search of was a reconciliation between individual and society, a means of effecting a reintegration of the maladjusted neurotic with his environment through a simple and rational code of conduct that would satisfy the demands of both" (Way, 1962, p. 186).

By the 1930s, Adler recognized that feelings of inferiority were not a fundamental condition of human nature, but a mistaken approach to life. Adler shifted his notion of the individual's striving for superiority to a fundamental desire to belong, to feel worthwhile as a human being, and be part of the human community (Ferguson, 1989). Not only had Adler found

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the concept describing the ideal state of the individual's relationship to his environment, but also he had changed his frame of reference from the neurotic to humankind in general. He had developed a criterion for normalcy – social interest – and could now rewrite his theory in terms of the normal individual.

Neurosis was now defined as the extent to which the individual possessed a discouraged attitude toward life. The "normal" individual functions courageously – cooperating and contributing to the extent of his or her social interest. Thus, the process of curing the neurosis as well as the process of educating children toward "normal adjustment" requires a program of help that is aimed at expanding and strengthening the individual's social interest. In this final phase, Adler established the most important and major element in his theory; the concept of social interest became the sole criterion of mental health and the increase of social interest was the major therapeutic goal.

Social Interest

For Adler, the criterion for "success" in life, in essence the healthy personality, is inherent in the extent to which the individual embodies social interest (Gemeinschaftsgefühl) in his characteristic approach to life and life problems. It is this conceptualization that describes the ideal state of the individual's mental health. Adler's term, Gemeinschaftsgefühl, presents considerable difficulty in terms of translation into English and, much like the terms *Gestalt* or *Vorstellung,* there is no available English equivalent that conveys the same meaning. A number of terms – "social feeling, community feeling, fellow feeling, sense of solidarity, communal intuition, community interest, social sense, and social interest (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p.

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134)" have been used. Adler seemed to prefer the latter term, social interest, which he used in most of his later writing (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956; Dreikurs, 1950).

Not only does the term Gemeinschaftsgefühl present translation problems, but, as the Ansbachers (1966) point out, these are minor difficulties in contrast to the problem of understanding what the concept really means. In Adler's own words, "it becomes clear that the difficulty with this term is not one of the translation from German into English, but one of the definition, no matter which language or which particular term one might choose" (Ansbacher, 1966, p. 14)." To advocate the sole use of the term, Gemeinschaftsgefühl, does not solve the problem since it would still convey little or no meaning, particularly to those with few or no German language skills.

Referring to the original German term for a moment, Gemeinschaftsgefühl is a composite of *Gemeinschaft* which is "a community, an aspect of the cosmos" and *Gefühl* which is "subjective state, an attitude, a state of the organism preparatory to action" (Buchheimer, 1959, p. 242), two words conveying a two-part or two-dimensional whole. In this view, Gemeinschaftsgefühl becomes a mediating factor providing for the reconciliation of the individual's internal, personal, subjective environment or frame of reference with the demands of the person's external, common, objective environment or surroundings. Ansbacher (1968) indicates that these can be considered as the psychological *process* dimension and the *object* (outside world) dimension at which the process is directed.

A review of Adler's writings reveals that he utilized and described Gefühl or "interest" in "social interest" in terms of three different aspects: of its being an aptitude or innate potentiality;

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of its being a set of abilities; and of its being a generalized attitude. Ansbacher (1968) describes

these as three developmental steps:

> In Step 1, social interest is an assumed <u>aptitude</u> for cooperation and social living which
>
> can be developed through training.
>
> In Step 2, this aptitude has been developed into the objective <u>abilities</u> of cooperating and
>
> contributing, as well as understanding others and empathizing with them.
>
> In Step 3, social interest is a subjective <u>evaluative attitude</u> determining choices and thus
>
> influencing the dynamics of the individual. When not backed up by the skills represented
>
> in Step 2, such an attitude of social interest may not be sufficient to meet all
>
> contingencies (p. 132)."

Assuming that social interest, then, is an aptitude or innate potentiality it must be

consciously developed until, as Bottome (1957) quotes Adler as saying, it becomes "as natural as

breathing or the upright gait" (p. 168). The next step – the function of education and training – is

the development of this potential, converting the aptitude into an ability or skill. Just as one

must train a potential for music or numbers or artistic productions, so must the social interest be

trained. The development of this capability for social interest makes an excellent argument for

implementing character education training and other comparable programs. With this training in

social interest comes the development of the capacities for cooperation and contribution. In

brief, these could be described, in total, as the ability to accept *what is* (the implication here

being one of cooperation) with a view of *what could be* (the implication being the element of

contribution).

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Emphasizing the abilities of cooperation and contribution as basic elements of the "interest" in social interest, Dreikurs (1950) indicates "each individual has to make an adjustment to two social levels which oppose each other. Fulfilling the social tasks which confront us means meeting not only the acute obligations presented to us by the needs of the groups around us, but also the needs for improvement and social development" (p. 9). Social interest requires that the individual have enough contact with the present to make his move toward the future meaningful and enough vision of the future to go beyond mere conformity. "The ideal expression of social interest is the ability to play the game with existing demands for cooperation and to help the group to which one belongs in its evolution closer toward a perfect form of social living" (Dreikurs, 1950, p. 8).

The social interest dimension described by cooperation is best exemplified by the ability of the individual to give and take. He/she must not only feel a part of life as a whole, but must also be willing to accept the good and the bad aspects of living. The person might be described as being neither optimist nor pessimist, but as one who functions effectively within the realities of the situation. He/she operates as a part of life, in conjunction with others. One of the measures, then, of the degree of social interest developed by the individual is expressed by the extent to which the individual is willing to cooperate. Though many individuals may have only a limited capacity to cooperate, life does not always present to them such demanding problems that their cooperation is found to be in short supply. Often, they are never called upon to cooperate to such an extent that they will be found lacking in their ability. It is only under difficult situations and stress that we can truly assess the cooperative ability of the individual.

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Not only must the individual develop his/her capacity for cooperation, but he/she must, in addition, develop a capacity for contribution – a willingness to consider in his/her own personal striving for overcoming and perfection, the welfare of others. Humans do not live an isolated existence, but every action and feeling has some effect and impact on others. Adler considered it to be a major function of each individual that he/she become his/her "brother's keeper" (Bottome, 1957). A major aspect of this dimension is the idea that there is no one-to-one correspondence between contribution and reward, and the individual must be able to give far more than he/she receives. This willingness to contribute must take place in a context of primary concern for others and the general welfare. Concern for personal benefit can only be secondary and must follow solely as "spill out" from the primary concern (Dreikurs, 1950).

In summary, the individual must be able to function on two planes – a horizontal and a vertical. The horizontal plane consists of the day-to-day demands of social living and is part of the here and now. This includes the individual's immediate relationships to all elements of this environment incorporating all things and all persons with which he/she comes in contact, either directly or indirectly. Thus, the horizontal plane is not restricted solely to social relationships, as may be implied by the term social interest, but is viewed as the totality of the person's environment. This plane might be adequately described as a *continuum of cooperation* – the extremes of which can be characterized in terms of the cooperative movement displayed by the individual – whether it be <u>with</u>, in a synergistic relationship, or <u>against</u>, in a hostile, fighting relationship toward the total spectrum of environmental elements.

The second plane, which is vertical in nature, consists of a type of evolutionary movement that is continuous and upward in direction. This plane can be designated as a

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continuum of contribution and refers to a general striving for improvement and social development. At the extremes, we would find the individual either moving <u>toward</u> improvement in a constructive manner inclusive of the welfare of others or moving <u>away</u> from social development in a destructive manner ignoring the social good. To remain solely on the horizontal plane would constitute a type of conformity in the individual that would have no element of a futuristic or evolutionary orientation. Devoting sole attention to the vertical would constitute a striving for superiority without a concomitant interest in the immediate environment. A balance or equilibrium must be maintained between the two directions of these planes if the social interest is to exist to any high degree in the individual.

The third developmental step results in the individual's moving closer to achieving a subjective evaluative attitude toward life. However, without the development of the previously mentioned capacities for cooperation and contribution, the arrival at such an attitude on the part of the individual would be inadequate in the face of meeting all the challenges of living. The development of freedom, for example, without the concomitant attitudes of commitment and responsibility is as disastrous for the individual as it is for him/her to have feelings of insecurity or inferiority. Thus, a mentally healthy attitude toward life not only allows for a feeling of value and self-worth but also influences the nature and direction – a direction of moving ever closer to a more adequate form of social living – of the activities the individual proposes to undertake.

Life, as viewed by Adler, presented the individual with two, often contradictory, demands. On the one hand, the individual had to be capable of meeting the acute demands of the existing environment; he/she had to have the capacity to cooperate. On the other hand, the demands for the need for social improvement and development required the individual to possess

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the capacity to make a contribution. The resolution of this dilemma necessitates that the individual find that balance between present needs and the demands of evolution (Dreikurs, 1950). Fortunately, there seems to exist in all human beings a recognition of the "necessity of being human, of contributing and cooperating in human society" (Wolfe, 1930, p. 26). Even the neurotic exemplifies this awareness by spending his/her life continually justifying the reasons for avoiding humanity and humanism. The social interest cannot be avoided and, in its ultimate form, establishes an ideal and a direction for the strivings of the individual and the group as a whole.

The meaning of Gemeinschaft, or the "social" in "social interest," is too often viewed from the limited perspective of social relations. The German term, in fact, has a much broader meaning than that implied in the word "social" (Ansbacher, 1968). Dreikurs (1950), while describing the difficulty that Gemeinschaftsgefühl creates for translation, indicated that the main difficulty lies in the term Gemeinschaft. "It is not identical with any of the many English words which are used for it . . . although all the various terms, 'community,' 'society,' 'group,' have some of the connotations implied in 'Gemeinschaft.' It is perhaps closest to the term commonweal which contains some of the significant aspects" (p. 4). "Even Adler extended the meaning of Gemeinschaft, the social in social interest, to a variety of 'objects' one would not necessarily assume under this term. In fact nearly all objects in the world are potentially included" (Ansbacher, 1968, p. 133).

Social interest remains throughout life. It becomes differentiated, limited, or expanded and, in favorable cases, extends not only to family members but also to the larger group, to the nation, to all of mankind. It can even go further, extending itself to animals, plants,

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and inanimate objects and finally even to the cosmos (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p.

138).

Thus, Gemeinschaft, as Adler used the term, is not restricted solely to the social community but

describes a holistic relationship between man and the cosmos. Way (1962) describes this

relationship: "The feeling for the Gemeinschaft is wider that the term 'society' suggests. It

embraces a sense of relatedness, not only to the human community, but to the whole of life . . ."

(p. 201). As one's horizons expand, relationships begin to include more and more of life, and

ultimately, there is a feeling of connectedness with the whole of the universe, society, and nature.

Social interest is a blending of the Gemeinschaft with the Gefühl; it describes a picture of

what can be rather than what is. Social interest establishes an ideal rather than a norm or median

as the direction for the strivings of humankind. It is more than a concept of adjustment since it

implies courage, initiative, and creativity. It places the whole of our existence upon a dynamic

foundation of movement and improvement, belonging and cooperation. Social interest

represents an *ideal norm* and, therefore, can be used as a standard to which the functioning of the

individual can be compared. It serves as a relative index of the individual's mental health status.

Role of Emotions and Feelings

Adlerians view emotions as an element of motivation. "Without strong emotions, no

strong acts are possible" (Dreikurs, 1967b, p. 213). The psychological movement of the

individual is goal-directed and, in addition to a life style goal, the individual has immediate

goals. Emotions are the fuel that helps one attain those goals. Emotion comes from two Latin

words, "ex" or "e" which means "out of," and "movere," which means "to move." Hence

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emotions help one "move out" of a situation in a way that is consistent with the life style and one's immediate goals. As Adler explains:

> They depend on his goal and his consequent style of life. The feelings are never in contradiction to the style of life. We are no longer, therefore, in the realm of physiology or biology. The rise of feelings cannot be explained by chemical theory and cannot be predicted by chemical examination. In Individual Psychology, while we presuppose the physiological processes, we are most interested in the psychological goal (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 226).

Adler divided emotions into conjunctive and disjunctive emotions. Conjunctive emotions, such as joy, love, excitement, and caring, serve the purpose of bringing people closer together. Disjunctive emotions such as anger, jealousy, bitterness, hatred, and loathing are emotions that distance us from each other. The Ansbachers (1956) provide us with an excellent example of this movement from Adler's writings:

> The emotion of joy, for example, cannot stand isolation. In its expressions of seeking company and embracing another, it shows the inclination to play the game, to communicate, and to share the enjoyment. The entire attitude is engaging. It is extending the hand, so to speak, a warmth which radiates toward the other person and intended to elevate him as well. All the elements of union are present in this emotion (p. 227).

Depending on the life style goal and the immediate goals of the individual, the person chooses the type of emotion that will serve his/her purpose. Joe was angry a lot. He reported that he had been abused by his mother and father and was determined not to be abused by others.

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The question to be asked here is, "What use does Joe's anger serve?" He admitted that he thought others would try to hurt him eventually so Joe created a "shield of anger" in order to minimize that potential hurt and to keep people at a distance from him. The anger also served the purpose of intimidating others and getting them to acquiesce when there was a quarrel because most people backed down when they saw how upset Joe became. Typically, anger is chosen on those occasions when the individual believes him/herself to be powerless. Although there is no guarantee that anger will make another person cooperate, it is self-reinforcing since it creates the illusion of being in power. Emotions are purposive and serve the goals of the life style and of the immediate situation.

Amy is described by school personnel as "being out of control." Amy, a 17-year-old, has learned to use her emotions to suit her goal of power, e.g., "I am equal to you by being more powerful." Whenever, Amy doesn't like something that others are doing or when she doesn't want to give in to the demands of the school, she has "fits of temper." On one occasion, when Amy was in the school library, her teacher asked her to put up her book and get ready to leave. Amy didn't respond and the teacher continued to tell her to put up the book. As the teacher began to get frustrated and demand that Amy comply, the school director stepped in to force the issue. Amy just "blew up," yelling for them to leave her alone and proceeding to sweep the books off the shelves that were nearest to her.

Of interest here is the fact that, as Amy was clearing off the book shelves, she completely missed a full cup of coffee the director had set down on the top of one of the bookcases Amy was clearing. Since Amy had emptied everything else off that bookcase, what would explain the fact that the coffee cup was missed? From an Adlerian perspective, the answer was clear. Amy was

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not driven by the anger but was using it; she was able to decide what she would destroy and what she wouldn't. In this case, she seemed to know that the director's coffee was off limits! As a rule, when Amy responded by "being out of control," the faculty and staff in the school would back off and leave her alone to do whatever she wanted. Amy was not *out of control* but was using her anger to be *in control*.

Emily might be best described as "thin-skinned" and oversensitive. Her friends are very careful around her in terms of what they say or might suggest. They all comment that being with Emily is like walking on eggs all of the time. They avoid discussion of subjects that have a tendency to upset her and constantly check in with her to make sure she is "okay" with the activities they are engaged in. Although Emily doesn't have the awareness, it is clear that she uses her "sensitivity" to control her environment and her friends. As a consequence, Emily has a difficult time keeping friends and doesn't understand why. Fred, on the other hand, is easygoing, enjoys life, and always has something positive to say to and about others. He is inquisitive and curious about his world and seems to be a "people magnet." Others seem to be naturally drawn to him and he is never at a loss for being with friends.

After describing a person without emotion, Dreikurs (1967b) commented:

We can see now why we need emotions. They provide the fuel, the steam, so to speak, for our actions, the driving force without which we would be impotent. They come into play whenever we decide to do something forcefully. They make it possible for us to carry out our decisions. They permit us to take a stand, to develop definite attitudes, to form convictions. They are the only basis for strong personal relationships to others, for developing interests and for building alliances of interests with others. They make us

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appreciate and devaluate, accept and reject. They make it possible for us to enjoy and

dislike. In short, they make us human beings instead of machines (p. 207-208).

Depending on the life style goal and the immediate goals of the individual, the person chooses

the type of emotion that will serve his/her purpose(s). No matter how it appears, emotions are

not something that control the individual; rather, the individual learns to use emotions to pursue

goals. As a way of preserving one's self-esteem, it sometimes feels as if the emotion dominates

the person; however, with closer analysis, one finds the reverse to be true.

Applications

Overview -- Phases of the counseling/therapy process

Adler identified three phases of the counseling/therapy process: *understanding* the client,

explaining the client's behavior to the him/her in a way that makes sense, and *strengthening*

social interest, the "working through" part of therapy (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956). Dreikurs

(1956) expanded the three phases to four with the addition of building *relationships* as an initial

step. This was consistent with the research on counseling and psychotherapy that was current in

his time. It might be interesting to note here that Adler never discussed the "relationship"

element of the counseling/therapy process other than to say it was similar to talking with a good

friend! Dreikurs referred to the four phases as building a *relationship* of mutual trust and

respect, psychological *investigation* to understand the client's life style and the present area of

operation, *interpretation* to help the client learn about his or her unique motivations, intentions

and goals, which are often unconscious or unaware, and *reorientation* or re-education, which has

encouragement as a central ingredient. Dreikurs emphasized that these phases often overlap.

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Mozdzierz, Lisiecki, Bitter, & Williams (1986) expanded on the roles and functions of an Adlerian counselor or therapist and emphasize that these are not stages or phases of counseling and therapy in any chronological sense of the term; rather, they are processes or elements that the counselor or therapist needs to attend to with different degrees of emphasis at different times. Rapport is usually one of the first processes or elements requiring attention by the counselor/therapist, but understanding the client is also an important step in the initial part of treatment and may actually enhance the rapport-building by helping clients feel that someone actually understands them. A more important emphasis for the Adlerian counselor or psychotherapist is that the patterns of living that the client has adopted be disclosed to the client in a way that makes sense. At various times during therapy (e.g., after a particularly discouraging week or difficult confrontation), the role of rapport building may again be emphasized while the other three processes take a temporary back seat. Similarly, at some point it may be useful to explore additional early recollections or solicit other information typically thought of as part of understanding the client or patient in an effort to help the client learn about him or herself.

Goals of Counseling and Psychotherapy

Dreikurs (1967c) distinguished counseling and psychotherapy from each other based on the idea that each of these has different objectives. Counseling was described as focusing on an acute situation aimed at the solution of immediate problems. It was viewed as a process of learning to adapt to the challenges presented by the tasks of life. The goal was not to change the lifestyle as much as to help the client understand how his/her life style may interfere with completing the tasks of life. Therapy, on the other hand, had a goal of changing the life style and

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was designed to affect the whole personality and lead to the re-organization of the client's life. Both counseling and psychotherapy, however, are accomplished in light of the over-arching goal of enhancing the client's social interest.

Contemporary Adlerians tend to see counseling and psychotherapy as more similar, as do clinicians and counselors in general. The goal of counseling and psychotherapy for Adlerians is to assist clients to understand their unique life styles and help them learn to think about self, others and the world, and to act in such a way as to meet the tasks of life with courage and social interest. While Adlerian counseling and therapy may vary from short-term to rather long-term, it is generally considered to be one of the forms of brief therapy primarily because of it's emphasis on interpretation, confrontation, and working with the client to understand and explain the client to himself or herself. The re-orientation phase of psychotherapy emphasizes the development of social interest and involves a great deal of encouragement with a variety of strategically planned learning experiences over an extended period of time, particularly for those clients who have severe deficits (Stein & Edwards, 1998).

The Process of Change

Change seems to occur in Adlerian psychotherapy and counseling because of a variety of mechanisms. Dreikurs (1956) posited that insight was an important part of change, although it was not the only therapeutic agent. He believed that change occurred as the patient began to recognize his or her goals and intentions. He spoke of a process Adler called "spitting in the patient's soup" as a way of helping the client become aware of his or her motivation. Once the patient becomes aware of his or her motivation for the behavior, the behavior becomes less desirable. Just like soup that has been spat in, one can continue to eat it but it may not be as

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appetizing. Dreikurs believed that it was not only making the person aware of goals and motivation that helped a person to change but of making the person aware of his or her own power, of the ability to make decisions, of freedom to choose directions. Encouragement is an essential element in therapy. Encouragement begins in therapy with the relationship based on mutual respect and trust. It is the process of restoring the patient's faith in self and the realization of strength and ability as well as dignity and worth. According to Dreikurs, "Without encouragement neither insight nor change is possible" (Dreikurs, 1956, p. 118).

Shulman (1973) has written about the process of confrontation in therapy and credits it as an important ingredient in change and success of Adlerian therapy. He sees confrontation as a way of provoking therapeutic movement. Since a major goal of Adlerian psychotherapy is to recognize and change mistaken goals and beliefs and their associated moods and actions, confrontation is frequently used as a way of holding the mistaken goals and beliefs up in front of the client, as with a mirror. Confrontation presents an opportunity to the client to make an immediate change in beliefs, behaviors, or mood. Since confrontation is an active method, the counselor/therapist has to make the client aware of his/her private logic and goals, the ownership of these, and the ability to change them.

Adler's emphasis on understanding the interpersonal nature of behavior and the facilitating of change processes rather than on analyzing intrapsychic processes contributed to the eventual split between him and Freud. The focus became one of empowering discouraged individuals to resolve problems by recognizing their strengths and assets rather than focusing on their weaknesses. For Dreikurs, all psychotherapy involved the correction of faulty social values and attitudes. He saw psychotherapy as a way of teaching cooperation.

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We find four attitudes essential for cooperation, with their counterparts disrupting it. These are: 1) social interest – hostility; 2) confidence in others – distrust and suspicion; 3) self-confidence – inferiority; 4) courage – fear. Social interest is an expression of a sense of belonging; lack of social interest limits or impedes cooperation and makes an opponent appear as an enemy. Fear seems to be the chief obstacle to adequate social functioning in a democratic atmosphere; it can be regarded as the sin of free man (Dreikurs, 1967a, p. 152).

Intervention Strategies

Life Style Analysis

Life Style Analysis is the process of learning to understand the goals and motivation of the client. This is a mutual process in which both the client and therapist learn more about the beliefs and patterns of behavior that the client has developed in a creative attempt to address life's challenges. The life style is a cognitive blueprint one has developed that includes ideas about self, others, and the world. It also includes ethical convictions (e.g., what I should be, what life should be, etc.) and a unifying fiction or goal toward which all movement is directed. The life style is an ongoing process. It is similar to "personality" but slightly different in that it includes one's patterns of behaviors as well as one's beliefs and perceptual schema. One's lifestyle not only affects what one does but how one sees the world, other people and the self. If a person has a life style that includes the belief that other people are hostile, that person will find validation on a daily basis of other people's hostility through the apperception of reality.

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Apperception is the process of experiencing or perceiving things mediated by attribution of meaning and significance to those experiences or perceptions.

There are many methods of doing life style analysis ranging from a more formal or structured approach to the less formal and structured. Shulman and Mosak (1988) have developed a standardized way of collecting life style data and suggest ways of interpreting that data. Powers and Griffith (1987) have another standardized method of data collection and emphasize slightly different aspects in interpreting the data. Other Adlerians see life style analysis unfolding as therapy or counseling continues and do not gather the data in quite so systematic manner as do these authors.

In doing brief counseling and therapy, often only those data regarding relevant lifestyle elements are obtained. Walton (1996c) suggests five questions for brief life style analysis:

1. Complete the following statement: "I was the kid who always . . ."

2. "Which sibling did you think was most different from you when you were a child? How?" (If client is an only child, ask, "How were you different from the other kids?"

3. "When you were a child, what did you think was most positive about your mother? Father? Was there anything you rejected about Mom and Dad?"

4. Unforgettable or most memorable observations: "When you were growing up, can you recall any conclusions you made about life such as – *when I get to be an adult, I certainly will always . . .* , or *I will never let this happen in my family (or in my life)?"*

5. Finally, obtain two early memories (recollections): "What was the earliest specific incident you can recall?" (Record these in the present tense in the precise words of the client.) "What moment was most vivid? What feeling is connected with the incident?"

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Other than in brief counseling/therapy, data for lifestyle analysis usually involves the collection of information in some or all of the following areas:

Family constellation. The family constellation includes the ordinal and psychological position in the family of reference along with an understanding of the relationships between the siblings, the parents, and the parents and children as the client perceives them. These evaluations on the part of the client form a part of the basic convictions upon which his/her anticipation of life, self, and others are based.

Family atmosphere. The family atmosphere is set by the relationship between the parents. The client's evaluation of this atmosphere as a child becomes important to the decisions he/she makes about how life and relationships should be and is retained and used in later life. To explore the general climate of the household, climate related terms may be used (i.e., "sunny," "partly cloudy," "tornadic," "icy"). The participation of each parent in the creation of the family atmosphere is a significant aspect of the child's "**gender guiding lines**."

Family values. Family values represent what both parents want for the children. These are the values that are shared by both the mother and father and, typically, are indicated by the ways in which all children in the family are alike. Each child in the family must take a position with respect to these values that operate as "family imperatives." Although most children are likely to support the family standard, it is not unusual for one child to ignore it, defy it, or take a contrary position. Exploration of family values can be accomplished by asking a child, "What is important to mother? To father?" With an adult, one might say, "Growing up as a child, what was important to mother? To father?"   Asking for mottoes is another means of ascertaining

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family values: "If mother had a motto, something she might put on a plaque or a poster, what would it be? If your father had a motto, what would it be?"

Gender guiding lines. The values not shared by the parents but held by only one take on a different significance. The child experiences these as elements of the gender guiding lines – what it means to be a "real" man or a "real" woman. These unshared values form the rules and patterns for a person's expectations regarding gender and are often perceived by the person as if it is destiny.

Family role played by each child. Reed (1995), when discussing family roles assumed by children of alcoholics, identifies the following four roles: the Hero, the Scapegoat, the Lost Child, and the Mascot. Milliren (1995) discusses the need for educators (and counselors/therapists) to "recognize the almost driven nature of the 'hero,' to understand the purposes of the behaviors of the 'scapegoat,' to have insight into the aloneness of the 'lost child,' and to know the need for affiliation on the part of the 'mascot.' (p. xvii)" Other role descriptors have also been provided (Typpo & Hastings, 1984): the Responsible One, the Caretaker, the Family Pet, the Forgotten Child, the Problem Child, the Acting-Out Child, and the Adjuster. All of these are lifestyle patterns adopted by children to cope with the family situation. These roles become so ingrained that they continue on through life even after the need for the coping style is no longer required.

Early developmental experiences. It is sometimes useful to explore the nature of early development experiences, i.e., early experiences with peers, adults, school, and sex, in order to obtain an additional dimension of the conclusions the client drew about how life should be. Sometimes these will take the form of early recollections.

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After these data are collected, a report is usually prepared. The discussion and

modification of the report becomes a collaborative activity between the counselor/therapist and

the client. This process takes the form of a dialogue that allows the counselor/therapist and

client to begin to examine the beliefs he/she holds about life and living. The purpose for life

style assessment is to help clients understand who they are, how they became who they are, and

to bring their unconscious goals into a level of greater awareness. It is important to note here

that Adlerians use the term "unconscious" only as an adjective. There is no such thing for them

as "the unconscious," and it may be more accurate to use the concept "out of awareness" when

describing unconscious processes. Since the lifestyle is the set of rules that the individual lives

by, it is important for him/her to come to understand his/her movement through life. Once these

rules are clarified, the person is in a better position to change disliked or unproductive elements.

Encouragement

Encouragement is the key in promoting and activating social interest and psychological

"muscle" or hardiness. Social interest and psychological hardiness are required to take life in

stride without becoming discouraged and to create meaning and purpose in life (Evans, 1997).

Encouragement is a fundamental Adlerian concept for helping parents (Meredith & Evans, 1990)

and teachers (Evans, 1995, 1996) improve relationships with children and create an atmosphere

of cooperation and democracy in the family and school. Encouragement is probably the

universal therapeutic intervention for Adlerian counselors and therapists. Encouragement is not

a technique; rather, it is a fundamental attitude or "spirit."

Although the concept of **e**ncouragement is simple to understand, it is difficult to define.

Simply stated, encouragement is the process of giving courage to another. Encouragement is not

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a special language used to gain compliance or cooperation. Rather, it is a fundamental attitude

regarding human nature. Encouragement is a spirit, conveyed through interactions with others.

Human beings are worthwhile merely because they exist. It is their birthright to belong.

Belonging is not something you have to achieve through your accomplishments. Thus,

encouragement is Mr. Rogers telling our children, "I like you just the way you are," not "I like

you when you do it well enough, fast enough, and get it all correct." The most fundamental

encouragement an adult can give a child is the sense that they have significance, even when

things go poorly. The most fundamental encouragement a spouse can convey to his/her partner

is that the partner counts by the mere fact of his/her existence. Communicating this spirit will

develop an individual's capacity to withstand adversity and the willingness to function when

things go poorly. Involving oneself in living life, especially in times of adversity, is an act of

courage.

Courage is the willingness to move forward, one step at a time, in the face of adversity

and in spite of how you feel. It is produced through encouragement and comes from a feeling of

belonging and contribution. A major source of courage comes from acceptance and recognition

of competence rather than a focus on failure. To instill courage, the therapist or counselor must

stimulate a sense of belonging on the part of the client and impart an appreciation for the

ironclad logic of social living. Instilling courage involves recognizing the strengths and abilities

of the client, assisting the client in setting goals that are attainable in a reasonable amount of

time, and helping the client identify the steps and methods by which these goals may be attained.

Some clients need more help with the process of identifying steps and methods for goal

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attainment, while others may need more assistance with identifying the goals. Still others have been so discouraged that they feel like they don't belong to the human race.

Encouragement is the single most important quality in getting along with others. It is so important that the lack of it could be considered the basic factor in misbehavior, divorce, job loss, suicide, and other human problems. Encouragement is the key ingredient in all positive professional and personal relationships. The ability to function in today's world balances on one's ability to nurture and convey concern for others. Encouragement is desperately needed today since fear, power, and the threat of punishment are not effective in developing responsible, capable, and fully functioning individuals. Rudolf Dreikurs (Terner & Pew, 1978) said that human beings need encouragement like plants need water. Yet so few of us know how to encourage ourselves and others. The mark of an encouraging person is someone who infuses life into the world. Encouragers are so comfortable with human nature that they convey faith in a person just because he/she exists.

Fear, worrying, and obsession are all forms of negative thinking that create discouragement. Conjuring up fears taints our present opportunities. Fear puts a strangle hold on our ability to function. Some individuals worry so much that they develop a negative attitude and go around reacting, obsessing, and pointing out all the dangers of life in an attempt to control the world. None of this activity solves the problem but just makes people difficult to be around. After a while, others either avoid or minimize their contact with them. The discouragement that flows from their tongues poisons the well. They send admonitions of doom and gloom that extract the joy from life. Fear and excessive worry convey a vote of "no confidence." In this

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way we treat ourselves as inferior and reflect doubt in our ability to handle life.   Fear is diminished by developing a more adequate and trusting view of self.

Half the job of encouragement lies in avoiding being discouraging. All criticism and/or external control, like rewards and punishment, are viewed as discouraging. Criticism is the poison that sours a marriage and destroys adult-child relationships. According to Evans (1997), there are five general ways to discourage:

1) Setting high expectations or unrealistic standards;

2) Focusing on mistakes in a misguided attempt to motivate;

3) Making comparison among people;

4) Making pessimistic interpretations; and

5) Dominating by being overly responsible

No corrective effort of a person's behavior is possible without encouragement. The worse the behavior, the more encouragement is needed. Yet individuals who misbehave are most likely to receive the least amount of encouragement. Instead of building on a discouraged person's strengths, we tear him/her down; instead of recognizing the person's efforts and improvement, we point out his/her mistakes; instead of allowing the person to feel like he/she belongs and can become responsible through shared decision-making, we control and punish.

To become encouraging we need to get out of our feeling of the need for external control (Glasser, 1999) and stop being mistake centered. We need to first make the relationship a priority and develop a friendly and respectful atmosphere. Encouragement is often mistaken as praise, yet praise is external control. Praise focuses on outcomes, doing well, uses superlatives, and is conditional. Encouragement will focus on effort or improvement rather than results. It

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focuses on strengths and assets, rather than identifying weaknesses, limitations, deficits, or disorders. Encouragement can be given anytime, no matter how poorly things are going; praise, rewards, and punishment can only be given with good or bad results. Encouragement separates the deed from the doer. A particular behavior can be disturbing, but the individual is not labeled as being "bad." Encouragement will point out specific behaviors that contribute, improve, or display strength. Finally, encouragement is focused on intrinsic motivation so that encouraging someone is also a means for helping him/her develop self-control (Evans, 1999).

Every person with whom we come in contact feels better or worse by how we behave toward him or her. Our attitude toward others either brings out their very best or very worst. Encouragers contribute, cooperate, and help out in life. They have discovered that the meaning in life is to help, not burden. Inappropriate behavior is the result of discouragement and derives from feeling alienated, different, or as if one does not belong. "All symptoms of neuroses and psychoses are forms of expression of discouragement. Every improvement comes about solely from encouraging the sufferer. Every physician and every school of neurology is effective only to the extent that they succeed in giving encouragement. Occasionally, a layman can succeed in this also. It is practiced deliberately only by Individual Psychology" (Adler, 1926, p. ??).

Clients with Mental Disorders

At first, Adler attributed all psychopathological behavior to exaggerated feelings of inferiority. Later, both Adler and Dreikurs believed that mental disorders reflected a tremendous sense of inadequacy and an inability to develop a quality human relationship along with a lack of social interest. The greater the social interest, the greater the level of functioning. To feel equal and adequate to the task at hand results in one being able to participate in a constructive and

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useful manner. This willingness to cooperate is social interest. When it is lacking, one feels less than others and, instead of moving toward others as a member of the human community, one moves toward self-elevation. The movement away from others may be toward personal glory, which can be a useful compensation, or, if the inadequacy is too great, it will move toward the useless side of life. All mental disorders can be reduced to this analogy (Dreikurs, 1961).

Adlerians view behavior as occurring on a continuum rather than as a dichotomy; they do not believe it is "either/or" but rather "degree of" that differentiates one person from another. While some theories of counseling/psychotherapy propose a categorical difference between those that are "mentally ill" and those that are "normal," Adlerians believe that people act in ways that are consistent with their life style goals. Adlerians believe that the only reliable diagnosis of symptoms, particularly psychosomatic symptoms, is to ascertain their function or use. Dreikurs (Terner & Pew, 1978) suggests the use of "**the Question**, a quick technique for differentially diagnosing whether a symptom is psychogenic or organic" (p. 185). Since behavior is purposive, there is usually some payoff or outcome toward which the behavior is directed, even though the individual may be unaware of it. If the symptom has no function, or particular gain, the Adlerian counselor/therapist would then conclude that the problem had organic origins and would need to be treated by a physician (Dreikurs, 1956).

One of the most important things an Adlerian counselor can do is to continually ask, "What's the use for this behavior?" Richard, a therapist in private practice, had asked to consult about a case he was working with since he couldn't understand what was going on for one of his clients. Martha, a fourth grader, had been referred for having difficulty at home and at school. As Richard discussed the case, he related two incidents that occurred while he was interviewing

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this little girl. First, Richard had asked about an incident involving Martha and her younger brother where Martha had refused to share her drawing materials. Immediately, when asked to explain, Martha began to cry and Richard said that he thought she was being remorseful and that she must have felt really bad about not sharing with her brother. A while later in the interview, when Richard was discussing what she might do differently in these situations with her brother, Martha began to cry again. He asked why she was crying and Martha said she felt like she was such a bad person for not sharing with her brother.

What Richard forgot to do was ask, "What's the use?" He failed to look for the purpose of the behavior and, as a result, was lead to believe that this was a "sweet little girl" who felt extremely sorry for the fact that she had not shared her things. However, after initiating a discussion of what the possible purpose might be, Richard happened to mention that Martha's mother was extremely demanding in her expectations of Martha's behavior. "After all, Martha is the oldest and needs to set the example!" With this background information, it was suddenly clear as to the purpose of Martha's crying. Martha was acting as if she believed that crying would allow her to avoid being punished for misbehaving. Richard mentioned that when Martha cried, he dropped the subject and went on to talk with her about other things. Richard further shared that the mother had told him that her response, whenever Martha would burst into tears, was to just tell her to not do it again. The mother was afraid of Martha's extreme sensitivity about everything and did not want to do anything to upset her further. Rather than being extra sensitive, however, Martha was using her sensitivity as "water power" to manipulate the situation.

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Shulman (1962) talks of persons with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder as sharing three characteristics: 1) extremely low self-esteem; 2) extremely high-flown goals in life, and 3) drastic measures for narrowing the gap between the self-image and the self-ideal (p.151). There are, of course, some genetic or organic factors that are often involved in what is commonly called major mental illness (e.g., schizophrenia, bipolar disorders, major depression). However, these are viewed as dispositions or propensities that increase the potential for developing these types of behavior patterns rather than determining factors. The environment and learning history need to be taken into consideration. Persons with schizophrenia are not all alike. Neither are all persons with bipolar disorder alike. Some lead lives that are more productive than others, while some have totally given up and feel isolated, totally different from other human beings. Again, the purpose of counseling and therapy, whether it is individual, group or milieu treatment, is to foster the sense of belonging, of competence, and of courage to participate in life.

For Adlerians, having a major mental illness such as schizophrenia or bipolar disorder is a part of life that must be dealt with through education, medication, socialization, and encouragement rather than stigmatization and isolation. Community support programs such as Fountain House in New York, Thresholds in Chicago, and other community based programs around the world exhibit a philosophy that is very similar to Adler's: "We are not alone." This was the emphasis of the first members at Fountain House who bonded together to assist each other in their re-entry into society after years of hospitalization and isolation from others. From this movement, it is clear that the principles of belonging, helping each other, useful contribution, and support are essential elements in the intervention process (Beard, Propst, & Malamud, 1982).

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A person with a major mental illness still has to decide what to do about the mental illness and about the tasks of life. Like a physical illness, mental illness of organic etiology may need medical intervention. If medication is necessary to allow one to function better, then its importance needs to be addressed as part of treatment. For many who have major mental illnesses, learning to recognize the onset of stress and alternatives to cope with stress are important aspects of treatment. For Adlerians, social treatment and involvement in community activities is frequently the focus of interventions. Group therapy and community drop-in centers, in which a sense of belonging, membership and useful contribution are encouraged, help the person with major mental illness to develop social interest and to learn to address the tasks of life in a constructive manner.

Evaluation

Overview

Of all of the personality and counseling theories, Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology is probably among the least well-known but has had the greatest influence on current approaches to counseling and psychotherapy (Corey, 1996). Willingham (1986), writing about the current status of Adlerian Psychology, indicates that Adler had an influence on various theories and methodologies in counseling, psychotherapy and education. He quotes Wilder (1959) as stating: "most observations and ideas of Alfred Adler have subtly and quietly permeated modern psychological thinking to such a degree that the proper question is not whether one is Adlerian but how much of an Adlerian one is (p. xv)" (Willingham, 1986, p. 165). "Modern applied psychology is increasingly congruent with Individual Psychology in that many applications in

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organizational psychology and counseling with families and school utilize concepts and methods

that strongly resemble Adlerian ideas and practices" (Ferguson, 2000a, p. 14).

In many respects, Adler developed a personality theory and approach to counseling and

psychotherapy that was far ahead of his time. Watts (2000) indicates "that many contemporary

approaches have 'discovered' many of Adler's fundamental conclusions, often without

recognition of his vision and influence" (p. 11). Watts also believes that, as much as Adlerian

counseling may be viewed as antiquated by students, educators and practitioners, it "solidly

resonates with postmodern approaches to counseling" (p. 16). In fact, "Adlerian theory

addressed social equality and emphasized the social embeddedness of human knowledge long

before multiculturalism became chic in the counseling profession" (p. 16).

Unfortunately, the simplicity of Adlerian psychology is often used as its major criticism,

of which Adler was apparently aware. The simplicity and common sense approach of Adlerian

theory is illustrated by a story told about Adler when he was scheduled for a series of lectures in

Aberdeen, Scotland:

> His host was psychology professor Rex Knight, who came to greet Adler at the Caledonia
>
> Hotel. After exchanging mutual greetings in the lobby, the two men sat down briefly to
>
> chat on a sofa. Suddenly, a handsome young man swaggered over. 'I hear that you two
>
> gentlemen are psychologists. I bet there's nothing that either of you can tell me about
>
> myself."
>
> Knight looked quizzically to Adler for an answer, who raised his eyes and gazed
>
> deliberately at the young man. 'Yes, I think there's something that I can tell you about
>
> yourself.' As the stranger smiled expectantly, Adler continued, 'You're very vain.'

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'Vain!' was the startled reply. 'Why should you think that I'm vain?'

'Isn't it vain,' Adler said simply, 'to come up to two unknown gentlemen sitting

on a sofa and ask them what they think of you?'

As the young man left baffled, Adler turned to Knight and commented, 'I've

always tried to make my psychology simple. I would perhaps say that all neurosis is

vanity, but that might be too simple to be understood.' (Hoffman, 1994, p. 322).

Simple solutions such as recommending that a teacher and parent encourage a student who is

doing poorly in school or removing the parent from sibling fights in order to reduce the conflict

are strategies that work. Results, many times, are what validate the theory for the practitioner

and the client.

Research

Adler developed his theory for the common man, offering common solutions for dealing

with the day-to-day problems of living. It was a therapeutic, educational, and rehabilitative

model that was a part of the pioneering work taking place in modern psychiatry. By the 1930's,

it was being applied to everyday real life problems in parenting, schools, marriage, and the

workplace. Empirical evidence for the theory came from case results rather than experimental

designs (Ferguson, 2001). In the 1950's and 60's most cited studies involving Adlerian

psychology were conducted by non-Adlerians (Mosak & Dreikurs, 1973). Until the last thirty

years or so, however, very little research emerged on the effectiveness of Adlerian psychology.

Watkins (1982) writes:

Admittedly, as theoretical and practical interests grow, so must the body of research

which supports and extends one's theoretical and practical understanding. The decade of

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the seventies saw more research studies being done to test the usefulness of Adlerian

constructs and concepts than had been done in many preceding years (p. 90).

Watkins (1983) reports that during the years from 1970 through 1981, there were 75

research studies in the Journal of Individual Psychology. Birth order "and its effects on

personality development and functioning" (p. 100) was the most researched area with 24 studies.

"Social interest is examined in 19 studies (25 percent), early recollections in 6 (8 percent), and

lifestyle in 4 (5 percent)" (p. 100). Watkins concludes his survey by indicating that "research on

Individual Psychology has flourished during the period examined (and, as a side note, has been

quite confirmatory)" (p. 103). He cautions, though, that the study of clinical populations is

extremely limited and "there is a definite need for further Adlerian-oriented research on

inpatients and outpatients alike" (p. 104).

In a follow-up study, Watkins (1992) examined the research activity with Adlerian theory

appearing in the Journal of Individual Psychology during the years 1982 to 1990. He notes that

103 studies appeared during this nine-year period. This was a marked increase over the previous

12 years that he had reported on earlier (Watkins, 1983). Although he did not attempt to

evaluate the quality of the studies reported, Watkins (1992) does conclude "that research into

Adler's theory is still on the increase (at least in IP) and suggest it is a vital theory that lends

itself to empirical inquiry" (p. 108). Since 1990, the reported research has continued to grow

with the Journal of Individual Psychology publishing additional studies on marriage, children,

substance abuse, classroom management, behavioral problems in children and youth, and

offenders. A number of other professional journals have included research articles on Adlerian

theory as well.

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A number of university faculty (i.e., Dr. John Dagley – University of Georgia, Dr. Roy Kern – Georgia State University, Dr. Eva Dreikurs Ferguson – Southern Illinois University, Edwardsville) have guided their doctoral students toward researching and refining Adlerian concepts. A leading figure in the development and validation of Adlerian research on lifestyle is Dr. Roy Kern has set out to validate Adler's psychology and develop a number of instruments based on Adlerian principles. For the past 25 years, Dr. Kern has been developing objective instruments for the assessment of lifestyle that are designed to be used in clinical and educational consultation as well as research. This has lead to the publication of 50 or more research articles and over 40 dissertations. As a result, Dr. Kern has provided a means to validate many of the Adlerian constructs. Some of the instruments now available include: the Lifestyle Questionnaire Inventory, the Kern Lifestyle Scale, Lifestyle Personality Inventory, Basic Adlerian Scales for Interpersonal Success -Adult Form (BASIS-A) (Kern, Snow, & Ritter, 2002).

Perhaps one of the best ways to validate Adlerian theory has been the results experienced by clients and practitioners and how the theory and writings have become international and cross-cultural. Dreikurs started the International Committee for Adlerian Summer Schools and Institutes (ICASSI) in 1962 with the first school being held in Denmark. ICASSI has developed into a rich international social experience wherein long-term relationships have emerged between people from many nations. ICASSI is held in a different country each year and has at least 24 different nationalities represented at each summer institute.

Limitations

One of the issues regarding Adlerian theory and practice is the lack of research demonstrating its specific effectiveness in counseling and therapy. Although this could be

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addressed as a major limitation, the problem does not just plague Adlerians but all approaches to counseling and therapy. An early problem with experimental research was that the European Adlerians were, at times, unduly suspicious of research based upon statistical methods. To further complicate matters, the idiographic (case method) approach upon which Adlerians relied did not lend itself to conventional research methodology. Statistical methods tend to be more appropriate for group research and were not considered particularly applicable. Adlerian psychology also rejects the notion of causality and focuses on intent and the social field in which behavior takes place. These are hard concepts to measure with statistics.

Much of the research derived from many studies was not designed to examine Adlerian counseling or psychotherapy, but are clearly applicable to it. Eva Dreikurs Ferguson's book, Motivation: A Biosocial and Cognitive Integration of Motivation and Emotion, does a thorough job of examining significant research and how it applies to Adlerian theory.

The book integrates Adlerian principles and methods with contemporary scientific psychology, especially in the areas of motivation and emotion. The book presents a vast amount of studies in scientific psychology that support Adlerian theory. The book provides evidence, in support of Adlerian psychology, that scientific psychology increasingly shows the validity of Adlerian concepts, of holism, psychic/mental determinants influencing neurochemical and physiological processes, and the impact of social processes on psychological well-being. The book integrates Adlerian ideas in line with research in modern scientific psychology (E. D. Ferguson, personal communication, November 28, 2001).

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Adler and Dreikurs both have been criticized personally as well as for their theoretical formulations. Both individuals were extremely forceful personalities whose "conceptualizations and insights were rich in insights. These insights contrasted with ideas then currently espoused, and rejection of these ideas often became confounded with rejection of the person as well as his ideas" (Ferguson, 2001, p. 325). Part of this criticism came from the sphere of the depth psychologists who argued that the methods of Adler and Dreikurs were too superficial; the other part came from the cognitive behavioral theorists who viewed them "as too dynamic, too concerned with inner motivation" (Ferguson, 2001, p. 325). So, on the one hand, to some, Adlerian theory appears to lack the depth that the more analytic approaches offer and, on the other hand, Adlerian theory is not as scientific as the more behavioral approaches might prefer. "The cognitive-social personality theory and methods of Adler and Dreikurs are very different from behavioristic approaches and, by criteria of broad and long-term health-providing effects, the theory and methods are indeed deep" (Ferguson, 2001, p. 337).

Another possible limitation in the application of Adlerian theory is the emphasis on social connectedness and individual responsibility. Mentally healthy or fully-functioning individuals possess high levels of cooperation and contribution and are perceived as being in charge of the decisions they make about life. There is no room for blaming others or society for one's situation in life. However, these beliefs run contrary to the general cultural thinking regarding human behavior and human relationships.

Thus, Individual Psychologists find themselves becoming agents of change for the community and the culture. As community values change, Adlerian methods become

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easy to apply. Until such changes in community beliefs occur, however, *Adlerian*

methods and Individual Psychology will be ahead of their time (Ferguson, 2000a, p. 19).

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SUMMARY CHART – ADLERIAN THEORY

HUMAN NATURE:

Adlerian Psychology is interested in understanding the lifestyle or the law of psychological movement of the individual. Early experiences and one's birth order and family constellation play major roles in the development of the lifestyle or personality, although these factors are solely formative and not deterministic. As the individual pursues the need to belong and find a place of significance, he/she draws conclusions about the world and his/her personal worth. These conclusions combine to form a system of beliefs that guides all of the person's future interactions.

_____

MAJOR CONSTRUCTS:

The most fundamental principles of Adlerian Psychology include:

(1) Purposiveness – All behavior is goal-directed or purposive. Although not always aware of the purpose, each individual moves through the world in such a way as to make things happen or achieve a desired outcome. The person is not pushed by causes, but rather is pulled by his/her goals and dynamic striving.

(2) Social Interest – People are social beings who want to belong; they want to be able to find a place in the group. Since participation in a group requires a high level of cooperation and contribution, the development of social interest or Gemeinschaftsgefühl is a necessity for success in life. All of life's problems are basically problems of interactions with others and require a high level of social interest for their resolution.

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(3) Holism – The person is seen as a dynamic, unified organism moving through life in definite patterns toward a goal. The person cannot be understood in part but must be viewed in totality. In combination, these principles describe the person as moving in unity toward self-chosen goals that reflect a human value for belonging and social contribution.

GOALS:

There are three general types of problems that arise – work, friendship, and family. The primary goal of counseling is to assist the client in the development of social interest, for this is required for the effective resolution of life's problems.

CHANGE PROCESS:

The lifestyle of the individual serves as a road map that governs one's journey through life. If the person holds a number of mistaken beliefs about self, others and the world, then the process of change involves helping the individual to reassess and reorient his/her belief system. The counseling/therapy process emphasizes four elements: (1) relationship and rapport building; (2) information gathering; (3) interpretation and goal setting; and (4) re-education/re-orientation. The counselor/therapist works in an atmosphere of encouragement wherein the client is empowered to utilize his/her strengths to make new decisions about how to achieve significance.

INTERVENTIONS:

The primary interventions in Adlerian counseling and therapy include lifestyle analysis and encouragement. Lifestyle analysis is the process of discovering the goals and motivation of the

client. Since the lifestyle contains the person's beliefs and perceptual schema about self, others and the world, the aim of lifestyle analysis is to help the client identify those elements that are working well and those that are not. Encouragement is viewed as the universal therapeutic intervention designed to assist the client in developing the courage to face life's problems. Adlerians may use a variety of additional techniques and methods as long as they are philosophically consistent with the basic theoretical premises of the approach.

LIMITATIONS:

Many of the beliefs in Adlerian theory tend to run counter to the prevailing general thinking in the culture regarding human behavior and relationships. Adlerian theory is neither analytic/dynamic nor behavioral/scientific. It is a cognitive, goal-oriented, social psychology; it is a simplistic and common sense approach. Nonetheless, the growing body of research seems to indicate that Adlerian theoretical concepts are consistent with contemporary scientific psychology. Studies of outcome effectiveness with this approach will help to expand the acceptance of Adler's and Dreikurs' ideas. Adlerian theory continues to be ahead of its time.

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The Case of Jonathan -- An Adlerian Approach

General Considerations

There are probably as many different styles of Adlerian counseling/therapy as there are individual Adlerians. However, certain principles will always be in evidence. As mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, three basic principles are critical to understanding and implementing Adlerian theory: purposiveness, social interest, and holism. These principles will be explored within four elements of the counseling/therapy process: relationship and rapport building, information gathering, interpretation and goal setting, and re-education/re-orientation.

Relationship and Rapport Building

It is essential that the counselor/therapist develop rapport with Jonathon and takes the time, both initially and throughout counseling/therapy, to understand the world from Jonathon's perspective. All of the basic attending and listening skills are important to this element of the counseling/therapy process. By using the skills of reflection, empathic listening, clarification, and questioning, the counselor/therapist builds rapport which is the foundation for a successful therapeutic relationship. The counselor/therapist listens not only to what the client is saying but also to how it is presented, looking for patterns. Instead of getting caught up in the specific content, the counselor/therapist works to see how one piece of information can fit into the totality of the client's view of life and living. As the session progresses, the use of all of these skills opens the door to understanding the logic and limits with which the client operates.

In addition, the counselor/therapist listens for the **gold mines** in the client's story and must be mindful of the **recognition reflex** when interacting with the client.   The gold mines are those elements that the client mentions that are clues to major areas for exploration. For

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example, Jonathon mentions that he was raised to be proud of his Native American heritage but never clarifies whether or not he is proud of it. Since he later explains that he is not wanted in the 'White Man's' world, one might suspect that he actually rejects his background and upbringing. This is a gold mine that should be explored since some nuggets of truth about Jonathon's view of the world might be uncovered.

The recognition reflex is one of Dreikurs' major contributions to Adlerian counseling/therapy and describes the person's spontaneous reaction to information that is discovered about one's self (Terner & Pew, 1978). This reaction carries with it a physical response of a smile, a nod, or other behavioral acknowledgement when the client realizes that the information just received is accurate. It is an internal "Me" or "Not Me" feeling, as if looking in a mirror, that responds to feedback a person receives from the external world. As the counselor/therapist explores Jonathon's story, he/she may resort to the use of the stochastic method of guessing, i.e., a form of educated guessing or jumping to conclusions. This allows the counselor/therapist to see what happens when the client tries on the information provided. Often the person will say "No," but the analog or external behavior will say "Yes." Even if the guess is wrong, the feedback gained from the client will serve to help clarify what is really going on for him/her. It is not possible to tell from the case material if any feedback was given to Jonathon in this first interview. However, in order to gain an accurate picture of Jonathon's functioning, some stochastic guessing and interpretive feedback will have to be provided during the counseling/therapy session.

Maybe the most important point in this discussion of the relationship is that each session should be viewed as a process of shared exploration. Care should be taken in interpreting the

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information received, and when feedback is provided, the skills of reflection and clarification become extremely useful. Feedback should always be tentative, i.e., "Is it possible that . . . ?" or "Could it be . . . ?" rather than dogmatic. This allows the client to work with the information in his/her own way. It was suggested to a mother that was attending parent counseling sessions that it might be possible that her problems with her children were the result of her wanting to be a good mother. She became quite indignant and, with tears in her eyes, informed the counselor that that was ridiculous. "I just don't want to be a bad one!" she said. Often, what seems to be a logical explanation for the purposes of behavior is not at all workable in terms of the client's private logic or view of the world.

Information Gathering

Although it is essential that the counselor/therapist build rapport and create a therapeutic relationship through the use of listening and reflecting skills, during the information gathering phase it is important to ask questions/statements of the client that generate meaningful responses. Effective questions help to define the goals of counseling and are necessary for obtaining the information needed to facilitate the change desired on the part of the client. Most Adlerian counselors/therapists are quite active in directing the counseling/therapy process; however, the content of therapy or the client's story is left to the client. The counselor/therapist should not be afraid of interrupting the client although this should be accomplished in a respectful and empathic manner. It is the counselor/therapist's role to facilitate the process by keeping the session focused.

During this phase, the counselor/therapist would be seeking to gain a picture of Jonathon's worldview. The counselor/therapist will direct the process of discovering how

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Jonathon sees himself, how he believes others should treat him, and how he views his place in the world. The nature of the questions/statements asked would be open-ended in an effort to seek expanded information rather than being closed-ended leading to only a "yes" or a "no." A good place to begin would be by exploring his family constellation and birth order. A sample question/statement on the part of the counselor/therapist might be: "Tell me about your childhood. What was it like growing up in your family? Did you have brothers and sisters and what was your relationship to each of them?"

Jonathon is the youngest of six children, and it would be useful to know how he dealt with being youngest. This could be found out easily enough by exploring in more detail the family of origin in regard to relationships among the siblings, the family atmosphere, and his early recollections. Since his self-statement regarding his referral problem had to do with getting along with others, it may be that he was a youngest child who developed a sense of entitlement. He may have developed a life position where he expects others to do for him and treat him in special ways. As a result, he may have developed a very discouraged life style and ended up feeling that he was not as competent as others, that he could only do things if others were very supportive. Although complete information is not available, this conclusion is quite consistent with other elements of the story Jonathon presents.

The dream represents a similar situation. He is on a bus, being carried along by someone else. A passive approach to life is involved. Everyone on the bus (everyone in the world, in his way of thinking, perhaps) is heading for a place of promise: New York, California. He is going to Albuquerque. In thinking of his dream within the cultural context of a Native American, the driver is the image of the trickster, a part of life that is represented frequently by the coyote or,

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among some peoples, as the raven. This bus driver has led Jonathon on a journey seeking big adventure and pay off. But, as is always true of life, there is no payoff when one lets someone else drive the bus. All that is left is irritation and disappointment when the vehicle of life doesn't take the individual where he/she wants to go. His response is the typical spoiled child's response: using force to keep her from laughing at him. Notice he doesn't seem to be concerned any longer about where his journey is taking him, only that someone is laughing at him. The trickster, by leading him on with promises of the big city, has left him alone, lonely and now unable to sleep. The trickster tries to teach a lesson. What might the lesson be?

The case does not provide any data regarding Jonathon's early recollections (ERs), and this would be one aspect that the Adlerian counselor/therapist would want to pursue. A recollection is a specific memory ("I remember one night when . . .") as opposed to a report, which is a general memory ("Every night my mother would . . ."). The counselor/therapist might want to ask Jonathon to "Think back as far as you can and tell me the first thing you remember." The events of the recollections should be written down exactly as the client presents them. This will become extremely important during the interpretation phase of the session and will allow the counselor/therapist to be more accurate. It is important to follow up each recollection with a query about the affective component by asking the client how he/she felt about the experience at the time it was occurring.

One helpful method of obtaining significant information is to consider the memory as a newspaper story. Your job is then to compose the 'newspaper headline' to present the story in the paper. In other words, read the story, then summarize the key points in a sample newspaper bold-print heading (Eckstein, Baruth, and Mahrer, 1982 p. 30).

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The counselor/therapist should not be afraid to guess at the meaning of the recollections and be cognizant of the client's recognition reflex. Encourage the client to share as many early recollections as possible with two or three as a minimum and six to eight as a maximum.

The counselor/therapist is cautioned against getting caught up in **factophilia**. This term was coined by Dreikurs (Terner & Pew, 1978) and refers to the empty talk and endless fact-gathering that often occurs in counseling/therapy. For example, a person might ask someone what he/she had for dinner and, instead of just getting the simple answer, "Meatloaf," he/she provides a running account of the recipe and preparation activities. Too often, counselors/therapists get caught up in thinking that detail is important. As a rule, it only tends to keep the focus on superficial content rather than discovering the essence of the client's psychological movement. Again, it is important to realize that the responsibility for counseling/therapy rests with the counselor/therapist; the goal is to help the client learn why he/she functions in the manner he/she does.

By way of summary of the information gathered from Jonathon, it could be organized according to Adler's three life tasks: work, friendship, and love. In the area of work, Jonathon is discouraged. He believes his employers expect too much of him, and he has trouble relating to his coworkers. Even when he had found other employment, it didn't seem to work out for him. In terms of friendship, Jonathon discusses family and coworkers but never mentions friends. He says he feels lonely and drinks, and one would assume that he is doing the latter activity alone. Love seems to elude Jonathon. He doesn't seem to be able to develop an intimate relationship with his wife and turns to other women for comfort and solace. He misses his children but does not seem to do anything to move to where they live. In these three tasks of life, it would appear

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that Jonathon does not want to recognize his responsibility for being a major part in his own problems. As soon as he begins to understand the purposes for the behaviors behind his complaints, Jonathon may be freed to work toward improvement of his life situation.

Interpretation and Goal Setting

The notes indicate, "others seem to expect more than he can deliver," a sad commentary as far as his own feeling of self-efficacy is concerned. Jonathon feels inferior to others and also seems to perceive them as being excessively critical. He reports that his work is "never good enough" and others are "always on his back." His describes his boss as a "perfectionist." These are all symptoms of his discouragement. His marriages have gone the same way, and he has the same complaint. He reports that things went well "during the first few years of marriage," but he feels "that no matter what he tries to do to make the relationship work, it is never good enough." The question becomes, "good enough for whom?" More than likely the answer is for him. He struggles with his own uncertainty although it is clear that Jonathon votes with his feet. In his head, he seems to think that he is torn between staying in the relationship and leaving, but when the chips are down, Jonathon elects to leave.

Guilt seems to be one theme that runs through this man's journey. He seems to use guilt to make himself feel better. While it appears that outwardly he is suffering from guilt, in fact, his guilt does not lead to constructive action but only passive acceptance of his ruined life. He complains that he feels guilty for being an absentee father and yet has moved away. To feel guilty that one is not living close to one's children does not change the behavior. It does serve the purpose of making one feel better, however. He can say to himself, "At least I feel badly about not being with my children. Look how I suffer from my guilt." "Dreikurs pointed out that

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although guilt feelings purport to show a high moral sense, they are in fact a substitute for responsible actions. The good intentions are a smoke screen for avoiding what the person knows to be responsible behavior" (Ferguson, 1984, p. 26).

Guilt is a way of artificially making himself feel better. Jonathon is able to feel more noble than his actions would indicate that he might be. This represents a neurotic solution to the life task of intimacy or sex. Rather than actually remaining in a marriage that may be difficult and remaining close to his children, he moves away. By creating guilt in himself, Jonathon makes it seem like he is suffering because it is impossible to be with them. In reality, he left his wife and children and moved to a big city for the "needed professional or financial opportunities." One must ask the question, "Needed for what?" This may be just another way in which Jonathon flaunts or disregards the family and tribal value of being close knit as a family. If he wants to be a father to his children, he needs to be near them, not hundreds of miles away. He should be able to find similar jobs on the reservation. His parents' health is declining and requires more of his time and assistance. More than likely he feels put upon by these demands upon him. One guess would be the Jonathon feels resentful of all these demands, having been the youngest in the family with older siblings and parents who took care of all his needs. He feels entitled to a better life. He wants someone who will comfort him like the other women he runs to when the challenge of marriage becomes more than he feels capable of handling.

Resolving the guilt over his brother's death is an issue with which Jonathon needs to deal. Exploration of the event and the responses of those who were close to him may help clarify the meanings that he attributes to this life experience. Adler was fond of paraphrasing Epictetus by saying that what happens to us is not as important as the meaning we make of what happens to

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us. Exploring what did happen by remembering his thoughts and feelings about the event is an important way of approaching the issue of the sense he makes of this accident. An extremely important part of this is how he remembers his parents and siblings reacting to the   At the present time, it would appear that he has conveniently forgotten. How did those he loved and whose judgment he valued react? How did this change his opinion of himself, of others or life? Most importantly, how did this impact his sense of belonging? Twenty years after the fact, Jonathon still suffers over his brother's death. One must realize he has chosen to suffer and he has become extremely practiced at being a better mourner than anyone else in the family! Since it was an accident, Jonathon has to look at the purpose of continuing to feel guilty about his brother's death.

Jonathon's drinking is a problem for him, as is his seeking the comfort of other women. Attendance at Alcoholics Anonymous may be an important part of his treatment. Many tribal groups do not approve of the use of alcohol by their members. Again, this is an area that should be explored with Jonathon since it is possible that this is his way of rebelling against his heritage and displaying his lack of acceptance of the cultural and tribal values. In addition, Jonathon may be also passively rebelling against other important family values such as: (1) family relationships; (2) earning a living; (3) providing for one's family; and (4) getting an education. Instead of openly opposing these values, Jonathon has taken a stance of becoming a failure where he justifies his inability to meet these standards by blaming his indecision and incompetence, as well as other people. He was even late to his first counseling/therapy appointment because, as Jonathon stated, he "had difficulty finding the mental health agency."

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Jonathon is quite consistent in his approach to life and provides an excellent example of the concept of unity of the personality.

What the counselor/therapist wishes to identify at this point is the private logic of the client – the conclusions drawn about one's self, others and the world. These conclusions are considered to be the **basic mistakes** of the client since they are not aligned with what Adler called "the common sense of social living" (Manaster, G. J. & Corsini, R. J., 1982). Mosak (1979) has developed a system of categorization of the basic mistakes that can be used by the counselor/therapist to summarize Jonathon's current beliefs. A few of Jonathon's faulty beliefs are listed below:

(1) *Overgeneralizations (use of all, never, always).* "No matter what I do to make my marriage work, it's never good enough." "The people I work with are always on my back."

(2) *False or impossible goals of "security."* "I am not wanted in the 'White Man's' world." "I have no future of my own." "I am trapped in my situation." "Other women can solve all my problems."

(3) *Misperceptions of life and life's demands.* "People always expect more than I can deliver." "I don't know what I will do if things don't change."

(4) *Minimization or denial of one's worth.* "I have ruined the lives of three families plus my own life." "My work is never good enough."

(5) *Faulty values.* "People are prejudiced against Native Americans." "I am responsible for my brother's death." "Leaving is the answer to solving life's problems."

It is important for the counselor/therapist to establish mutually acceptable goals for counseling/therapy. "Therapeutic cooperation requires an alignment of goals. When the goals

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and interests of the patient and therapist clash, no satisfactory relationship can be established"

(Dreikurs, 1967, p. 65). A common mistake among many counselors/therapists is to not spend

enough time engaging in goal alignment. If counseling/therapy is to satisfactorily progress, both

parties have to be reading from the same sheet of music. The lack of goal alignment frequently

happens in agency and school settings where clients are referred or ordered to participate in

counseling/therapy. In these instances, a third party, i.e., a judge, teacher, parent, or other

agency, often dictates the goals of counseling/therapy. Feeling pressured to proceed and

succeed, the counselor/therapist attempts to impose the goals on the client. Nothing is more

prone to failure than when these circumstances exist.

When a client approaches counseling or therapy, there is an expectation that some sort of

change will occur. However, clients want to believe that the change will occur in others and that

this external change will make it easier for them to do what they have always done. They want

to lose the problem without changing the attitudes or beliefs upon which they operate.

Counselors/therapists, on the other hand, approach the process of counseling/therapy with the

expectation that the client will change. Without some level of agreement and cooperation in

terms of working toward mutually established goals, clients and counselors/therapists will be

working at odds with each other.

> Winning the patient's cooperation for the common task is a prerequisite for any therapy;
> maintaining it requires constant vigilance. What appears as 'resistance' constitutes a
> discrepancy between the goals of the therapist and those of the patient. In each case, the
> proper relationship has to be re-established, differences solved, and agreement reached
> (Dreikurs, 1967, p. 65).

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Evans (1997) suggests that counselors/therapists work with clients to determine a starting point by asking in which areas they would like to get better or improve. At a minimum, the counselor/therapist can ask about the life tasks and have the clients rate themselves on a scale of 1 to 10 as to how they feel a about how well these are being accomplished.

Work:	1 --- 2 ---3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7 --- 8 --- 9 --- 10
Love and Marriage:	1 --- 2 ---3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7 --- 8 --- 9 --- 10
Friendships (Male):	1 --- 2 ---3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7 --- 8 --- 9 --- 10
Friendships (Female):	1 --- 2 ---3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7 --- 8 --- 9 --- 10

Other areas appropriate for Jonathon might include:

Leisure:	1 --- 2 ---3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7 --- 8 --- 9 --- 10
Finances:	1 --- 2 ---3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7 --- 8 --- 9 --- 10
Parenting:	1 --- 2 ---3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7 --- 8 --- 9 --- 10
Getting Along With Self:	1 --- 2 ---3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7 --- 8 --- 9 --- 10
Finding a Meaning In Life:	1 --- 2 ---3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7 --- 8 --- 9 --- 10
Relationships (Spouse):	1 --- 2 ---3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7 --- 8 --- 9 --- 10
Relationships (Children):	1 --- 2 ---3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7 --- 8 --- 9 --- 10
Relationships (Boss):	1 --- 2 ---3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7 --- 8 --- 9 --- 10
Relationships (Coworkers):	1 --- 2 ---3 --- 4 --- 5 --- 6 --- 7 --- 8 --- 9 --- 10

When the ratings are complete, the counselor/therapist asks the client which of these areas were the most satisfying at the present time and which might he/she want to work to improve. Once the client selects an area for improvement, the development of a goal can proceed. For example, if the client selects an area that was rated as a 6, the counselor/therapist

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might ask what it would take to move that to a 7 or 8. In this process, it is useful to explore with the client what he/she has already done, what stops him/her from improving at the present time, and what personal resources he/she might have that will contribute to improving the situation. In Jonathon's situation, there are a lot of options for places to begin.

Re-Education and Re-Orientation

Therapy or counseling with Jonathon will involve encouragement and confrontation. The Adlerian counselor or therapist will actively attempt to hold up a mirror to Jonathon so that he can see himself, his behavior, and his strengths. Recognizing who he is and what decisions he actually has power over will be an important part of therapy. "Spitting in the soup" of his guilt and the other feelings that he uses to enable him to escape responsibility will allow him to rely on his own sense of strength and empower him to make different decisions. It should be pointed out to him that many of his current problems e.g., loneliness, being away from his children, and a collapsing marriage, are the result of his present attempts to solve his problems.

One's problems are often a result of the solutions attempted in the past that failed. Instead of looking for new solutions, the individual continues to behave in a way that adds to the problem rather than becoming the solution. Instead of doing what he has always done, Jonathon will be encouraged to try something new. Jonathon needs to be aware of the decisions he has made about life and the purposes of the choices he has pursued in his behavior. When he has come to an understanding of his current life plan, he can then be empowered to make different choices. Encouragement will be very important with Jonathon, as he seems to be convinced that he has no power. Holding up the mirror of his life will help him see that he has power but that it

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was misdirected. Mistakes can be corrected, new directions can be chosen, and his situation

becomes more hopeful.

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