

PREFACE

It was heartwarming to me to hear the recently elected president of the United States of America, Barack Obama, speak of the importance for the U.S. government to “extend a hand to,” and “find common ground with,” those with whom the U.S. has been experiencing difficult relations. The keys to cooperative relationships among nations are not so different from the keys to cooperative relationships within families and within classrooms.

Nearly one hundred years ago psychiatrist Alfred Adler emphasized that the most important role of the mother is to spread the interest of the child from the child, to mother, to father, to other members of the family and finally outside the home to other members of society. The importance of the child learning to care about the welfare of fellow human beings cannot be overemphasized. The very definition of good mental health can be described as follows: good mental health consists of moving towards the problems that life presents, in an effort to deal with those problems in a manner that is a help to us and to others who will be influenced. This edition of these publications is especially intended to be a contribution to the development of the good mental health of young people in Bulgaria.

This publication has been made available upon the occasion of my first visit to Trakia University in April, 2009, when I will offer the first in a series of presentations for students and members of the faculty involved in the helping relationships.

The invitation to me to offer presentations at Trakia University, and the publication of this book are both due to the dedicated efforts of Professor Zhaneta Stoykova, Deputy Head of the Social and Pedagogical Department in the Faculty of Education at Trakia University, who participated in my family counseling course at the International Adlerian Summer Institute held in Hungary in 2008. The principles and techniques that are the focus of this book have proven their value in helping parents, teachers, social workers, psychologists, and other mental health workers better understand young people and help them develop as responsible citizens who carry with them a concern for the welfare of fellow human beings.

Francis X. Walton, Ph.D.