

Adlerian Family Therapy



family

IDAHO
SOCIETY OF
ISIP
INDIVIDUAL
PSYCHOLOGY

**Series
Workshop
301**

TABLE OF CONTENTS
ADLERIAN FAMILY THERAPY HANDOUTS
Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D., LMFT

PAGE

- 1) Course Syllabus
- 2) Course Objectives
- 3) Recommended Books
- 4) IP
- 5) Adlerian Psychology Theory of Human Behavior (wagon wheel chart)
- 6) Adlerian Theory and Psychotherapy Process (landscape – multi charts)
- 7) An Adlerian Perspective on Human Behavior (4 pages)
- 11) Adlerian Family Therapy – Assessment & Treatment
- 12) Our Changing Society – The Equality Revolution (5 pages)
- 17) Parenting Styles
- 18) Parenting Styles – Dynamics Underlying
- 19) Baumrind’s Parenting Styles Research (4 pages)
- 23) Understanding Purpose: The Goals of Child/Teen Misbehavior
- 24) Goal Disclosure with Children and Adolescents (2 pages)
- 26) A Typical Day (2 pages)
- 28) The Dynamics of Power – Notes for Counselors (3 pages)
- 31) Can We Make Our Children Happy?
- 32) Adlerian Psychology – Psychological Birth Order Vantage (4 pages)
- 36) Flow Chart of Adlerian Family Therapy
- 37) Family Therapy – Together or Apart
- 38) The Approach to the Parent (Adler)
- 39) The Characteristic Elements of Child Guidance (Dreikurs)
- 40) Adlerian Parenting Concepts and Methods – A Brief Overview (3 pages)

- 43) The Mutual-Storytelling Technique (2 pages)
- 45) Lifestyle Notes
- 46) Lifestyle Development
- 47) Lifestyle Assessment – Two Points On A Line
- 48) Lifestyle Assessment with Parents (interview guide) (4 pages)
- 52) Lifestyle Assessment with Parents – Case Example (2 pages)
- 54) Quotes – Parenting and the Treatment of Families (4 pages)
- 58) Steve’s Resume

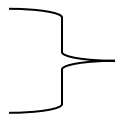
IDAHO SOCIETY OF INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY

CERTIFICATE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES IN ADLERIAN PSYCHOLOGY

COURSE SYLLABUS

ADLERIAN FAMILY THERAPY

- ◆ INTRODUCTIONS AND HOUSEKEEPING
- ◆ OVERVIEW OF THE CERTIFICATE PROGRAM AND THIS COURSE
- ◆ ADLERIAN PSYCHOLOGY RESOURCES (no handout: see ISIP & NASAP websites)
- ◆ THE MAJOR THEMES OF ADLERIAN PSYCHOLOGY
- ◆ ONE THEORY – TWO TECHNOLOGIES (The Power of Blending the Two)
- ◆ “ZOOM LENS” METAPHOR
- ◆ THE DEMOCRATIC (Equality) REVOLUTION
- ◆ PARENTING STYLES
- ◆ GOALS OF MISBEHAVIOR
- ◆ THE TYPICAL DAY ASSESSMENT
- ◆ PARENTING EDUCATION
- ◆ GOAL DISCLOSURE
- ◆ WORKING WITHIN THE MEDIUM OF THE CHILD
EXAMPLES: Child Drawings, Sandtray, Mutual Story-Telling
- ◆ AN ADLERIAN FAMILY THERAPY PROCESS
- ◆ *PSYCHOCLARITY*: Lifestyle Assessment with Parents and Teens



How they work together as a system

The logo is a horizontal rectangular box with rounded corners and a drop shadow. Inside the box, the text is centered. The top line is in a large, bold, black font. The bottom line is in a smaller, regular, black font.

IDAHO SOCIETY OF INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOLOGY

CERTIFICATE OF PROFESSIONAL STUDIES IN ADLERIAN PSYCHOLOGY

ADLERIAN FAMILY THERAPY

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Participants will be able to:

- 1) Apply Adlerian Psychology theoretical concepts and practice principles to the practice of family therapy.
- 2) Understand the impact of the “Equality Revolution” on contemporary family relationships.
- 3) Assess the parenting style / goals of misbehavior system and provide relevant and corrective education and intervention based on respectful leadership principles.
- 4) Incorporate Lifestyle Assessment into Family Therapy to increase a parents ability to access the principles of respectful leadership.
- 5) Learn creative Adlerian Psychology oriented applications with younger children.

RECOMMENDED BOOKS IN ADLERIAN PSYCHOLOGY

Steven A. Maybell (2018)

History / Theory / The Cast of Characters:

The Drive for Self – Alfred Adler and the Founding of Individual Psychology (Hoffman)

The Courage to be Imperfect – The Life and Work of Rudolf Dreikurs (Terner and Pew)

Theory:

What Life Could Mean to You (Alfred Adler)

(a classic, best representation of Adler's original writing, please consider the book's historical context)

The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler (Edited by Heinz and Rowena Ansbacher)

(the "purple book", comprehensive representative of Adler's writings and ideas, a great reference, well indexed)

Social Equality the Challenge of Today (Rudolf Dreikurs)

Adlerian Theory: An Introduction (Eva Dreikurs Ferguson)

The Lexicon of Adlerian Psychology (Jane Griffith and Robert L. Powers)

Counseling and Therapy:

Psychodynamics, Psychotherapy and Counseling: Collected Papers (Dreikurs)

Adlerian Counseling and Psychotherapy (Sweeney)

Counseling and Psychotherapy: An Integrated, Individual Psychology Approach

(Dinkmeyer and Sperry)

Understanding Lifestyle: The Psychoclarify Process (1987 1st edition) title changed to *The Key to Psychotherapy: Understanding the Self-Created Individual* (2012 revised edition) (Powers & Griffith)

Adlerian Family Counseling (Christensen et al)

Guiding the Family (Grunwald and McAbee)

Systems of Family Therapy: An Adlerian Integration (Sherman and Dinkmeyer)

Couples Therapy: An Adlerian Perspective (Oscar Christensen et al)

Partners in Play: An Adlerian Approach to Play Therapy (Terry Kottman)

Metaphor Therapy (Richard Royal Kopp)

Parent / Family / Classroom Education:

Children the Challenge (Dreikurs)

Raising Respectful Kids in a Rude World (McKay's, Maybell, and Eckstein)

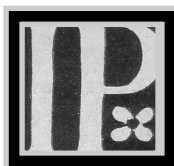
Calming the Family Storm (McKay and Maybell)

Systematic Training for Effective Parenting – S.T.E.P. (Dinkmeyer, McKay, and other authors)

[various titles for different age groups]

Positive Discipline (Jane Nelson et al) [multiple titles for parents of teens, pre-schoolers, etc]

Maintaining Sanity in the Classroom (Dreikurs, Grunwald, and Pepper)



Adlerian "Individual" Psychology is the psychological school dedicated to an understanding of persons and to the enhancement of the human experience. As formulated by Alfred Adler, MD., Rudolf Dreikurs, M.D., and many others involved in its development and practice, the theory is based on the recognition of:

- The unity of the individual in thought, emotion and action and in mind/body (holism).*
- Humankind as social in nature with behavior understood only in its context (social embeddedness/social systems/family systems).*
- The dynamic striving towards goals of security, belongingness, significance and success (teleology).*
- The realization of each person's self-created frame of reference and philosophy of life (phenomenology/lifestyle).*

Human dysfunction is understood as arising from "mistakes" made in the lifestyle leading to exaggerated feelings of inferiority compensated for through the creation of heightened goals of personal superiority. Social disharmony results from superiority-inferiority relationship dynamics which are in violation of social equality - Adler's ironclad principle of social living.

The model for mental health is the compensation for common feelings of incompleteness through an alignment with the human community whereby strength and purpose are realized through cooperation and contribution (community feeling/gemeinschaftsgefühl).

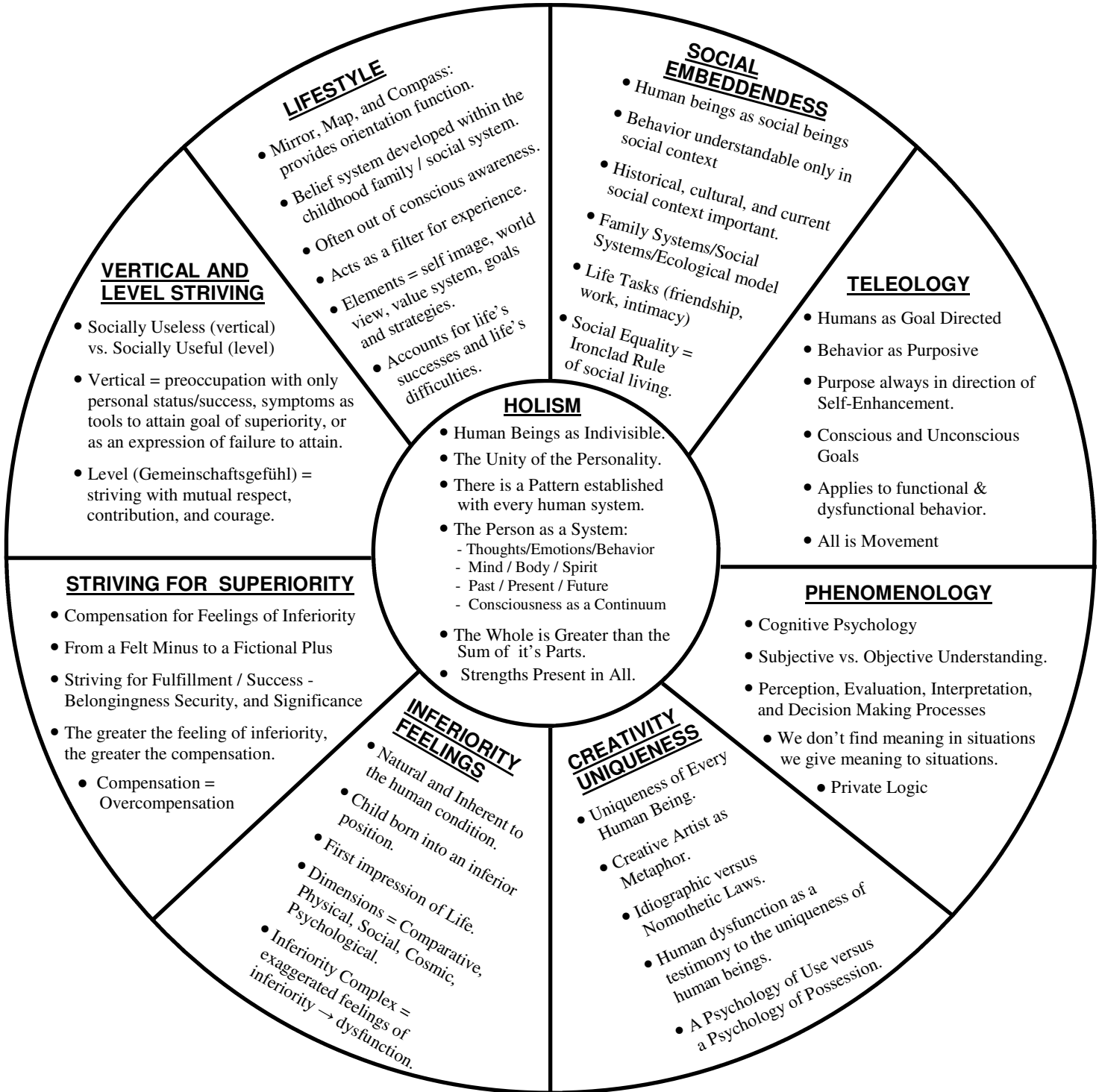
The theory in practice is based on a model incorporating empathy, collaboration, education, and encouragement. It leads the individual toward liberation through an understanding of her/his lifestyle and how it both facilitates and impedes effectiveness. It leads the couple, family and group toward relationships of social equality and mutual respect. It assists all of humankind toward the realization of each person's inherent value and place in the unending process of creating a more perfect world community.

◆ Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D. ◆

(© 1984)

Adlerian Psychology Theory Of Human Behavior

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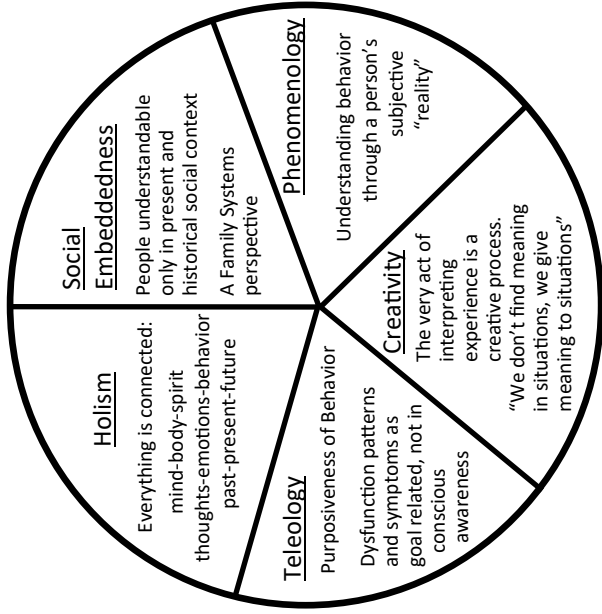


Theory in Brief: The Indivisible Person, Indivisible from the Social World,
Strives for Goals of Security, Belongingness, Significance, and Success, based on a Self-Created Philosophy of Life.

Adlerian Psychology is simultaneously a Holistic, Psychodynamic, Family Systems, Cognitive-Behavioral, Humanistic/Existential
and Strength-Based approach to therapeutic practice.

Adlerian Psychology has pioneering theoretical connections to such diverse models as Client-Centered, Humanistic-Existential,
Family Systems, the Ecological Model, Psychodynamic, Feminist Therapy, Narrative Therapy, Solution-Focused Therapy, Reality Therapy/Choice Theory,
Gestalt Therapy, Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, Reprocessing Therapies (EMDR & Lifespan Integration), and the Strengths Based/Empowerment Model.

The Primary Theoretical Constructs



[+]

Vertical Striving

Towards Subjectively Created Goals



Horizontal Striving

"Community Feeling"
"Social Interest"

"Gemeinschaftsgefühl"

Contribution vs. Status Seeking



Belongingness
Mutual Respect

Valuing Self and Self-Care

Sees Others as having Equal Value

Empathy and Understanding

Courage

Meeting the Needs of the Situation

INFERIORITY

Feeling

[-]

COMPENSATION

LIFESTYLE DEVELOPMENT

PSYCHOTHERAPY PROCESS

- The Therapeutic Alliance
- Assess Client Issues and Symptoms (Bio-Psycho-Social)
- Therapeutic Goals
- Lifestyle Assessment Process
 - Current Context/Life Tasks
 - Childhood Situation
 - Early Recollections
- Collaborative Interpretation Process → Insight
- Reorientation

THE LIFESTYLE ACTS AS THE MIRROR, MAP, AND COMPASS FOR THE INDIVIDUAL:

Becomes the subjective "Frame of Reference" for the developing child, teen, and Adult.

Operates mostly out of conscious awareness.

In combination with development, context, and bio-chemical processes, accounts for life's successes and life's difficulties.

INCORPORATED INTO THE CHILD'S DEVELOPING LIFESTYLE:

- Self-image
- World View
- Gender Guiding-Lines & Big Numbers
- Value System
- Goals of Belongingness, Security Significant & Success & their Strategies

CREATIVE POWER:

Perceived, Interpreted, Evaluated, - AND - Integrated By the Child

CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES:

- Family Atmosphere
- Family Values
- Cultural Influences
- Gender Models
- Parenting Styles
- Birth Order Vantage
- Early Memories

LIFESTYLE

- Self-Image
- World View
- Gender Guiding Lines
- Value System
- Lifestyle Goals
- Movement consistent with the "lifestyle".
- Influence All other inner and outer systems.

AN ADLERIAN PERSPECTIVE ON HUMAN BEHAVIOR, TREATMENT PRINCIPLES & METHODS

© 1989 by Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D., LMFT

THEORY OF HUMAN BEHAVIOR:

- ◆ The indivisible person.....(holism),
- ◆ indivisible from the social world.....(social embeddedness, social systems),
- ◆ strives toward self created goals of significance, security and success.....(teleology),
- ◆ based on a private philosophy of life.....(cognition, private logic, lifestyle).

The lifestyle is created on the basis of necessity - for the child must immediately begin the process of orienting to the social world, and does so by creating meanings of what life is like, what others are like, what facilitates and impedes success, and what the child him/herself is like and is capable of. Since the first conclusions are formulated in childhood, they become the foundation of the lifestyle. Since the vantage point of all early conclusions is from the small, weak, inexperienced child, there are always mistakes made in the meaning given to life and the self-image is always distorted to some extent by feelings of inferiority. The growing and developing child compensates for these feelings through the creation of compensatory goals for success, which like other conclusions are likely to be mistaken to some degree. The lifestyle, which is created at a pre-verbal level and never formulated into clear concepts, operates at an unconscious level. All future experiences are interpreted in accordance with the lifestyle and all future actions are guided by its laws. As social beings, effective living means effective social living. In the rapidly changing and democratic world in which we live, the mandatory life tasks of work, love and friendship in their unending challenge, require confidence, courage and an approach to relating founded on the iron clad rule of social living - equality. An approach to social relationships based on respect for self, respect for others, and the working out of mutual agreements toward the enhancement of our shared lives, is the only approach, which results in real success, on the useful side of life.

The model for "mental health" is where the lifestyle meanings and goals of an individual are facilitative of successful social living and include a sense of belongingness, a valuing of self and others, autonomy and courage, and compensation for natural feelings of inferiority through goals which include self development in line with social enhancement (Gemeinschaftsgefühl - Social Interest - Community Feeling). Such a person is prepared for effective social living based on mutual respect, and can meet life's changes, challenges and losses with significant inner and outer resources.

Human dysfunction has as its foundation a lifestyle with distorted meanings (mistaken ideas) and extreme feelings of inferiority (inferiority complex) compensated for by narrow and exaggerated goals of personal significance, security and success (superiority complex). This foundation leaves the person vulnerable to life's challenges, changes and losses (exogenous factors). Dysfunctional behavior occurs as the lifestyle is unable to accommodate to the challenges with necessary flexibility, courage and cooperation. In the place of flexibility, distorted meanings lead to hesitation and limited options for problem solving. In contrast to courage and confidence, a sense of failure and despair is eminent as the narrowly defined goals become impossible to retain. Cooperation is replaced by the self-elevation and self-protective requirement of the style, further limiting the individual's resources and leading to avoidance, dependency or contention. The specific symptoms or dysfunctional patterns emerge as an expression of defeat and discouragement or as compensatory solutions - efforts to regain a position of personal safety and superiority in line with lifestyle convictions, while safeguarding the self-esteem.

Relationship dysfunction occurs whenever an effort exists to create or maintain superiority/inferiority dynamics, regardless of the nature of the relationship. Both sociological and psychological realities support the inevitability of disharmony which exists in all relationships of inequality. Sociological trends recognize the growing and unyielding development of democracy and equality in all our social institutions. Added to this the psychological movement of all persons that proceeds from the status of inferiority to a position of self-enhancement, and it is clear that no human being will agree to occupy a position of social inferiority, but will strive always to overcome this position. This is the basis for human conflict.

ADLERIAN TREATMENT PRINCIPLES AND METHODS:

The Adlerian model of treatment rests on the following principles and methods:

- An educational model, whereby client(s) and therapist seek a clear understanding of the difficulties and of the available alternatives for an enhanced situation. This contrasts the medical model, which seeks to cure the patient's "illness" so as to return the person to a state of previous "health".
- The model recognizes client(s) and therapist as equals, as collaborators, working together on a common task. The therapist is responsible for his/her part in the relationship, to establish structure and process to work within, to contribute to that process and to assist the client(s) in his/her contribution. The client(s) is responsible for his/her part in the relationship, to contribute to the developed structure and process and to translate the work into his/her life. This contrasts the medical model, which recognizes a superior and active therapist whose job is to treat and cure the inferior, passive and "sick" patient.
- The model recognizes the uniqueness and strengths of the client(s), as well as the total social context and system in both assessment and treatment. This contrasts the medical model, which sees patients as categories of illness, which resides within the patient.

Psychotherapy has as its aim a "liberation" of the individual. A process of lifestyle assessment assists client and therapist understand the lifestyle meanings and goals, which contribute to the client's difficulties. As a result of this understanding the client is in a position to evaluate his/her meanings, goals and resultant behavior, and engage in the process of reorientation toward more effective ways of interpreting life, solving problems and living with others.

Couple therapy involves understanding those relationship dynamics, which result in conflict. Superiority/inferiority dynamics in areas of communication, problem-solving and relationship structure are uncovered and methods based on equality and mutual respect are clarified and incorporated. Lifestyle assessment is employed to assist the clients better understand him/herself and his/her partner. Lifestyle meanings and goals, which affect and impede the relationship are clarified.

Through this process of mutual understanding, empathy, encouragement and contribution - a relationship of mutual respect is enhanced.

Family therapy involves working with parents and children to better understand those factors in family relationships which contribute to the difficulties. Those superiority/inferiority dynamics that exist in areas of communication, problem solving, family structure, and discipline are uncovered and methods based on mutual respect are clarified and incorporated. Children are helped to understand the goals of their misbehavior and meanings in their developing lifestyle. Where lifestyle elements of the parents impinge on family relationships, lifestyle assessment is incorporated to assist parents toward improved self-understanding, which can pave the way to a more effective leadership style.

ADLERIAN FAMILY THERAPY – ASSESSMENT & TREATMENT

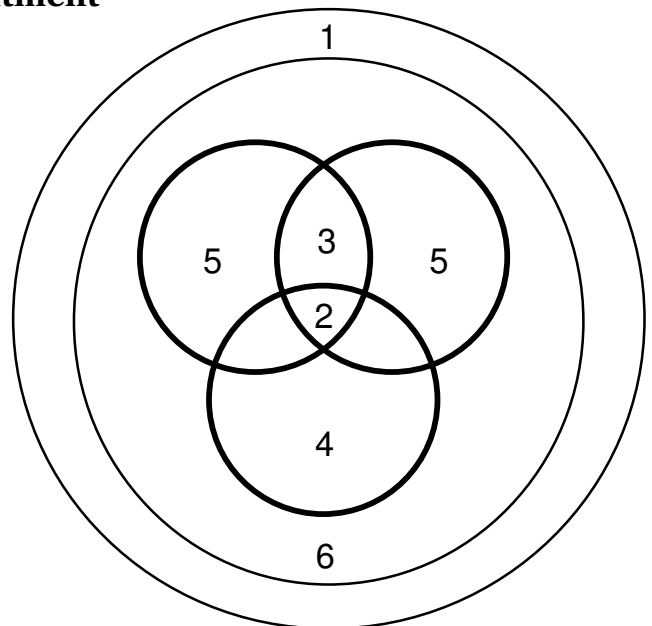
The perspective of Adlerian Family Therapy might be viewed as analogous to that of a movie cameraman looking through a “zoom lens”. At times, the therapist moves to a wide angle view to see the family system and its societal/cultural influences. At other times the therapist may choose to zoom in to focus on the pattern of parent-child or couple relationship dynamics. Still at other times the therapist may zoom in further to focus on the child/teen or individual parent. Intervention and change may occur at any of these levels, changing both the parts and the whole. This is the power and the strength of Adlerian Psychology – which is simultaneously a holistic, psychodynamic, family / social systems and cognitive-behavioral model - adapted from William G. Nicoll in “Adlerian Couples Therapy”

1. Wider Society

- A. Democratic Revolution /Multicultural Society /Technological Society

2. Parenting/Child Behavior Assessment & Treatment

- A. Family Constellation – Birth Order Dynamics
- B. Presenting Problems: Relevant History and Context
- C. Tracking the Problem
- D. Typical Day Assessment
- E. Parenting Style/Goals of Misbehavior System
- F. Family Alliances For and Against
- G. Level /Vertical Dynamics
- H. Areas of Discouragement / Inferiority/ Compensatory Goals
- I. Family Communication Patterns and Skills
- J. Problem Solving/ Decision Making/ Chores & Labor/Family Meetings
- K. Discipline Methods: Choices & Consequences
- L. Quality Time



3. Couple Assessment & Treatment

- A. Relationship History
- B. Level / Vertical Dynamics
- C. Division of Labor
- D. Communication / Problem Solving / Fun / Intimacy
- E. Lifestyle Dynamics

4. Child / Teen Assessment & Treatment

- A. Psychological Birth Order Vantage – Sibling Dynamics
- B. Goals of Misbehavior
- C. Developing Lifestyle of Child
- D. Children: projective methods: drawings, play, story-telling, sand-tray, etc.
- E. Teens: Lifestyle Assessment

5. Adult Assessment & Treatment

- A. Adult issues / dysfunction / treatment
- B. Lifestyle Assessment with Parents

6. Family Context

- A. Family Cultural Background
- B. Family and each member’s relationship with neighborhood, community, faith community, workplace, school, extended family

Holistic Approach to Family Therapy:

Treatment Goals =

- (1) Understand Relationship Patterns
Develop Relationship Skills
- (2) Insight
(into my lifestyle and its effects on the family)
- (3) Outsight
(into the lifestyle, perceptions & feelings of family members)

Our Changing Society - The Equality Revolution

Implications for Parents - Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D. -

Our society has evolved in so many ways in the past few generations - advanced technology where information technology is central to our economy and way of life including most kids spending increasing time on their "screens", a greater percentage of single parent households and households where both parents work, more working parents, kids managing themselves at home without parental supervision, large schools with 3,000 or more students attending, the increasing cost of college, an increase in gun ownership and gun violence, a greater visibility and intensity of racial strife, etc. One of the most significant changes we are living through, that has effected all of our social institutions, and which many have not recognized, I'll call the "Equality Revolution" (first conceptualized by Rudolf Dreikurs who named this impactful dynamic, the "Democratic Revolution").

First some background: Since the beginning of human civilization, human relationships in all of our "social institutions" in the full range of human relationships have been organized consistently - in a hierarchical structure. Historically speaking, leading up to the present and based on ones ascribed or achieved status in life, there are some members in our societal network who are defined as holding a superior position, and others defined as holding the inferior position. This arrangement began historically in order to provide safety and protection for the human species and due to differences in size and strength between the genders. Those in the superior position have had greater power, privilege, resources, and support and have been regarded as having greater value and social status. Those in the inferior position have been subordinate to those in the superior position and much of their energy is spent surviving, accommodating, and coping with their position. This hierarchal relational system can be referred to as "vertical" in nature (picture a vertical line from above to below). When society was structured "across the board" in this way and before the

equality revolution that began in a big way in the mid-20th century, there was a high degree of acceptance, compliance, and accommodation to this system. Some of the obvious examples are:

Area of social life	The superior position	The inferior position
Government	Dictatorial leaders	The citizens, the people
The work place	Boss, owners, management	Workers, line staff
Race relations	Caucasians	People of color
Gender relations	Males	Females
Sexual orientation	Straight	LGBTQ
Parent / child relations	Parents: fathers then mothers	Children

It is important to note that a person may occupy a superior status in one relationship and the inferior position in another, e.g. a woman who is married to a man and a parent.

People in society who occupied the "superior" position had all the power and those occupying the "inferior" position were restricted to adapting to this power.

The essential methods applied by the "superiors" to maintain order (and power) included the following "coercive" tactics:

- 1) imposing rules
- 2) rewarding those who obey the rules.
- 3) punishing those who violated the rules.

Looking again at the social institutions and the hierarchy that was traditionally established in all of them - it is interesting to note the vast changes that have occurred.

- In government: a worldwide trend toward democracy where people have influence, e.g. representation, vote.
- In the workplace: the union movement, strikes, progressive workplace legislation (the 40 hour workweek, minimum wage, profit sharing). Workers now have influence.
- In race relationships: the civil rights movement. People of color standing up for equality.
- In gender relations: the women's movement. Women empowering themselves in government, the workplace, marriage, etc.

The above developments are what is meant by the "equality revolution". As if in mass during the middle part of the 20th century, many in the human community declared that they have value, are to be treated with respect and are therefore deserving to participate fully in matters that affect their lives and be treated as having equal value regardless of position, race, gender, sexual orientation or age.

What has changed so dramatically in family life is that "equality is in the air" and whether we like it or not, our children breathe the same air. With each passing generation, children are raised in a different social environment than their parents were. They are raised in an environment where equality is more and more a thing, an important thing, visible and prominent as an issue all around them. Beginning with Kids growing up in the 1960's, when women stood up to a male dominated society and children witnessed this dynamic between their parents, children have increasingly pictured themselves as equals to adults and to their parents, and are operating on an "equality identity". Today's parents were raised further back in this evolutionary process when parents occupied more of a superior position with their kids

who operated on a "subordinate identity". Since most parents learn their model of parenting by observing their own parents, what we are witnessing is a collision of forces occurring in all of our homes and schools.

We tend to operate from the vertical "coercive" traditions learned from our parents, applying these methods to a generation of children who for the first time picture themselves as equals. What is the result?

- 1) when rules are imposed on kids - rebellion is a way of demonstrating equality.
- 2) when we apply the punishment model - kids in their efforts to be equal find ways to punish us in return.
- 3) when we use a reward system - kids expect a reward for most everything they do.

The "clash of forces" between the outmoded, traditional model of parenting and today's youth often result in conflict, alienation, and sometimes violence. The remedy is not to go back in time and attempt to make the "coercive" model work, anymore than we can expect citizens, employees, minorities, women, or people who are gay, lesbian, or bi-sexual to once again accept a position of inferiority. The coercive model of parenting so often results in power struggles between parents and kids that can have difficult and painful results. The remedy is also not to pamper our kids, that is do for them on a consistent basis what they can do for themselves. Pampering is another kind of "vertical" relationship. In our democratic world, kids who are pampered move so readily from the mindset of being equal to their parents to being superior to them. They consider special treatment to be something they are entitled to - with dependency, self-centeredness, vindictiveness and stalled development as a common result.

The discouraging message we send to our kids when we adopt the coercive model is, "It is obvious you are not able to do things well enough on your own, so I will make you." The

discouraging message we send to our kids when we adopt the pampering model is, "It is obvious you are not able to do things well enough on you own, so I will do them for you."

The irony is that parents who adopt the coercive model and attempt to control their kids, lose all control. Likewise, parents who adopt the pampering model and attempt to make their kids happy, tend to make their kids miserable.

The new tradition that is required is one whereby our kids are not able to picture themselves in a position of inferiority to their parents or other adult leaders...for when they do, based on their "equality identity" they are compelled to actively or passively resist or rebel

At the same time, parental leadership is important in any family. The question becomes, what kind of leadership? Controlling, domineering, and punitive leadership most always result in resistance, rebellion, and disrespect. Overindulgent leadership most always results in dependency, a sense of entitlement, an undermining of internal strength, irresponsibility, and demanding and vindictive behavior. Kids today will be truly influenced only by a parent they respect. With the equality revolution in full swing, respect cannot be demanded, respect must be won. Winning respect involves first and foremost giving respect.

The real *solution* is in developing a new tradition in parent-child relationships where parents as leaders in the family incorporate methods of communication, problem-solving and discipline based on mutual respect and which emphasize taking the child's value as a person into account.

PARENTING STYLES (an Adlerian Psychology perspective)

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PARENTING STYLE	FOCUS/TACTICS	IMPLIED MESSAGE	RESULTS
<p><u>COERCIVE</u></p> <p>CONTROLLING PUNITIVE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imposing Rules • Threats and Punishments • Rewards • Self Righteous - Always the Child's Fault 	<p>"It is obvious you are not able to do it well enough on your own, so I will make you"</p>	<p>Anger, conflict, power struggles and revenge.</p> <p>Parent gets the opposite behavior that they are after, or exactly what they are trying to prevent.</p> <p>Irresponsible or high-risk behaviors via rebellion.</p> <p>Irony: In the parent's effort to control their child's behavior, they lose all control.</p>
<p><u>PAMPERING</u></p> <p>OVER-INDULGENT OVER-INVOLVED</p>	<p>Doing for a child on a regular basis what the child can do for her/himself.</p> <p>Parent over-identifies with child and makes the child the focal point of her/his life.</p> <p>Gives Special Service.</p>	<p>"It is obvious you are not able to do it well enough on your own, so I will do it for you."</p>	<p>Exaggerated sense of one's own self-importance and diminished sense of one's own ability.</p> <p>Dependency, Self-Centeredness, Vindictiveness, Stalled Development, Serious self-indulgent behavior, e.g. drugs.</p> <p>Serious dysfunction to justify dependency or to avoid increasing responsibility.</p> <p>Irony: In the parent's effort to make their child happy, they make their child miserable.</p>
<p><u>DISENGAGED</u></p> <p>UNINVOLVED</p>	<p>Unaware of and Unresponsive to child's needs, self-absorbed, emotionally detached, Sets few Boundaries, Often challenged with life stressors, may struggle with mental health or substance abuse issues.</p>	<p>"You don't matter, You aren't valuable or interesting enough, You are a disappointment, You are unlovable, You are a burden, You are flawed, You are bad."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Esteem problems. • Relationship difficulties. • Struggles with emotional regulation. • Obsessed with solitary activities. • Attachment issues. • May Compensate by connecting to other stable families, friends, relatives.
<p><u>RESPECTFUL LEADERSHIP</u></p>	<p>Mutual Respect, values providing a sense of belongingness and growing independence, Establishes boundaries, provides warmth, empathy, & encouragement, level communication, mutual problem-solving, choices & consequences.</p>	<p>"I see you as a valuable and separate person. I believe in you and your ability to develop and learn from your own mistakes. I respect and value your contributions."</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possesses Self Esteem & People Esteem • Responsibility Taker • Is Cooperative & Respectful • Develops "Psychological Muscle"

PARENTING STYLES - DYNAMICS UNDERLYING

Parents Who Control	Parents Who Over-Indulge (Pamper)
Controlling parenting style modeled in childhood by parent(s).	Pampering parenting style modeled in childhood by parent(s).
Controlling or dominant role in childhood, e.g. first born, child occupying a parental role.	Care-taking role in childhood, e.g. first born daughter.
Compensation for chaos and/or powerlessness in childhood.	Compensating for neglectful parenting as a child, <i>I must be involved, and make my children happy.</i>
Pampered as a child (expects things to go his/her way).	Compensating for controlling, punitive, or abusive parenting as a child, <i>I must be kind.</i>
Cultural influences: a cultural norm for parents to be in charge, for children to obey.	Cultural influences: a cultural norm for parent, most often mother, to be giving and kind.
To respond to the challenges brought about by the simultaneous tendency to pamper the children (demanding and self-centered behavior).	To make up for the simultaneous tendency to control and punish the children.
An adaptation to or to make up for current challenges, e.g. over-indulgent spouse, stress or chaos, divorce (trying to be both parents).	An adaptation to or to make up for current challenges, e.g. a cruel, controlling or punitive spouse, or the threat of losing custody, or to make up for hardships "suffered" by children, e.g. divorce, handicaps, abuse, or deprivation.

In her research, Diana Baumrind found what she considered to be the four basic dimensions that shapes successful parenting: responsiveness vs. unresponsiveness and demanding vs. undemanding. From these, she identified three general parenting styles: authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive. Maccoby and Martin expanded the styles to four: authoritative, authoritarian, indulgent and uninvolved.

Maccoby and Martin's Four Parenting Styles (underlined)

Baumrind's Three Parenting Styles in *italics*

Adlerian Based Parenting Styles (**bolded**)

	Demanding	Undemanding
Responsive	<u>Authoritative</u> - <i>Authoritative</i> Respectful Leadership	<u>Indulgent</u> - <i>Permissive</i> Pampering
Unresponsive	<u>Authoritarian</u> - <i>Totalitarian</i> Coercive	<u>Uninvolved</u>

Baumrind believed that parents should be neither punitive nor aloof. Rather, they should develop rules for their children and be affectionate with them. These parenting styles are meant to describe normal variations in parenting, not deviant parenting, such as might be observed in abusive homes. Most parents do not fall neatly in one category, but fall somewhere in between, showing characteristics of more than one style.

From a self-help article in “*Very Well Family*” titled *Four Types of Parenting Styles and Their Effects on Kids*, by Amy Morin, LCSW, about how the parenting styles described above relate to family life:

Your parenting style can affect everything from how much a child weighs to how she feels about herself. It's important to ensure your parenting style is supporting healthy growth and development because the way you interact with your child and how you discipline her will influence her for the rest of her life.

Researchers have identified four types of parenting styles:

- Authoritarian
- Authoritative
- Permissive
- Uninvolved

Each style takes a different approach to raising children and can be identified by a number of different characteristics.

1. **Authoritarian Parenting**

Do any of these statements sound like you?

- You believe kids should be seen and not heard.
- When it comes to rules, you believe it's "my way or the highway."
- You don't take your child's feelings into consideration.

If any of those ring true, you might be an authoritarian parent. Authoritarian parents believe kids should follow the rules without exception.

Authoritarian parents are famous for saying, "Because I said so," when a child questions the reasons behind a rule. They are not interested in negotiating and their focus is on obedience.

They also don't allow kids to get involved in problem-solving challenges or obstacles. Instead, they make the rules and enforce the consequences with little regard for a child's opinion.

Authoritarian parents may use punishments instead of discipline. So rather than teach a child how to make better choices, they're invested in making kids feel sorry for their mistakes.

Children who grow up with strict authoritarian parents tend to follow rules much of the time. But, their obedience comes at a price.

Children of authoritarian parents are at a higher risk of development self-esteem problems because their opinions aren't valued.

They may also become hostile or aggressive. Rather than think about how to do things better in the future, they often focus on the anger they feel toward their parents. Since authoritarian parents are often strict, their children may grow to become good liars in an effort to avoid punishment.

2. **Authoritative Parenting**

Do any of these statements sound like you?

- You put a lot of effort into creating and maintaining a positive relationship with your child.
- You explain the reasons behind your rules.
- You enforce rules and apply consequences but take your child's feelings into consideration.

If those statements sound familiar, you may be an authoritative parent. Authoritative parents have rules and they use consequences, but they also take their children's opinions into account. They validate their children's feelings, while also making it clear that the adults are ultimately in charge.

Authoritative parents invest time and energy into preventing behavior problems before they start. They also use positive discipline strategies to reinforce good behavior, like praise and reward systems.

Researchers have found kids who have authoritative parents are most likely to become responsible adults who feel comfortable expressing their opinions.

Children raised with authoritative discipline tend to be happy and successful. They're also more likely to be good at making decisions and evaluating safety risks on their own.

3. **Permissive Parenting**

Do any of these statements sound like you?

- You set rules but rarely enforce them.
- You don't give out consequences very often.
- You think your child will learn best with little interference from you.

If those statements sound familiar, you might be a permissive parent. Permissive parents are lenient. They often only step in when there's a serious problem.

They're quite forgiving and they adopt an attitude of "kids will be kids." When they do use consequences, they may not make those consequences stick. They might give privileges back if a child begs or they may allow a child to get out of time-out early if he promises to be good.

Permissive parents usually take on more of a friend role than a parent role. They often encourage their children to talk with them about their problems, but they usually don't put much effort into discouraging poor choices or bad behavior.

Kids who grow up with permissive parents are more likely to struggle academically. They may exhibit more behavioral problems as they don't appreciate authority and rules. They often have low self-esteem and may report a lot of sadness.

4. **Uninvolved Parenting**

Do any of these statements sound familiar?

- You don't ask your child about school or homework.
- You rarely know where your child is or who she is with.
- You don't spend much time with your child.

If those statements sound familiar, you might be an uninvolved parent. Uninvolved parents tend to have little knowledge of what their children are doing.

There tend to be few rules. Children may not receive much guidance, nurturing, and parental attention.

Uninvolved parents expect children to raise themselves. They don't devote much time or energy into meeting children's basic needs.

Uninvolved parents may be neglectful but it's not always intentional. A parent with mental health issues or substance abuse problems, for example, may not be able to care for a child's physical or emotional needs on a consistent basis.

At other times, uninvolved parents lack knowledge about child development. And sometimes, they're simply overwhelmed with other problems, such as work, financial issues, and managing life.

Children with uninvolved parents are likely to struggle with self-esteem issues. They tend to perform poorly in school. They also exhibit frequent behavior problems and rank low in happiness.

Further Clarification

Sometimes parents don't fit into just one category, for example, there may be times or areas where you tend to be permissive or authoritarian and other times when you're more authoritative.

The studies are clear, however, that authoritative parenting is the best parenting style. But even if you tend to identify with other parenting styles more, there are steps you can take to become a more authoritative parent.

With dedication and commitment to being the best parent you can be, you can maintain a positive relationship with your child while still establishing your authority in a healthy manner. And over time, your child will reap the benefits of your authoritative style.

UNDERSTANDING PURPOSE: THE GOALS OF CHILD/TEEN MISBEHAVIOR

Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D.
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[Based on the Psychology of Alfred Adler & Rudolf Dreikurs]

GOALS	The Child's Behavior	The Child's Belief	How Parent Feels	Parent's Mistaken Reactions	Effective Parenting Methods	
					Responses	Prevention
ATTENTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nuisance Showoff Clown Disruptive Pesters 	"I count only when I am the center of attention, when others are noticing me."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Annoyed Irritated Frustrated 	Acting annoyed and frustrated Reprimanding Scolding Punishing	Ignore or withdraw when attention or service is demanded Give choices Natural consequences Logical consequences Go on strike	Give attention when least expected. Special time Provide opportunities to contribute Promote Autonomy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Take time for training Give responsibility Encourage "Get a Life!"
SERVICE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acts Pitiful Acts Helpless Acts Scared Acts Whiny Demanding 	"I am special and expect others to do whatever I want, whenever I want it. I am not sure I can do for myself."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sorry for Worried Afraid Guilty Responsible for 	Reminding Taking responsibility Making excuses for Doing for the child what the child can do for her/himself		
POWER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Angry Defiant Argumentative Threatening Apathetic Tearful 	"Others seek to overpower me, I must prove that they are not the boss and that I am."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Defeated Provoked Angry 	Forcing Fighting Arguing Punishing	Withdraw from provocations. Avoid retaliation Mutual problem-solving	Mutual Respect Avoid all punishments Give Choices Mutual Problem-Solving Family Meeting
REVENGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vindictive Rude Abusive Steals Devious Self-Destructive 	"Others seek to dominate me and hurt me. I must even the score by hurting back."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hurt Angry Spiteful 	Retaliating Punishing Playing the Victim	Don't fight and Don't give in Declare Bankruptcy	
PROOF OF INADEQUACY OF AVOIDANCE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Withdraws Pessimism Hopelessness Puts Self Down 	"I am inferior to other people. I must not let anyone see this or know this."	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Discouraged Hopelessness Futility 	Criticizing Comparing child to others Giving Up	Unconditional support Emphasize what the child does well	Encouragement Give responsibility Show trust & faith Create atmosphere where it is OK to be imperfect

GOAL DISCLOSURE WITH CHILDREN AND ADOLESCENTS

(Based on Adlerian Psychology and the work of Rudolf Dreikurs, M.D.)

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Fundamentals:

1. This a method of problem solving, not for blaming, judging, pressuring, embarrassing, or defeating.
2. It must be carried out in a friendly, respectful, tentative and curious way, and never when the counselor is feeling frustrated or angry.

Objectives:

- to address relevant problems with the youth and/or within the family.
- to let the child know you respect him/her.
- to obtain confirmation, via the child's recognition response, or lack thereof, of what is or isn't going on.
- to begin a process of collaboratively working toward developing solutions in the child's life and/or family system to the "problem" behavior.

Process:

1. Self-check: does the counselor have a friendly attitude toward the child/teen.
2. Tell the child that you have noticed the problem behavior. Say something like, *It occurs to me from talking with you and your parents, that you are having a wide variety of school related problems lately.*
3. Ask the child if he or she knows why he or she does this, *Do you have an idea about why this is happening?*
4. The child or teen may offer an explanation, which is frequently more about what other people are doing to them, or in the form of an excuse for their own conduct. It is important to listen carefully and respectfully.
5. Get permission to offer your ideas, *May I tell you what I think?*

6. Make your guess by incorporating the "goals of misbehavior". Frame your guess in a tentative manner. Dreikurs taught us to ask, *Could it be...* Additional empathy is added by beginning with a brief description of the situation (context) the child is in that gives rise to the goal along with the idea that the goal the child pursues through her/his misbehavior is out of conscious awareness . . . "without knowing it" . . . For example:

Justin, I am aware that there have been a lot of stress in your family lately and that your older brother has been in a lot of trouble. Your parents have needed to spend a lot of time with him addressing these problems. I put myself in your shoes and realize that you may be feeling left out. Could it be that, without knowing it, the problems you have been having at school are to get your parents to notice you and pay more attention to you?

7. Observe the child's verbal and non-verbal behavior. A "recognition response" may be in the form of a verbal affirmation, or a non-verbal affirmation, typically a knowing smile, a widening of the eyes, a show of embarrassment, or a strong and adamant denial, *Doth protesteth too much* (Shakespeare).
8. If you get a confirmation, express empathy. Say something like, *I can understand how difficult it would be to lose so much attention all at once, and how you might go to such extremes to get the attention back. How creative of you!*
9. If you get no recognition response, it likely means that the guess is off base, and it is time to further assess and revise your hypothesis about the possible dynamics, including one of the other goals of misbehavior.
10. Problem Solve Together: You might begin by asking, *What do you think can be done about the situation, so that you can get your share of attention without paying such a price?* Listen to the child's proposal, and work to reach agreement. If the child has no idea, offer yours. *How would it be if we talked to your parents, and helped them understand how you feel, and invite them to solve this problem with us? I have a couple of ideas to suggest that might work.*
11. After reaching an agreement, tell the child that you are glad you had a chance to talk it over. Clarify what the next step is and what you will do to participate in the problem solving effort. Be a trustworthy ally and follow through what you have agreed to do.

A TYPICAL DAY

Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D. (rev 6-22)

The Family: Consists of mother, a first-generation Hispanic woman (age 27) and father (age 30) who is mixed race (African and White) and their two children, Andres, age 9 and Bella, age 6. Their SES would be considered as "lower-middle".

Presenting Concerns: Andres is "defiant" and "angry" and is having academic and behavioral problems at school (not completing his work and fighting with other children). Bella is "whiny", cries a lot, neither do much around the house even when asked, the kids are "sloppy", the children fight. The parents argue a lot, mom blames dad for not being at home enough, and dad blames mom for always controlling and blaming the "guys in the family" for everything.

Morning: Mom gets up first and after getting cleaned up wakes up father, then Andres (the first time). Dad gets himself up soon after and begins getting ready for work. Often Mom wakes Andres up again and an argument frequently ensues. Mom continues to "stay on" Andres, fearing if she did not he would miss the bus. Later Mom wakes Bella up by singing to her until she awakens. Bella sometimes cries when she realizes she has to get up. Mom comforts her and tries to be kind and gentle so as to "start her day off right". Mom dresses Bella and frequently argues with Andres about the clothes he has chosen, sometimes forcing him to change. Mom cooks breakfast, which Andres eats and then runs off for the bus. Bella sometimes protests what Mom has fixed, often there is arguing and crying about this. Mom who is concerned about Bella having good nutrition before school frequently fixes what she wants instead. Bella will sometimes miss the bus and Mom drives her to school.

After School: The kids get home at about the same time. Mom reminds Andres that it is time to clean his room (his only chore, which mom insists be done each afternoon). There is frequent arguing, and Mom often feels angry and punishes Andres by taking away TV privileges. She occasionally will slap him during the conflict, but has lately handed the "discipline" over to Father. Mom will give father a report when he gets home from work. Dad sometimes takes privileges away, or gives him a couple of "swats". Bella (who has no chores) begs for candy or ice-cream after school, and often cries if Mom says "no". She usually gets what she wants. Mom checks with Andres to see that he is doing his homework. Often there is conflict about this, as Andres resists doing it. Once again Mom will report this to Father.

Evening: There is often fighting at the table between the children. Mom tries to separate them, tells them to shut up, if he is home, Dad threatens, finally deserts are withheld. Mom cleans up the dishes. Mom has recently told Andres that he is old enough to dry the dishes. This turns into a conflict most every night. Last week Andres was put on restriction for two weeks for grumbling while drying the dishes. Often there are fights between the children at night, for example about who can use the laptop or choose which show to watch on TV. One or both of the parents get involved and punish Andres, "He is the oldest, he should know better".

Bedtime: There is frequent conflict between Andres and his parents about going to bed. They insist he be in bed and asleep by 8:15 PM. He often wants to stay up to get his homework done, which they don't support. They check on him and yell at him if he is not in bed with the lights out on time. Sometimes they will catch him sneaking to do his homework when he believes they are asleep. They have restricted him in the past for problems that happen around bedtime. Bella asks for a story, hugs and kisses, water, etc. She cries out to her parents after they leave her in her room. She frequently has a bad dream and ends up in her parent's bedroom much of the time. If they try to take Bella back to her room, she has a tantrum and ends up sleeping with the parents about half the time.

THE DYNAMICS OF POWER – NOTES FOR COUNSELORS

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(1) To be a leader or counselor of children means to be an expert on the "dynamics of power", an expert on "sniffing out" inferiority/superiority dynamics. Why? Because they don't work and so often lead to dysfunctional levels of anger, conflict, alienation and violence.

(2) The Democratic Revolution: The latter half of the 20th century was characterized by a movement toward equality by every traditionally oppressed groups:

- a. citizens living under dictatorial governments (the democratization of nations)
- b. workers (the union movement - workers rights - labor laws)
- c. people of color (the civil rights movement)
- d. women (the women's movement).

Equality is in the air and our children breathe the same air we breathe. No one (regardless of status) will agree, any longer, to stand in a position of inferiority without an effort to overcome this position. Therefore, all efforts made to force a child to obey, will result in discord.

(3) "Our children have become immune to adult domination in the process of a democratic revolution which provided them with a sense of equality." (Rudolf Dreikurs)

(4) The Bottom Line: The Iron Clad Rule of Social Living is Equality (Alfred Adler), when we treat each other with mutual respect, as people possessing equal value, we are able to work things out together. When we violate this ironclad rule, we cannot work things out effectively.

(5) The Role of Anger: It is common for people to think of their emotions, especially their anger as a force outside of their control, caused by their body or other people. In actuality, anger serves a purpose. Anger is most often generated by the individual in order to overwhelm or punish others - as a means to be more effective at fighting. What is the purpose of fighting - to win - no one ever fought to lose. Anger is an effort to have a 2 to 1 edge (your ideas vs. my ideas + my anger). Anger is not about problem solving! It is about domination and winning!

(6) "There are many things a parent can do, but first, they must become aware of what not to do." (Rudolf Dreikurs)

(7) The Power to Say No is Absolute: In a fight, a power struggle, the person who is in the position to say "no", is in the strongest position. Parents and youth leaders are most often in the position to force the kid(s) to say "yes" to (cleaning the room, doing the homework, going to bed on time, etc.). All a child or teen has to do to defeat the parent, by word or by deed, is to say "no". Cooperation can never be forced through power, it must be won with respect.

(8) Kids hold up their end of the power struggle by becoming experts on their parents "red buttons", the issues that activate their parent's values. Whatever is important to the parent, the child can violate and thus demonstrate power and get even.

(9) Since for most parents, a strong value is the health and safety of their children, self-destruction becomes a power tool for kids.....

(10) Control and Influence are Mutually Exclusive, are Contradictory: Power and control tactics result in the child pursuing that which we forbid, the opposite of what we intend. All real influence we can have on another can only be realized through respect.

(11) The best way to get into a power struggle with someone is to think in terms of:
"How can I get my child to do _____, or stop doing _____."
In our democratic world, the only person we can truly impact is ourselves. The perspective becomes, "Given this situation (problem or conflict), what choices are available to me in respectfully addressing it with my child."

(12) When we are in a Power Struggle we are Unable to be Cooperative: The Teleological Principle (Behavior as Purposive) informs us that we cannot move in two directions at once. It is therefore not possible to (a) seek to win the power struggle. and (b) at the same time be friendly and cooperative. Rather, in line with our movement, we seek to gather evidence to support us in the direction we want to go, focusing our attention on all of the things wrong with our son or daughter. This process works to further escalate the power struggle.

(13) So often, when parents and their children get into power struggles, the problems mount. As each is attempting to win the struggle, more and more fields of activity are effected. The list of problems that parents bring to a therapists attention become numerous. In fact, there is only one problem - a power struggle, who is "up" and who is "down", played out in multiple issues.. Once family members realize this and are able to convert their attitude and behavior to mutual respect, it's amazing how the many "problems" evaporate.

(14) It is always helpful to connect the problems in the family with the power struggle and the parents role in it.

(15) It is helpful for the parent to visualize the power struggle as a "tug of war". What happens when you continue to tug? What happens when you let go of your end of the rope?

(16) Power comes in two forms Active and Passive: Active power involves the more obvious - defiant, hostile and critical behavior. Passive power is less easily detectable and is most common in the situation where the child or teen perceives active rebellion to be unsafe or unwise. Passive power includes apathetic, deceptive, and symptomatic behavior. If someone (e.g. a child) seems to agree to stand in a position of inferiority, look more closely, and you will always find a compensation, though often a circuitous one.

(17) For parents who insist upon the importance of their kids being obedient, it is helpful to have them think about the implication. If their kids were somehow able to develop the desired passive and obedient position, how welcoming will it be when as a result they assume that same position with their peers. Do we want our kids to be passive and obedient in their peer group, to follow the leadership of their peers? Or do we want our kids to think for themselves and make their own independent choices?

(18) Stay out of Power Struggles with our Clients: Watch out for our own hypocrisy. It is important that when educating parents to the "dynamics of power", not to do so in a forceful manner. Every person has the right to choose her/his approach to childrearing. Some parents are determined to hold on to the superior position, others will learn only from the natural consequences of their choices, as things continue to go poorly. Remember, we will have influence only to the extent that we maintain a respectful stance and are able to focus treatment not on changing the client, but on our own options in offering treatment. For resistant parents the options may be:

- a. Perseverance with our message of mutual respect and the parenting methods based on mutual respect, accepting the resistance and waiting for the consequences to unfold. Sometimes things have to get worse before they'll get better.
- b. Using paradox.
- c. Inviting the parent into a lifestyle assessment process in order to help them better understand their approach to parenting.
- d. Encourage what they are doing well.
- e. Discontinuing treatment for now.

(19) The Power of Choice: Exercising our own inner choices is where real power, humane power originates. While all of us are restricted in various ways (experience, education, resources, culture, heredity, lifestyle) there remains one human freedom that we can all take better advantage of.....The freedom we all have to choose our attitude toward every situation that we face. It is important to remind your clients and yourself of this miraculous human gift.

Can We Make Our Children Happy?

The most important task in any culture is the task of parenting its children. Yet this is the one task where mandatory education is not required, and children do not come with an owner's manual!

How do we learn how to parent our children? The reality is that we learn from our own parents, for better or for worse, and from the so-called "experts". Since the middle of the last century, experts have legitimately warned us that coercive, controlling and punitive approaches to parenting are damaging to the child's developing self-esteem, and invites power struggles between parents and kids. They have, however, also led us to mistakenly believe we must not do anything to make our children unhappy or uncomfortable, lest we damage them for life. Our job, they insist, is to assure that our children are always happy and comfortable.

Based on my experience as a parent, counselor, and parent educator. I am convinced that we have been deceived by the "experts", and that the formula:

Happiness + Comfort = Self-Esteem Simply does not add up.

How is self-esteem developed? Where does it come from? The answer can be found in the term itself. **SELF** esteem can only come from within ourselves, from a belief in ourselves and our own ability. The belief in ourselves is developed by having the room to learn, to make mistakes, and learn from our mistakes. It requires being **GIVEN** the opportunity and responsibility to manage a new task, a new territory of life. This is the only way a child's "psychological muscle" can grow. The formula above directly subtracts from this process. Parents who see their job as making their children happy foster dependency, the exact opposite of self-sufficiency and self-esteem. Parents who strive to make their kids comfortable, deny their children the opportunity to take on a new challenge, which by definition will be uncomfortable to some degree.

When a child who is truly developing self-esteem faces a problem or challenge, she/he thinks, "I wish I didn't have to face this difficulty, but it will be OK because I have a good person to count on and that's me." Whereas the dependent child tends to think, "This is overwhelming, where is the person who can solve this problem for me."

A child's psychological muscle, their self-esteem can be fostered in specific ways. For example, (1) giving a young child the experience of sleeping in his/her own bed at night, (2) letting children pick out their own clothes to wear to school (as long as the choice is within the school dress code), (3) teaching children to do their own laundry and then handing this task over to them, (4) Giving our children in their early teen years the responsibility of choosing and managing their own bedtime.

An interesting paradox I have noticed is that parents who try too hard to make their children happy and comfortable, add instead to the child's unhappiness and discomfort as they face life as dependent and anxious people. The irony is in their effort to make their children happy they make their children miserable.

By allowing our children the opportunity, with each passing year, to take on more and more life responsibilities (which comes with some unhappiness and discomfort), we are giving our children the greatest gift imaginable, the gift of true **SELF** esteem.

ADLERIAN PSYCHOLOGY
PSYCHOLOGICAL BIRTH ORDER VANTAGE

Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D.

Alfred Adler, M.D.

It is a common fallacy to imagine that children of the same family are formed in the same environment. Of course there is much which is the same for all children of the same home, however the psychological situation of each child is unique and differs from the others, due to their unique birth order vantage.

We must insist again that the situation is never the same for two children in a family; and each child will show in his style of life the results of his attempts to adapt himself to his own particular circumstances.

There has been some misunderstanding of my custom of understanding according to position in the family. It is not of course the child's number in the order of successive births which influence his character, but the total situation into which he is born and lives, and the way in which he interprets it.

Rudolf Dreikurs, M.D.

Upon closer examination, it is found that each child has an essentially different position in the family and must see all the circumstances of his childhood in an entirely different light.

The only fundamental law governing the developing child's character is that he trains those qualities by which he hopes to achieve significance or even a degree of power and superiority in the family constellation.

Robert L. Powers

No two children are born into the same family.

The psychological value of considering the birth order position is that it reveals the vantage from which the child perceives and evaluated self, others, and the world, and from which the child forms convictions about what is required of him or of her to make a place, given the heredity endowment and the environmental opportunities in the given situation.

UNDERSTANDING THE DYNAMIC IMPACT OF BIRTH ORDER

Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D.

- 1) Always consider *psychological position vs. ordinal position*. A therapist can always rely upon the client, e.g. for a client who had two older siblings, “Did it feel more like you were a youngest of two, or an only child.”
- 2) *Psychological Competition* is a primary dynamic when considering birth order vantage dynamics. When a second child comes along, she/he in an effort to find a unique place of significance seeks to:
 - Avoid those areas where the older sibling is most prominent or capable.
 - Develop in those areas where the older sibling is less prominent or capable.

This in turns “cements” the orientation of the older sibling, who wishes also to be unique, by being different than the younger sibling.

The other dynamic of psychological competition occurs when the younger child decides to compete directly in the same “field of activity” as the older brother or sister with an effort to surpass the older sibling. This is referred to as the “Avis” child - “I’m #2 but I try harder”.

- 3) The *greatest psychological competition* exists between children of the same gender and who are close in age.
- 4) *Psychological competition can play out through the life cycle*, e.g. a first-born, suddenly depressed and discouraged at age 35 and did not know why. Exploration revealed that his younger sibling recently graduated with his doctoral degree . . .
- 5) Take *age differences* into consideration. Where there are gaps of three or more years, it is common for the birth order to begin anew, creating *birth order sub-groups*.
- 6) *Blended or step-families* go through a period of disorientation and competition for “place” as there is typically two first-borns, two youngest, etc.
- 7) Look always for the dynamic of *dethronement*, for the next oldest sibling when a new sibling comes along. This tends to be temporary.
- 8) When *displacement* occurs, meaning the younger sibling overtakes the older with respect to accomplishments, this is much more devastating in the long run.
- 9) The way in which *gender* is defined by the parents in a family has strong impact on psychological birth order. Boys and girls may be assigned a very different value and very different roles in the family. A firstborn daughter, for example, whatever her ordinal position may have significant domestic and care-taking responsibilities. The firstborn son may be given heightened value and privilege even though he is not born first.

- 10) *Health/Mental Health problems* have impact. A developmentally disabled child, for example, can remain in the “baby” position regardless of ordinal position. This in turn impacts the psychological position of the other children.
- 11) *Adopted Children*, are in a unique place in a family. Parents may be so thankful for the child that they are overindulgent. At the same time the child may be plagued by not being wanted by the biological parents. If the adopted child is in a family with biological siblings, the adopted child may feel different and alienated from the rest of the family.
- 12) *When a child dies in the family*, this can have an effect on the position of the other children. Dynamics may include the over-indulgence of the remaining children, or the deceased child being so idealized in the family, as to present an impossible image to live up to.
- 13) *Twins* know, as do the rest of the family, who was born first and who was not . . .
- 14) Adler pointed out that in his experience the *extreme positions* tend to experience the extreme problems. I have found this also to be true.
- 15) *In all modalities of treatment*: individual, couple, and family therapy, uncovering psychological birth order dynamics can be most useful and at times key to understanding the case. It can be a most illuminating process to look at birth order combinations between parents and their kids, and between members of a couple.
- 16) In some cases, *birth order dynamics are primary* in their impact on lifestyle or relationship dynamics. In other cases the impact of *birth order is secondary* to other more prominent issues and dynamics, e.g. family atmosphere, parenting styles, gender guiding lines, memorable or traumatic experiences.

AN OVERVIEW OF PSYCHOLOGICAL BIRTH ORDER POSSIBILITIES

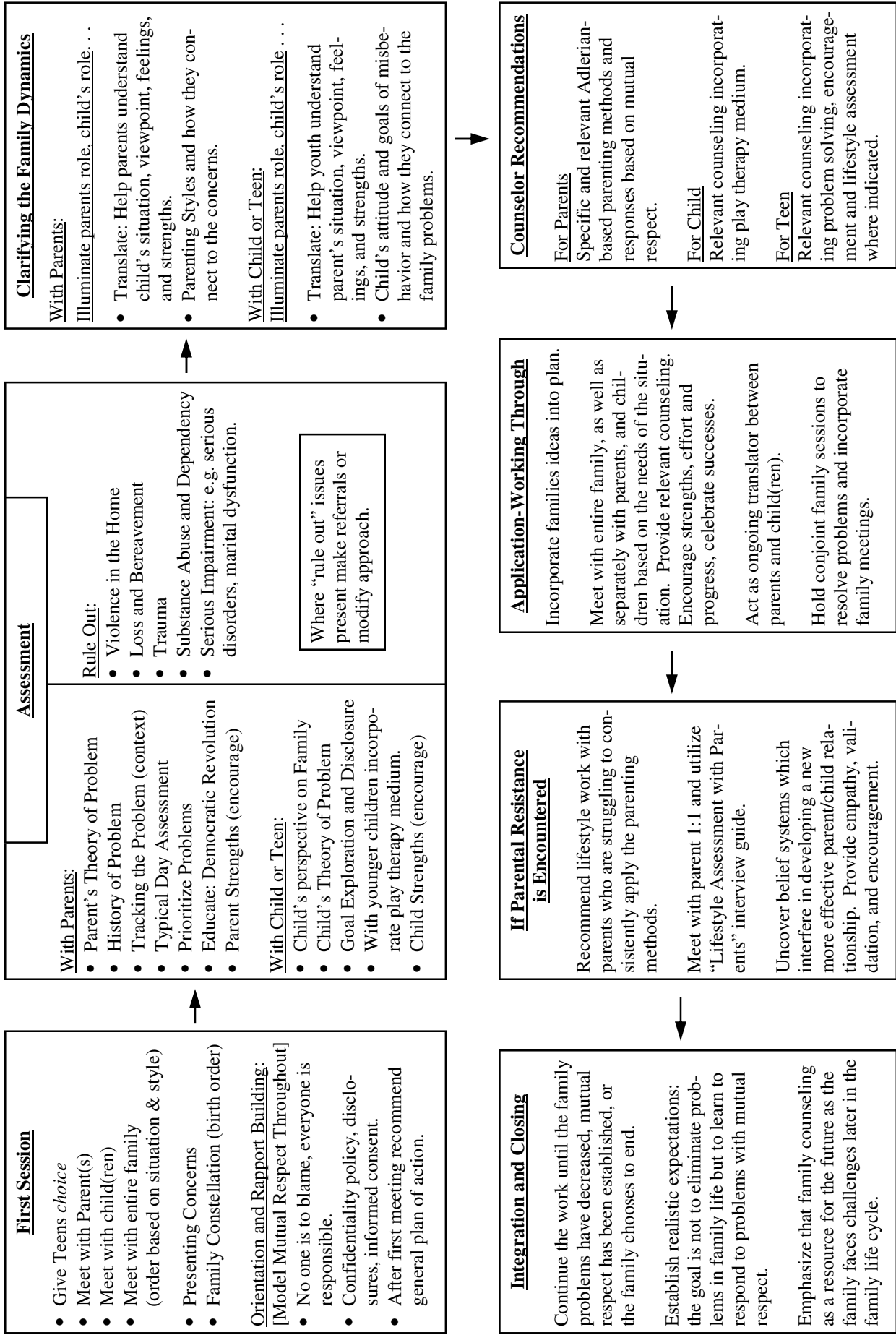
Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D.

(This is a broad simplification of birth order dynamics and Adler's theory)

POSITION	FAMILY SITUATION	CHILD'S CHARACTERISTICS
ONLY	Her/his birth is a miracle. Parents have no previous experience. No sibling rivals, retains full attention from both parents. Has less opportunity to learn cooperative behavior. May carry the burden of expectations for the family. Can be over-protected and spoiled.	Likes being the center of adult attention. Often has difficulty sharing with siblings and peers. May be solitary and self-sufficient. Prefers adult company and uses adult language. May be burdened by carrying parental expectations.
OLDEST	Initially is an only child and is the center of attention. Dethroned by next child. Parent expectations are usually very high. Often given responsibility and expected to set an example.	May initially "regress" to compete with second born. Learns that the advantage is that she/he can do things better, and has more power. May therefore become perfectionistic. May become controlling or bossy. May assume nurturing/care-taking role.
SECOND	He has a pacemaker, someone who is always ahead developmentally. Never has parents undivided attention.	In an effort to find significance in the family is usually in psychological competition with the older child by seeking a unique territory. May seek to surpass the older child in the same territory. May feel discouraged and retreat if perceives self as never measuring up.
MIDDLE	Has a unique perspective of being in the middle. Is "sandwiched" in. May feel squeezed out of a position of privilege and significance. Possesses neither the advantages of the oldest or the youngest.	May be a mediator and from the middle position, seek to hold things together. May feel neglected, insignificant, and discouraged. Fairness and justice are common themes.
YOUNGEST	Has many caretakers: parents and siblings. Never dethroned. May be considered special, is seldom in a position of caring for others. All other family members are more capable, and is usually considered the least capable.	May take advantage of the "baby position" - all the attention and service, and emphasize charm and helplessness. May feel entitled to special treatment. May compensate for smallness and strive to be big and capable.

FLOW CHART OF ADLERIAN FAMILY THERAPY

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**FAMILY THERAPY
TOGETHER OR APART
ONE ADLERIAN THERAPISTS PERSPECTIVE**

Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D.

TOGETHER:

Together: when child won't tolerate being alone with the therapist.

Together: to witness "first hand" the relationship patterns and dynamics.

Together: to facilitate communication, to negotiate issues,
or to develop mutual goals or plans.

Together: to teach and practice family meetings.

APART:

Apart: when helping parents with parenting related issues.

Apart: whenever focusing on lifestyle (family of origin) issues or other personal
issues, when working with children to better understand their perspective,
when "processing is indicated, e.g. grief or trauma.

Apart: when significant over-involvement (enmeshment).

Apart: when significant power struggles are present.

Apart: when having family members together is chaotic.

Alfred Adler, M.D.
The Approach to the Parent

Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D.

<p>From <i>The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler</i>, edited by Heinz and Rowena Ansbacher, 1956, first appearing in <i>The Education of Children</i> by Alfred Adler, 1930</p>

We must always act on the assumption that the parents are not responsible for all the bad qualities the child shows. The parents are after all not skillful educators, and they usually have only tradition to guide them. The parents should never be reproached even when there is just grounds. We can achieve much more when we succeed in establishing a sort of pact, when we are able to inspire the parents to alter their attitude and work with us according to our methods. It is of no avail to emphasize the faults made in the past. What we must do is help them adopt a new procedure.

We must first of all win the parents. If the parents come to us to consult with us, they do this out of a certain feeling of inadequacy. They feel responsible and subject themselves to our critique. Before doing anything else we must lift this burden from them. I tell the parents always, "I can see you are on the right track", even when I am convinced to the contrary, for if I want to be of use, I must know how to encourage them. It is always advisable to use such qualifying phrases as "perhaps" or "I think that the following might prove effective."

It is important to exercise tact and respect in all of our conversations with parents. Eventually we can give the parents some helpful ideas, however it is impossible to modify an entrenched system with a few words. It will take a persistent effort from the consultant, parents, and children to create positive change in such parents and therefore in the behavior of their children.

Rudolf Dreikurs, M.D.
The Characteristic Elements of Child Guidance

Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D.

*From Child Guidance and Education, Collected Papers of Rudolf Dreikurs, M.D.,
first appearing in the Individual Psychology Bulletin, 1947.*

These elements were described in the context of Dreikurs' development of four child guidance clinics in the Chicago area (1939). They were modeled after the Child Guidance Clinics developed by Adler in Vienna between 1921 and 1937. Adler and his followers established 32 such clinics in the Vienna area and numerous others throughout Europe. Dreikurs worked in the Vienna clinics for several years. The rising influence of the Nazi Party resulted in the forced closure of all of the clinics by 1937. All teachings of Adler's followers were also prohibited. For further information, see Chapter 5 in *The Courage to Be Imperfect: The Life and Work of Rudolf Dreikurs*

1. The focus of attention is directed toward the parents, as the parent is generally the problem, not the child. The child responds only in his own way to the experiences to which he is exposed. Especially younger children do not change easily as long as the parent's attitude to the child does not change.
2. All parents consulting at our child guidance centers participate simultaneously in a procedure that may be called "group therapy". In these sessions each case is openly discussed in front of the other parents. Many parents gain greater insight into their own situation by listening to the discussion of similar problems which other parents have. In this way an influence is exerted beyond the scope of individual treatment, and the whole community is directed toward a better approach to understanding children. SM Note: this supports the importance of contemporary Adlerian-based parent education programs, e.g. S.T.E.P. and Positive Discipline as well as the Open Forum Family Counseling model and the *Helping Family* model).
3. The same therapist works with parent and child. All problems of children are problems of a disturbed parent-child relationship. The therapist is confronted with this disturbed relationship and must approach it from both ends simultaneously. Working with one party alone is almost a handicap. The speed and course of treatment depend upon the receptivity of the parent and child alike. It can be evaluated only if the counselor is in close contact with both.
4. The problems of the child are frankly discussed with him, regardless of his age. If the child understands the words, he can also understand the psychological dynamics which they describe. Contrary to widespread belief, young children show an amazing keenness in grasping psychological explanations. In general, it takes much longer for a parent to understand the psychological dynamics of the problem; the child recognizes them almost immediately.
5. If there are other children in the family, we deal with all of them, not only with the "problem child." His problems are closely related to the behavior of every other member of the group. One has to understand the whole group and the existing interrelationships, the lines of alliance, competition, and antagonism to really understand the concept and behavior of any one member.
6. The main objective of our work is the change in the relationships between child and parent, and between the siblings. Without such a change it is impossible to alter the child's behavior, his lifestyle, his approaches to social living, and his concept of himself in relationship to others.

ADLERIAN PARENTING CONCEPTS AND METHODS: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

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KNOWLEDGE / UNDERSTANDING OF:	BRIEF DESCRIPTION:
The Democratic Revolution	A social trend especially pronounced since WWII. The “Democratic Revolution” refers to the fact that all previously oppressed groups: e.g. labor, women, and minorities have one by one all stood up for equality. Consequently children, who now live in a world where there is literally no one to model a status of inferiority for them, adopt the attitude that they also have equal value. Children consequently resist and rebel against traditional autocratic parenting consisting of the imposition of rules, punishments, and rewards. Mutual respect is therefore the most essential principle for effective relationships.
Parenting Styles	Understand (1) Coercive, (2) Pampering, and (3) Respectful / Democratic styles of parenting and their impact on child development, the parent / child relationship, and child misbehavior.
Parent’s Own Life Story	Research has shown clearly that a parent’s own understanding of their life story, how their relationship in their family of origin effects their own relationship with their children, and from this knowledge making important adjustments is the single most important variable in parental effectiveness.
Family Constellation, Birth Order Dynamics	Understand that parents and children are mutually influential, all having impact on the family system. Understand the role of birth order vantage and the effects of the siblings on each other, especially the impact of “psychological competition”.
Family Values, Values Overstressed	Understand that when a parent’s values are over-stressed or where both parents share the same values, this presents an unavoidable issue for the child. The most common child adaptation is to internalize the value, or to rebel against it.
The Goals of Misbehavior	Understand that most all child/teen misbehavior is goal directed, and is designed to achieve an unconscious purpose. Common goals of child/teen misbehavior are (1) Attention, (2) Service, (3) Power, (4) Revenge, and (5) Proof of Inadequacy/Avoidance. Parents typically, through their effort to correct the behavior, reinforce the goal.
The Fundamental Principle of Mutual Respect in Parental Leadership	Understand that parental leadership is vital. In our democratic world, the fundamental principle of mutual respect is the foundation of effective leadership. Mutual respect means interacting in such a way as to respect oneself and the child. When the principle is violated and children are discouraged, misbehavior is increased and children develop in unhealthy ways. When parents are guided by this principle in their communication, problem solving, and discipline, misbehavior is reduced and children develop in healthy ways.

PARENTING METHODS:	BRIEF DESCRIPTION:
Encouragement	The root word is COURAGE. A parental attitude, translated into behavior that communicates, “You are capable and I believe in you”. Implication: never do for a child what a child can do for her/himself. A parent’s job is to do themselves out of a job.
Having Fun Together / Special Time	Building or repairing the relationship by engaging in enjoyable activity together. For children whose misbehavior is attention getting in nature, planning and scheduling one to one special time with that child, whereby the parent connects to the child and the child’s interests, is especially effective.
Establish Order / Routine	Children learn best when their daily routines are clear and predictable. It is important to work out routines together.
Establish Boundaries / Limits	It is important for parents to be clear about and stand firm with respect to what is NOT OK regarding unhealthy, illegal, and high risk behavior. It is important for parents to communicate why the established boundaries and limits are essential and what the consequences are for going beyond the boundaries and limits.
Take Time for Training	It is important for parents to take the time to share their expectations, values, and to impart knowledge and skill to their children.
Giving Responsibility	Children cannot be taught responsibility, it can only be given. When a child holds developmentally appropriate responsibility, this is encouraging. Experience and natural consequences become the child’s teacher.
Level Communication: Reflective Listening	Demonstrating Empathy (listening so kids will talk) – “It sounds like you’re feeling frustrated with your homework assignment.”
Level Communication: I-Messages	Taking Responsibility for your point of view and feelings (talking so kids will listen) “When we make plans and you oversleep, I feel disappointed because I look forward to spending time together.”
Recognize and Disengage From Goals of Misbehavior	Based on what the parent is feeling, learn to identify the Goal of Misbehavior. Avoid your first impulse. Do the opposite of what the child may expect. Disengage from the goal oriented behavior, not the child.
Limited Choices	Especially relevant for younger children, e.g. “Do you want to put your pajamas on now, or after the program is over?”

PARENTING METHODS:	BRIEF DESCRIPTION:
Natural Consequences	<p>Allowing children to experience the natural result of the choices they make, e.g. the child forgets to bring lunch money to school, the child experiences hunger.</p> <p>Also involves discussing with children the natural consequences of their choices and actions so that they can make a direct connection between the present and the future and thus make more effective choices.</p>
Logical Consequences	<p>Actively establishing a consequence for the irresponsible or disturbing behavior based on the 3 R's, (1) related, (2) respectful, and (3) reasonable, e.g. child leaves bicycle outside, the child loses the privilege of using the bike for a few days. A variation especially appropriate for older children and teens is "consequences in advance". Following problem behavior, the child and parent mutually decide on a logical consequence in the future if the problem were to recur.</p>
Mutual Problem Solving	<p>Engaging the child in a collaborative discussion aimed at understanding the problem, developing relevant solutions, and making a commitment to follow through on the agreed upon plan.</p>
The Family Meeting	<p>A scheduled meeting that occurs each week whereby the family democratically shares concerns, seeks solutions, plans activities, and encourages one another.</p>
Going On Strike	<p>A strategy to respond to the challenge when, in spite of repeated efforts to correct the problem, children maintain a pattern of disrespect and irresponsibility in the family or toward the parent. The parent decides to cease offering the expected benefits and services to the child, e.g. providing rides or cooking meals, for a designated period of time or until a new agreement is reached. This method is especially relevant for parents who have tended to overindulge their child(ren) and have engaged in a "pampering" style of parenting.</p>
Declaring Bankruptcy	<p>A strategy to deal with power struggles, especially relevant for parents who have engaged in the "coercive" or controlling style of parenting. Instead of continuing the pattern of power and control, the parent shares her/his utter discouragement, and helplessness in knowing what to do to improve the relationship. This response tends to be: (1) unexpected, (2) respectful, and (3) creates space for the child to begin contributing to a new solution.</p>

THE MUTUAL STORY-TELLING TECHNIQUE

Based on the work of Richard A. Gardner, M.D.
Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D.

Appropriate for children ages 4 to 11 (or so)

1. Set the scene - the child is a guest on a T.V. show, e.g. *Dr. Steve's Storytelling Hour*. Make it real. Make believe there is a camera, build in commercial breaks, etc.
2. To facilitate readiness and relaxation ask the child concrete/closed questions, e.g. name, age, grade, family member, where from...
3. Rules: The child must make up the story, it cannot be a story based on something that actually happened, from a book, movie, T.V., etc. Convey this rule to the child.
4. Have the child tell a story. Some children may require assistance beginning the story. If so the counselor can initiate the story by stating, "Once upon a time", or "Once upon a time there was a boy/girl named...." and then point to the child and facilitate further as necessary by adding, "and then he/she...." again pointing to the child to continue. This back and forth process may be used until the child gets "into" the story. Feel free to ask questions about the story in order to better understand it, being careful not to interfere in the child's meaning and process. If the child's maturity level and verbal ability allows it, you may ask the child to tell the morale or lesson of the story following its completion. The counselor may wish to take notes about the child's story.

The child's story is understood as a "projection", a symbolic description of the child's subjective view of life - his/her creative way of "seeing the world", including, themselves, others, relationships, life, and their challenges." The story provides clues to the child's developing belief system, including unconscious goals (of significance, security and success) and strategies for coping and solving problems. The counselor is thus able to learn about the child's inner and outer life through storytelling, a domain familiar and comfortable to the child.

The counselor is also able to "counsel" the child within the domain of the child's story. The important advantage here is the ability to work creatively within the child's own world of perception. A counselor can offer important observations, interpretations and suggestions without communicating in the typical vertical manner so characteristic of direct dialogue with children (where the child is obviously inferior to the counselor).

5. The counselor now tells a story. The counselor may interject a break for a commercial message in order to make the time necessary to create the story. It is important to determine which figure or figures in the story represent the child her/himself and other important people in the child's environment. The counselor's story includes the same characters and themes as the child's story. The story is changed, however, to include a more realistic and courageous view of the child and his/her world and more adaptive and effective strategies for responding to the challenges and difficulties described by the child. A common way to facilitate this is for the counselor to bring into the story an additional character(s), e.g. a "Wise Old Owl". Through this wise and benevolent figure, the counselor provides acceptance, validation, perspective, observations, suggestions, and new possibilities to who in the story the child is likely represented by.

If the child was asked to provide a morale to the story, the counselor provides a morale at the end of their story.

How the therapist makes use of the story in therapy varies depending on the therapist's theoretical perspective and style.

A more directive approach might be exploring the stories together verbally and/or by having the child draw the stories, by asking the child who she/he might be in the story, and who the other characters might be, what real life situation or problem the story is like, what the metaphors the child uses in the story says about how the child sees or feels about the situation or problem, and what the therapists story might say about different ways of looking at things, and different possibilities or solutions. This follow up conversation is best done in subsequent sessions vs immediately following the experience during the same session.

A non-directive approach might be to let the story speak for itself, realizing the experience allows the child to process some relevant aspect of their life providing a more reality-based perspective, integration, and new possibilities. How this might change things can be discerned through the child's developing countenance and behavior.

6. *What is learned through this process can be a useful way of helping the child understand what's going on and what possibilities there may be for coping with or addressing whatever the issues may be. What is learned may also be useful to the parent, providing a new way for the parent to experience their child's concerns and inner world. I have found that by recording the experience; the child's story and the therapists story, not only provides a more realistic portrayal of a radio or television program, it provides a recording of the child sharing their meanings and feelings about important relationships, needs, and challenges. With the child's approval, having a parent witness the recording can be incredibly illuminating and powerful. The parent gets to learn something important that otherwise may never be communicated in day to day life. A number of times I have been a witness when parents became involved in this way, with dramatic and meaningful results.*

LIFESTYLE NOTES

Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D. (1991)

Roughly equivalent to the term "personality".

Emphasizes the creative - cognitive aspect of the human process.

A phenomenological concept - understanding from the "inside . . . out".

We enter life disoriented, we must orient to survive, we orient by drawing conclusions, by forming meanings, the early conclusions provide the foundation of the belief system, the early conclusions are naturally mistaken in small or large ways (Maybell, 1989) "the realm of meanings is the realm of mistakes" (Adler).

Lifestyle provides an orientation function and can be thought of metaphorically as providing a *Mirror, Map, and Compass* (Maybell, 1989).

Prior to choosing the term lifestyle or "style of life", Adler used the following terminology: life plan, lifeline, psychological main axis.

Max Weber - Pioneer sociologist coined the term "lifestyle" to refer to the folkways, traditions, tendencies, and commonalities of all subcultures.

Adler was drawn to the term due to the artistic aspect . . . "style"

The foremost task of I.P. is to prove this unity in each individual - in his thinking, feeling, acting, in his conscious and unconscious, in every expression of his personality. This self-consistent unity we call the style of life of the individual. (Adler in Ansbacher, page 175)

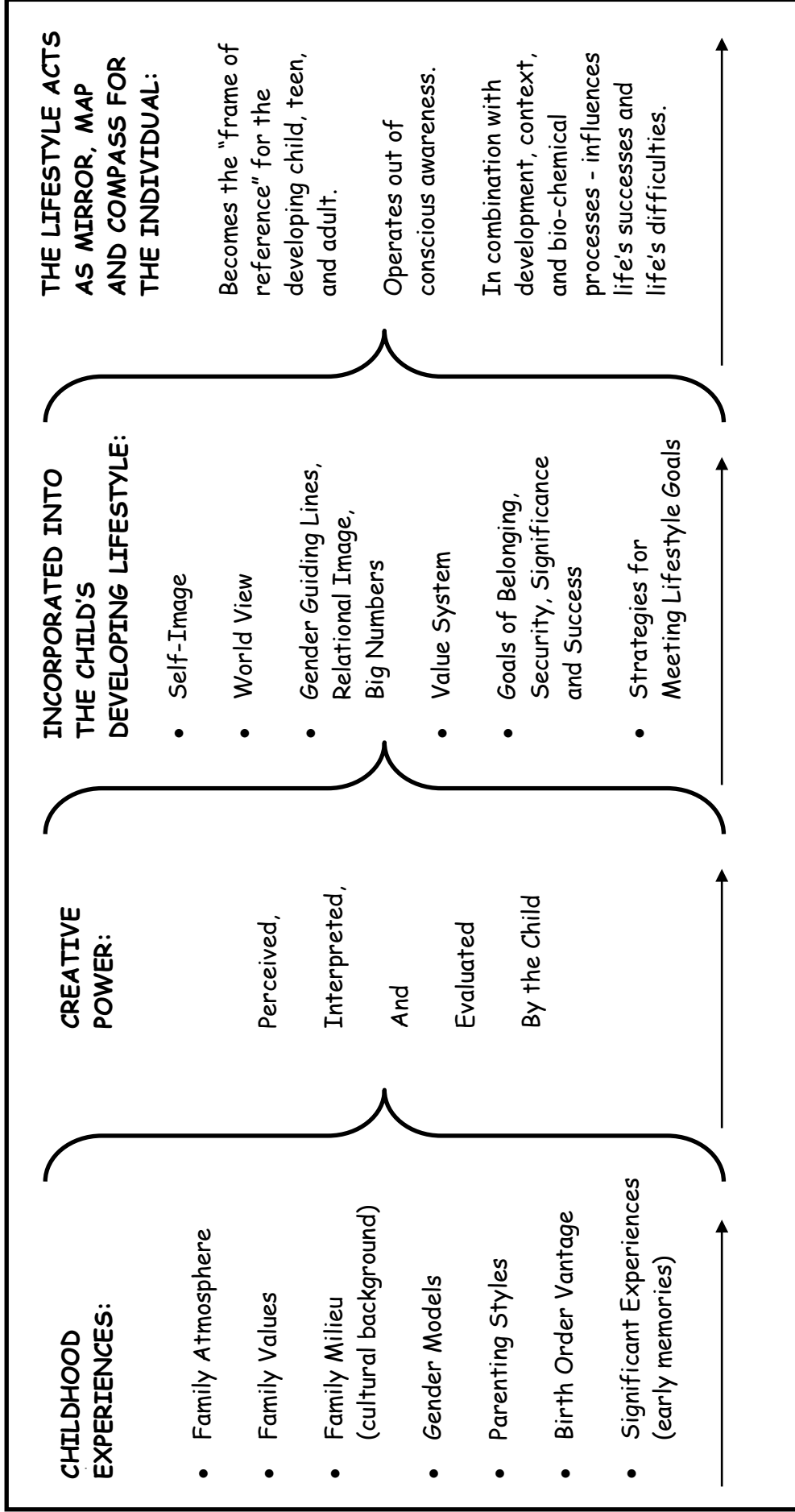
The style of life is the concept comprising in addition to the goal, the individuals opinion of himself, and the world and his unique way of striving for the goal in his particular situation (Adler in Ansbacher, page 172).

The style of life commands all forms of expression, the whole commands the parts. (Adler in Ansbacher, page 175)

The lifestyle provides an orientation function for the whole person. Perception, emotion, behavior, and bio-chemical processes all cooperate with its construction and direction (Maybell, 1989).

LIFESTYLE DEVELOPMENT

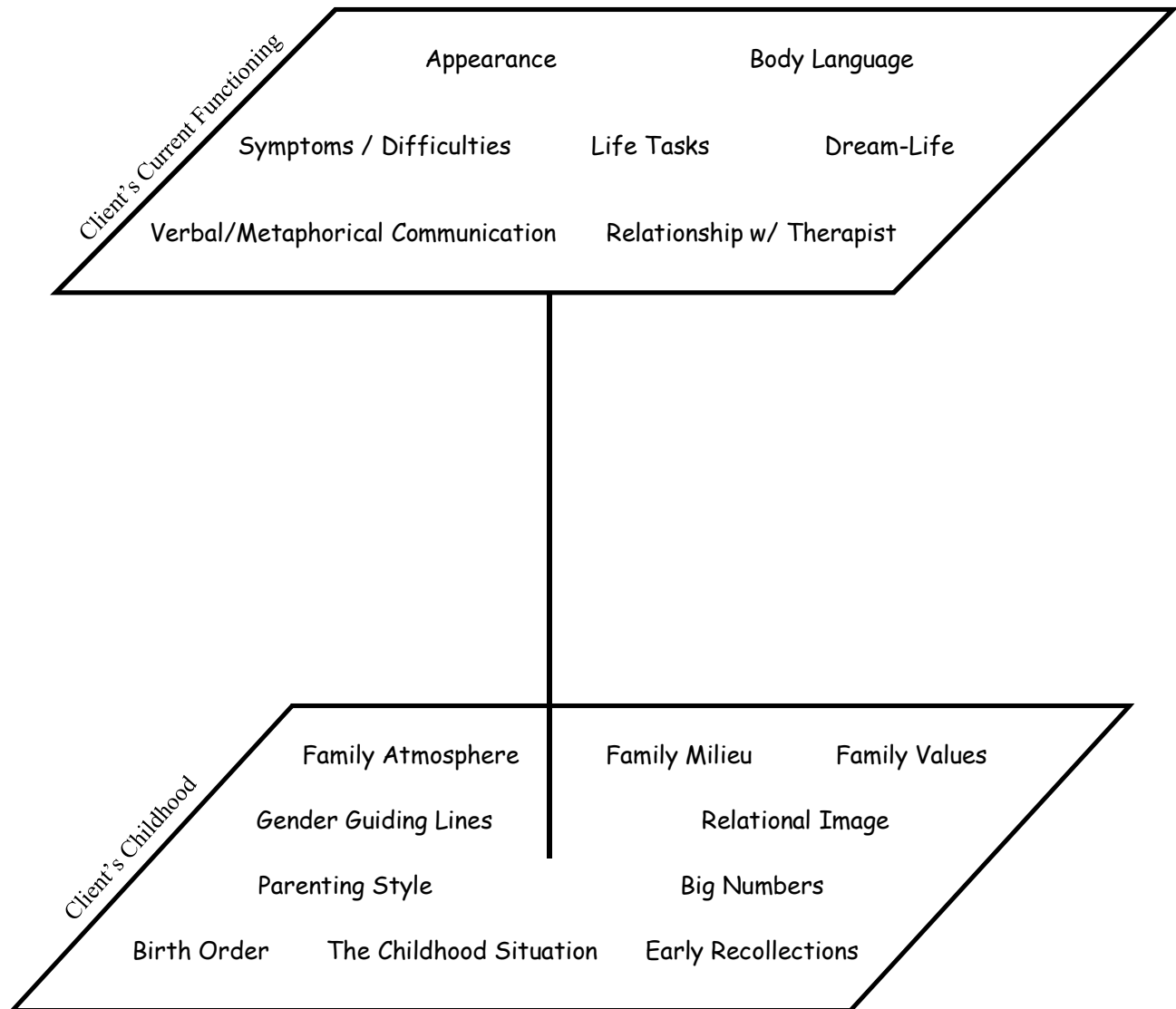
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LIFESTYLE ASSESSMENT– TWO POINTS ON A LINE

Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D. © 2002

We have made the important contention that the understanding of human nature can never be learned by the examination of isolated phenomena which have been withdrawn from their entire psychic context and relationships. It is essential for this understanding that we compare at least two phenomena which are separated by as great a time as possible and connect them within a unified pattern. (Alfred Adler - Understanding Human Nature page 152)



Adlerian Holistic Thinking - "The Critical Connection"

Therapist thought process for connecting "two points on a line" and framing interpretations:

What possible interpretation of the childhood incident or experience would make the current behavior understandable and/or beneficial?

LIFESTYLE ASSESSMENT WITH PARENTS*An Adlerian / Dreikursian Approach*

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Name: _____

Date: _____ Age: _____

Note: It is assumed that prior to engaging in Lifestyle Assessment, Counselor will have gathered information about the parent's health/medical issues, and for the family they are the parent of: their concerns, parent-child dynamics, and relevant history.

Issues to Address: What do you want to better understand about your approach to parenting: your parenting style, attitude, feeling ,or behavior toward your child(ren), the issues that result in conflict or difficulty?

When you first became aware that you were going to be a parent:

- ◆ What kind of a parent did you want to make sure you would be?

- ◆ What kind of a parent did you want to make sure you would never be ?

- ◆ What kind of a person did you want to make sure your son/daughter developed into?

- ◆ What kind of person did you want to make sure your son or daughter never became ?

From this section forward all questions are to be answered from the vantage point of the client (parent) as a child

Family Atmosphere: Describe the atmosphere of the family(s) you were raised in. How would you describe the climate, feeling tone, the general environment of the family?

Family Values: Describe those values that were prominent in your family. If you were raised by more than one parent, which values did both parents agree upon?

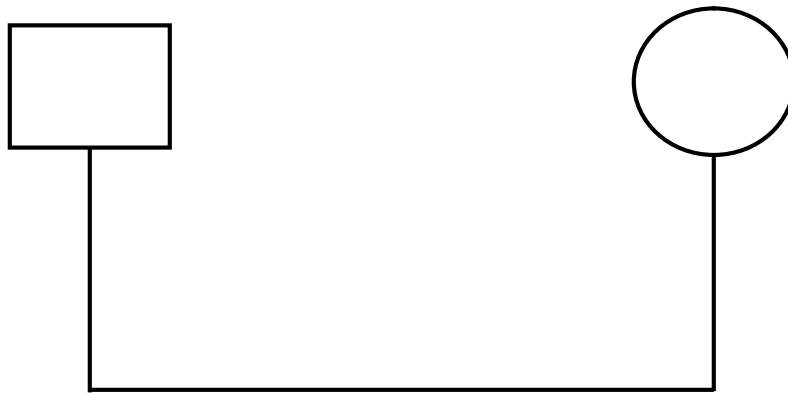
Parenting Style(s): Describe how your parent(s) parented you and the children in your family? Include each parent(s) parenting style, manner of communication, problem solving and discipline, support and affection provided . . . and how you felt about the way you were treated.

Most Memorable Observation: As you think about your family about age 11, 12, 13 or so, what conclusion do you think you drew? It may have been positive or negative or both. Be specific about what you liked and didn't like.

--

GENOGRAM

The larger square and circle below represent the (parent) client's biological father and mother respectively. Add circles and squares below this level to represent the client and her/his siblings, and fill in the level above to represent grandparents, aunts, and uncles.
Add circles and squares to represent other family members and narrative descriptions of all family members.
Adlerian Qualifier: Important to have descriptions of family members be from the vantage point of the parent (client) as a child.



EARLY RECOLLECTIONS

Gather three or more early recollections. Begin with the earliest recollection the client (parent) can recall. For each recollection describe the feelings of the child at each stage of the memory, and identify the most vivid moment in the memory.

Age	Description of Memory	Feelings

**ADLERIAN FAMILY THERAPY
LIFESTYLE ASSESSMENT WITH PARENTS
CASE EXAMPLE**

Steven A. Maybell, Ph.D. © 2000

Current Family Constellation:

Don (Dad): Out of town much of the time and works late (construction contractor). Not significantly involved in family life. When home, somewhat aloof, leaving domestic and parenting responsibilities to his wife. Not involved in the counseling. Wants Justin and Sandi to “just get along”.

Sandi (Mom): Very involved in domestic and parenting activities. Works part time. Wants the very best for Justin. Is anxious about both being a mom and about what kind of a person Justin will turn out to be. Is absolutely O.K. with Don being away so much and not sharing in domestic and parenting tasks.

Justin (age 11): A sweet boy in session – communicative and friendly. Admits to having conflicts with his mom. Does not know why he is so defiant towards her. Does fine at school. He had a recognition response to the goal of power when using goal disclosure technique.

Presenting Problem: (from Mom)

Justin is defiant. He seems to enjoy making me mad. I over-react to him. He pushes my buttons. We spend way too much time fighting. I just need for him to behave and mind me. I don't know why he won't mind me, I am so good to him. I don't know why I am so obsessively concerned about what kind of parent I am and how Justin will turn out.

Course of Family Counseling:

Things would improve for awhile and then there would be some small conflict and mom would over-react in anger. At these times she would feel guilty, blame Justin and question whether counseling was helping. I convinced Sandi that it would be useful for us to explore and for her to better understand the connection between (1) the beliefs formed in her childhood, and (2) her perceptions, feelings and behavior in her present family situation.

Sandi's Lifestyle Information:

Family Atmosphere: Tension and Alienation.

Family Constellation:

Dad – Police officer, also “psychotic”, in and out of treatment. Would bully me, mom, and my brother. He’d get in my face. He was so unpredictable. He’d be decent one moment and for no apparent reason erupt into a rage.

Mom – Not there. Always in her room. Seemed gloomy all the time. The house was a disaster and there was no routine or organization. Never stood up for herself with Dad, “a doormat”. Never stood up for us kids.

Dave (+3) – A bully just like Dad. The more Dad punished him for bullying me, the more he enjoyed it.

Sandi – Discouraged much of the time, but never gave up. Thought a lot about what she could do to “save her family”. Succeeded in school. Hated going home. Always dreamed of the perfect family.

Early Recollections:

- (1) (age 7) Working on my homework, stumped with a math problem. Went to the bedroom and asked mom for help. She told me she’d be out to help in a little while. She spent the rest of the evening in bed. (feeling: rejected – insignificant)
- (2) (age 9) My brother is badgering me about how dumb I look. It was my birthday. I ask him to leave my room. He laughs and grabs my arm and twists it hard. I begin to cry. He laughs and finally leaves to answer the phone. (feeling: frustrated, angry, hurt, humiliated)
- (3) (age 14) My Dad is in my face, about what I do not know. I finally have had enough. I do something I’ve never done before, I get in his face and tell him that I won’t take it from him anymore! He backs off and begins to whimper. He never bullies me again! (feeling: fear, anger, new sense of strength, finally a victory)

Family Therapy Questions:

- 1) For the Lifestyle Themes below, what beliefs does Sandi seem to be operating on? (Based on her description of her family of origin and her early recollections)
 - What are men like?
 - What are women like?
 - To be a successful parent, what must I avoid?
 - To be a successful parent, what must I do?
- 2) How are these lifestyle convictions “playing out” in her own current family and contributing to “the problem” with Justin?

Adlerian Theory and Therapy – The First Family Systems Model

A noteworthy precursor of family systems therapy was the family education and child guidance movement developed as early as 1922 by Alfred Alder and his followers. In many ways Adler can be considered the first family therapist.

(AATBS National MFT License Exam Study Guide)

Alfred Adler was the first psychologist of the modern era to do family therapy using a systemic approach. He set up more than 30 child guidance clinics in Vienna after World War I. Adler conducted open public forum family counseling to educate parents and professionals in greater numbers.

(Gerald Corey in “Theory and Practice of Counseling and Psychotherapy 7th Edition”)

In the Study of marital and family counseling, Adlerian theory is an area that is often omitted. Students tend to study exclusively only those models that came into being as the discipline of family therapy was being developed in the 1950’s and after. It is from the work of Alfred Adler and his followers that most of the systemic theories find their roots, however formal acknowledgement of his theoretical position has seldom been noted.

(Rebecca LaFountain and Beverly Mustaine in “Infusing Adlerian Theory into Marriage and Family Therapy Curriculums” in “The Family Journal” July 1988)

*Alfred Adler chose to call his theory Individual Psychology. The term, individual was taken from the Latin *individuum*, meaning indivisible; indicating a holistic, systemic view of personality and behavior and recognizing the need to understand all behavior primarily from the larger social context(s) in which it occurs. Adler’s theory seeks explanations of all problems by considering the interrelationship of the parts and the whole. Perhaps Adler’s greatest mistake was in not labeling his psychology “Systems Psychology,” while the term was still available to him.*

(William Nicoll in “Couples Therapy, An Adlerian Perspective”)

Equality

- (1) *There should be no ruler in the family and every occasion for feelings of inequality should be avoided.*

(Alfred Adler in *What Life Should Mean to You*, page 135).

- (2) *Adults are usually deeply disturbed by the notion that children are their social equals. They indignantly deny such a possibility, "Don't be ridiculous, I know more than my child does, he cannot possibly be my equal". No of course not. Not in knowledge, or experience, or skill. But these things don't indicate equality – even among adults. Equality doesn't mean uniformity! Equality means that people, despite all their differences and abilities, have equal claim to dignity and respect.*

(Rudolf Dreikurs in *Children the Challenge*, page 8)

- (3) *This dissatisfaction with the sexual role is very frequent in our culture . . . it is impossible to avoid problems in marriage unless we truly have the feeling that men and women are equal; and so long as one half of the human race has reason to be dissatisfied with the position accorded it, we shall have a great obstacle to the success of marriage. The remedy here is training for equality.*

(Alfred Adler in *What Life Should Mean to You*, page 276)

- (4) *As I would not be a slave, so I would not be a master. This expresses my idea of democracy. Whatever differs from this, to the extent of the difference, is no democracy.*

(Abraham Lincoln in *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* edited by Roy P. Basler, Volume II, (August 1, 1858), p. 532)

The Unanswered and often Unasked Question that most every parent has when entering Family Counseling – and that must be answered to “Win Them Over”

- (5) *Why should I change, I am doing everything as well if not better than my own parents, and I turned out all right. Consequently the problem must be my child . . . fix him please..... Helping Parents to understand the Democratic Revolution is essential in answering this question... that it is not that they are an inadequate parent or have inadequate children, but that times have changed, and what once worked which they learned from their parents (as passed down through the generations) . . . no longer works and in fact is a major part of the problem . . . Our task is in helping parents see how Superiority / Inferiority Dynamics are at work in their relationships and how this connects to “the concern, the complaint, the problem”.*

(Steven A. Maybell)

The Adlerian Multi-Systems Approach – The “Zoom Lens” Metaphor

- (6) *The perspective of Adlerian Family Therapy might be viewed as analogous to that of a movie cameraman looking through a “zoom lens”. At times, the therapist moves to a wide-angle view to see the family system and its societal/cultural influences. At other times the therapist may choose to zoom in to focus on the pattern of parent-child or couple relationship dynamics. Still at other times the therapist may zoom in further to focus on the child/teen or individual parent. Intervention and change may occur at any of these levels, changing both the parts and the whole. This is the power and the strength of Adlerian Psychology – which is simultaneously a holistic, psychodynamic, family / social systems, and cognitive-behavioral model.*

(Adapted from William G. Nicoll in Adlerian Couples Therapy, page 4)

Overindulgence and the Pampered Style of Life

- (7) *A situation resulting in a mistake in the meaning given to life is the situation of the pampered child. The pampered child is trained to expect that his wishes will be treated as laws. He is granted prominence without working to deserve it and he will generally come to feel this prominence as a birthright. In consequence, when he comes into circumstances where he is not the center of attention and where other people do not make it their chief aim to consider his feelings, he will be very much at a loss, he will feel that his world has failed him. He has been trained to expect and not to give. Others have been so subservient to him that he has lost his independence and does not know that he can do things for himself. His interest was devoted to himself and he never learned the use and necessity of cooperation. When he has difficulties before him, he has only one method of meeting them – to make demands on other people. It seems to him that if he can regain his position of prominence, if he can force others to recognize that he is a special person and should be granted everything he wants, then and only then will his situation improve.*

These grown up pampered children are perhaps the most dangerous class in our community. Some of them make great pronouncements of good will; they may even become very “loveable” in order to secure an opportunity to tyrannize; but they are on strike against cooperating, as ordinary human beings, in our ordinary tasks . . . they feel “Life means – to be first, to be recognized as the most important, to get everything I want,” and so long as they continue to give this meaning to life, every method they adopt will be mistaken.

(Alfred Adler in What Life Should Mean to You, page 16)

Psychoclarity with Parents

- (8) How you made sense of your childhood experiences has a profound effect on how you parent your own children. Recent findings in neurobiology and attachment research has resulted in conclusive evidence that the most important thing a parent can do to address their concerns about their children and their family is to develop a deeper understanding of their own life stories. Understanding how we remember and how we construct a picture of ourselves as a part of the world we live in can help us make sense of how the past continues to impact our lives. In the absence of reflection, history often repeats itself, and parents are vulnerable to passing on to their children unhealthy patterns from the past. Understanding our lives can free us from the almost predicatable situation in which we recreate the damage to our children that that was done to us in our own childhoods (or overcompensate for that which was done to us). Research has clearly demonstrated that our children's attachment to us will be influenced by what happened to us when we were young if we do not come to process and understand those experiences. By making sense of our own lives we can deepen a capacity for self understanding and bring coherence to our experience, our views of the world, and our interactions with our children.

(Daniel Siegel, M.D. in *Parenting from the Inside Out*, 2004)

The Social Responsibility of the Therapist (Psychologist, Social Worker, Counselor)

- (9) The honest therapist cannot become so focused on the problems of the individual so as to shut their eyes from seeing social conditions which prevent the child and human being from becoming a part of the community and from feeling at home in the world, and which allow a person to grow up as if she lived in an enemy country. Thus the therapist must work and take action against nationalism when it is so poorly understood that it harms humankind as a whole, against wars of conquest, revenge, and prestige; against unemployment which plunges people into hopelessness; and against all other obstacles which interfere with the spreading of community feeling, of belongingness in the family, the school, and society at large.

(Alfred Adler)

RESUME

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Current Positions:

- CoHear/BCS: Counseling and Psychotherapy services in a private practice setting
- PT Faculty: Marriage & Family Therapy, Seattle Pacific University / Couple & Family Therapy, Seattle University
- The Institute of Adlerian Counseling and Therapy: Adlerian training and clinical supervision

Past Professional Experience:

- Director of the Student Counseling Center: Seattle Pacific University (2005-2019)
- Clinical Director: Youth Eastside Services, Bellevue, Washington (1996-2005)
- Director of Counseling Services: Lifeline Community Services, Vista, California (1975-1996)
- Director of Professional Studies/Faculty: The Americas Institute of Adlerian Studies (1983-1996)
- President: The San Diego Society of Adlerian Psychology (1983-1994) - Board Member: (NASAP) 1990-1998
- Faculty: Psychological and Social Services Program- Palomar College, San Marcos, CA (1976-1996)
- Faculty: The Professional School for Psychological Studies, North San Diego County (1984-1990)
- Faculty: The Adler School for Professional Psychology, Vancouver, B.C. (1996 to 2005)
- LMFT & LCSW Oral Examination Commissioner: California Board of Behavioral Sciences (1980-1996)
- Psychotherapist and Family Counselor in Private Practice (1980 to 2005)

Education:

- Bachelor's Degree in Social Work - California State University Long Beach
- Master's Degree in Social Work - San Diego State University
- Ph.D. in Counseling Psychology - La Jolla University

Specialized Training Received:

Carl Rogers (Person Centered Therapy), Virginia Satir (Family Therapy), Albert Ellis (Rational Emotive Behavioral Therapy), Victor Frankl, Rollo May, and Irving Yalom (Existential Therapy/Group Therapy), William Glasser (Reality Therapy/Choice Theory), David Epston (Narrative Therapy), Scott Miller and Barry Duncan (Narrative Therapy & the Common Factors Model), Daniel Siegel (*Interpersonal Neurobiology/The Mindsight Institute*), Peggy Pace & Cathy Thorpe (Lifespan Integration), Francine Shapiro (EMDR), Kurt Adler, Tee Dreikurs, Robert Powers, Oscar Christensen, James Bitter, Richard Royal Kopp, and Frank Walton (Adlerian Therapy).

Licensure, Certification, and Honors:

- Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist - State of Washington
- Licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker - State of Washington
- Mental Health Professional / Child Mental Health Specialist - State of Washington
- Clinical Fellow & Approved Supervisor - The American Association of Marriage and Family Therapy
- Diplomate in Adlerian Psychology - North American Society of Adlerian Psychology
- Diplomate in Professional Psychotherapy - IABMCP
- Diplomate in Clinical Social Work - National Association of Social Workers
- Certified Clinical Trauma Professional - International Association of Trauma Professionals
- EMDR training (level 2) and Lifespan Integration training (level 2)
- Clinical Supervisor of the Year - Washington Association of Marriage and Family Therapy
- Clinical Supervisor of the Year - University of Washington School of Social Work
- Certificate of Professional Studies in Adlerian Psychology - The Americas Institute of Adlerian Studies
- Who's Who Among Americas Teachers - Biographical Listing

Publications:

Calming the Family Storm, IMPACT, 2004

Raising Respectful Kids in a Rude World, PRIMA, 2001

Journal of Individual Psychology (various professional articles)

Parenting a New Tradition, LIFELINE, 1986

