

The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler: A Theoretical Overview and Illustration of Technique

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- I. In this theoretical framework behavior is viewed as follows:
 - A. **Purposeful, goal directed, selfdetermined.** Man sets his own goals and determines his own movements, although he frequently is not fully conscious of his decisions.
 - B. **Motivated by a desire to belong.** Man is motivated to find his place in society. If he feels inadequate or inferior to others, then he doubts his place in the group. Instead of moving toward participation, he defends himself against its demands.
 - C. **Holistic.** Since man is viewed as more than the sum total of his physical, mental and emotional faculties, behavior is best understood in its unity or pattern, thus the emphasis on "life style".
- II. Four phases characterize the practice of Adlerian counseling with individual clients.
 - A. **The relationship.** Development of mutual trust and respect. Agreement upon procedures and goals.
 - B. **Psychological Investigation.**
 1. Exploration of subjective situation; complaints, problems, symptoms.
 2. Exploration of objective situation; how client is functioning in the three areas of social living - work, social relationships, relationships to other sex.
 3. **Family Constellation.** An indication of how client found his place within his first group. Shows the circumstances under which he developed his conclusions about himself, others, and the world around him.
 4. **Early Recollections.** Early recollections represent conclusions the client drew from the circumstances in which he was involved. From the many experiences to which he has been exposed, he selectively recalls only those which coincide with his outlook on life.
 - C. **Disclosure.** In this phase, the client's basic premises about life and the purpose of his behavior as seen in the psychological investigation are disclosed. When the client begins to recognize his goals, his conscience becomes a motivating factor.
 - D. **ReOrientation.** Encouragement is the most important factor at this point, as the client attempts to catch himself at behavior based upon his mistaken notions, and tries to substitute more productive behavior.