

ADLERIAN COUNSELING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

SECOND EDITION



DINKMEYER • DINKMEYER • SPERRY

ADLERIAN COUNSELING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY

Second Edition

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To Rudolf and Tee Dreikurs, our teachers and friends, who have fostered and stimulated the growth of Adlerian psychology throughout the world; and to our wives and mothers.

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Foreword

Alfred Adler proposed that his psychology should be a "psychology of use." The second edition of *Adlerian Counseling and Psychotherapy* is based on this premise.

After contact with professors, editors, and graduate students across the country, the authors have expanded the text of the earlier edition in a number of ways. The chapter on Psychopathology has been reconceptualized to relate the DSM-III to Adlerian constructs. New chapters on Health Care Counseling and Counseling and Psychotherapy with the Elderly, written by a new author, a psychiatrist whose expertise is in the areas of health psychology and the elderly, expand the scope of the textbook and reflect the increasingly diverse applications of Adlerian psychology. Research studies are included to support principles.

The authors have actively solicited information from others whose expertise could clarify important principles, such as the lifestyle and priorities and how family systems theories parallel Adlerian approaches to family therapy. The authors have also adhered to the recommendations and comments of reviewers, editors, and formalized evaluations of graduate students.

The authors have thus enriched the text with extensive revisions of a number of chapters and have added three new chapters to keep step with the variety of ways practitioners apply principles of Adlerian psychology. I believe the second edition of *Adlerian Counseling and Psychotherapy* is a major contribution to the field of Counseling Psychology.

Roy M. Kern
Professor, Georgia State University

Preface

An increasing number of disciplines embrace the tenets of Individual Psychology. Adlerian ideas continue to dramatically influence the fields of psychology, psychotherapy, social work, and counseling. The North American Society of Adlerian Psychology steadily grows in membership. Although it is now fifty years since the death of Alfred Adler and more than a decade since the death of his most influential disciple, Rudolf Dreikurs, there is a resurgence of interest in Adlerian psychology. One sees evidence of this interest in the proliferation of books and educational materials and in higher attendance at conventions.

The second edition of *Adlerian Counseling and Psychotherapy* will satisfy the growing interest in this practical psychology. It is designed for use in counselor education programs and in the training of psychologists, social workers, and psychiatrists who are interested in the basics of Adlerian counseling and psychotherapy.

We begin with a brief review of the history and current status of Adlerian counseling and psychotherapy. In Chapter 3, we discuss the development of personality and the life style—a unique Adlerian concept that finds practical application in the therapeutic process. Chapter 4 presents an Adlerian understanding of psychopathology and its relationship to the DSM-III. Chapters 5 and 6 acquaint the reader with the actual process and techniques of Adlerian counseling and psychotherapy. Ensuing chapters review the application of Adlerian counseling to children and adolescents, the elderly, health care settings, to group procedures, to family and marriage counseling, and to teacher and parent education.

This book is a substantial revision of our work with W.L. Pew, published in 1979. We have added chapters on the elderly, health care counseling, and a new integration of psychopathology with standard assessment tools by Len Sperry, Ph.D., M.D.

This text was conceived while the senior author worked with Rudolf Dreikurs and was begun with his encouragement and support. Sharing Dreikurs's wisdom and techniques with the readers is personally rewarding. Don Dinkmeyer, Jr., an associate editor of the *Individual Psychology* journal and vice-president of the North American Society of Adlerian Psychology, and Len Sperry collaborated in this effort to bring the ideas of Adler and Dreikurs to the attention of the counseling profession. The book also incorporates the thinking of contemporary Adlerians such as Bernard Shulman, Harold Mosak, Kurt Adler, Heinz and Rowena Ansbacher, and Walter O'Connell. The content also reflects Don Dinkmeyer, Sr.'s intensive training at the Alfred Adler Institute of Chicago with Rudolf Dreikurs, Bernard Shulman, Harold Mosak, Bernice Grunwald, Bina Rosenberg, and Raymond Corsini.

It is virtually impossible to list all the inspiring colleagues and teachers who have contributed to this book with their constructive criticism and encouragement and to express our appreciation to all of them. We are particularly indebted to Dr. Michael Nystul, New Mexico State University; Dr. Roy Kern, Georgia State University; and Bernard Shulman, Stone Medical Center, Chicago.

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A

lfrid Adler's Individual Psychology is one of the oldest, and still most relevant, schools of psychological thought. It emerged during Adler's nine-year association with Freud as an alternative to Freud's approach. Adler's system, with its practical applications to psychotherapy and counseling, has continued to experience steady growth after a period of neglect that followed Adler's death in 1937. Today, Individual Psychology is acknowledged as the precursor of many current systems of thought and approaches to psychotherapy. Its impact can be detected in countless areas—among them, child rearing, marriage and family therapy, and school counseling.

A BRIEF BIOGRAPHY

Alfred Adler was born on February 7, 1870, in Penzing, a suburb of Vienna. He was the second of six children. His father was a middle-class Jewish merchant, and his mother was a housewife. In his early childhood, Adler suffered from poor health and was run over by a vehicle. As he grew older, his health steadily improved. His interest in medicine, which arose when he was very young, led to a medical degree at the prestigious University of Vienna in 1895.

Adler became a practicing physician in Vienna. In the fall of 1902, Freud invited him to join his discussion groups, which later grew into the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, of which Adler became president in 1910. Adler resigned from the society one year later, partly because of Freud's pressures for uniformity and strict allegiance to his theory. Contrary to popular notion, Adler was not a "disciple" of Freud (he was never psychoanalyzed by him); he was a colleague, and his ideas were often in conflict with Freud's.

After he severed his ties with psychoanalysis, Adler devoted himself to developing his own system of thought. In 1912, the Society for Individual Psychology was born and counted among its members a large number of those who had belonged to Freud's Psychoanalytic Society and who had left when Adler did. After participating in World War I as a medical officer, Adler created numerous child-guidance clinics in the Vienna public schools to serve as training vehicles for teachers, social workers, physicians, and other professionals. Adler demonstrated his techniques in front of groups of professionals—an instructional idea that had never been used before. Despite their revolutionary nature, the guidance clinics grew rapidly in Vienna and throughout Europe, and, at one point, there were nearly 50 of them. But soon political and other obstacles began to interfere with the growth of Adler's psychology in Europe.

In 1926, Adler made his first lecture tour in the United States. After that, his visits became more and more frequent, and eventually, in 1935, he fled Europe and settled in the United States, where he taught and lectured extensively. He died in 1937 in Aberdeen, Scotland, while on a lecture tour, leaving his disciples, many of whom had fled the political unrest of Europe, to carry on his work.

ADLER'S LEGACY

Adler published more than 300 books and articles.¹ Countless lectures and public demonstrations attest to his commitment to a theory that would be useful not only to professionals but to the public at large. Those who inherited Adler's legacy have continued to honor his commitment by being acutely aware of the needs of the community and by keeping alive Adler's practice of public demonstration, parent- and family-education centers, and the dissemination of useful, practical information.

After Adler's death, there was a decline of interest in his work. The Nazi regime and World War II were partly responsible, causing his disciples to scatter across the European continent and beyond. Many of them came to the United States. Here they found extreme resistance to Adler's work, which was seen as the antithesis of Freudian psychology. This erroneous perception of Adler's ideas here, the destruction of Adler's accomplishments in Europe, and the preeminence of the Freudian Approach were the main causes of the temporary decline in the recognition of Adler's contributions and in the number of practitioners of Individual Psychology.

Rudolf Dreikurs

Rudolf Dreikurs, a prolific writer and founder of the Alfred Adler Institute in Chicago, nurtured the growth of Adlerian psychology in the United States during the period of heavy psychoanalytic dominance.

Dreikurs emigrated to America in 1937 to escape Nazi persecution. His dream was to establish Adlerian child-guidance centers throughout the world. Among the numerous contributions he made to Individual Psychology before his death in 1972, especially important are his understanding of children and his unique insights into the counseling process.

Inspired by the basic Adlerian principle that all behavior has a purpose, Dreikurs formulated the four goals of misbehavior in children. He

¹Of special interest to counselors and psychotherapists are *The Practice and Theory of Individual Psychology* (Totowa, N.J.: Littlefield, Adams, 1958); *What Life Should Mean to You* (New York: Capricorn, 1958); *Understanding Human Nature* (Greenwich, Conn.: Fawcett, 1969); and *The Neurotic Constitution* (New York: Arno, 1972).

saw in those goals—attention, power, revenge seeking, and display of inadequacy—the explanation for all of a child's disruptive behavior. By categorizing misbehaviors in terms of their goals, Dreikurs offered parents and teachers an invaluable tool for dealing more effectively with children's mistaken efforts.

Dreikurs also made some interesting contributions to the area of counseling. He stressed that the interview with a client is a valuable opportunity for the counselor to show that he or she is not perfect and to offer insights not as indisputable truths but as tentative hypotheses. In Dreikurs's opinion, the counselor should look at each interview as if it might be the last. Anytime the client leaves the interview without having learned something, the counselor has failed. Dreikurs would begin each session by asking the client "What do you remember from last time?" stressing the client's responsibility for his or her own change and the continuity from session to session. It was Dreikurs who first introduced the multiple-therapist procedure to psychotherapy as a teaching method for both therapist and client.

Rudolf Dreikurs was a colorful and courageous theorist and practitioner. His insights continue to reach thousands through his writings and the continuing work of those he encouraged during his lifetime. A highly readable biography, *The Courage to be Imperfect* (Turner and Pew, 1978), gives insight into a fascinating man who battled massive odds with tremendous strength.

ADLER, A MAN AHEAD OF HIS TIME

Adler left a wealth of ideas and techniques that still serve the counseling profession well. His son, Kurt, a practitioner in New York City, has gathered what he considers the most significant examples of his father's pioneering contributions to psychotherapy and counseling (Adler, n.d.).

Alfred Adler was the first to work publicly with clients by practicing group and family therapy in front of large audiences of doctors, teachers, parents, and others. He used these demonstration settings so that other professionals could learn by observing the counseling interaction at work. No other practitioner had ever risked or shared as much as Adler did through these public demonstrations.

Adler explained neurotic symptoms as "safeguards" against threats to one's self-image and against the challenges of the outside world. Freud, instead, saw neurotic symptoms as defense mechanisms against the repression of internal, instinctual drives. Freud's interpretation of neurotic symptoms was later amended by his daughter, Anna, who recognized the existence of defenses against external, and not only internal, demands.

The existence of such defenses was first recognized in children and later extended to include the whole gamut of safeguarding devices that are employed by humans of all ages.

Adler suggested that a child's bedwetting problem has a psychological, as well as a physiological, component. Contemporary research suggests that many instances of bedwetting are in fact physiologically based but that the physiological element alone is not sufficient to explain the problem. To thousands of pediatricians who rarely find a physiological cause for bedwetting, Adler's understanding of the interaction between psychic and physiological factors is still valid today, just as it was more than 75 years ago.

In the 1920s, Adler predicted that two more generations would pass before women would achieve true equality. Women's successful struggle for equality in the past decade attests to the accuracy of this prediction. Adler didn't see much difference between domination by males and domination by tyrannical regimes like those that oppressed Europe before and during his lifetime. Instead of indulging in the popular contemporary misconception of women's inferiority, Adler stressed that inequality makes loving relationships and mutual cooperation impossible. His commitment to the equality of all people is reflected in Tyra Boldsen's plans for a monument commemorating the enfranchisement of women. Boldsen, a Danish sculptor and an early "liberationist," planned a sculpture that would have many women but only one man—Adler.

FROM AUTOCRACY TO DEMOCRACY

Adler's model fits a democratic era. The revitalization of counseling through Adler's ideas has paralleled the democratic revolution that has profoundly affected not only our institutions but our strategies for changing behavior, beliefs, and feelings. A therapist-dominated approach, like Freud's, was appropriate in an autocratic era. When powerful leaders dominated the masses, parents and schools controlled children, and minorities were ignored, it was fitting that the therapist would authoritatively prescribe and the client would passively accept the therapist's wisdom. The client's passive position on the therapist's couch alluded to the nature of the relationship and to the power of the helper. In an age of democracy, when people demand to be treated as equals, Adler's basic approach offers a model that is consistent with the times, since it views the client as a full and equal participant in the counseling process.

The shift from autocratic to democratic procedures has brought about a revolution in counseling and psychotherapy. In the past, the training of

psychiatrists, psychologists, and social workers was often heavily influenced by the psychoanalytic school of thought. Emphasis was on cause and effect, on human drives, and on a mechanistic view and explanation of behavior. While the psychoanalytic theory still has a large following, there is an increasing acceptance of other approaches—for example, rational-emotive therapy, behavior modification, reality therapy, transactional analysis, and client-centered therapy (Corsini, 1979). All these approaches share the belief that people are decision-making beings responsible for their own behavior and capable of changing it.

Walter O'Connell (1976), a past president of the North American Society of Adlerian Psychology, referred to the attitude of many contemporary practitioners and theorists as a "yes, but" acceptance of Adlerian principles. He pointed out that none of them (he specifically mentioned Viktor Frankl, Colin Wilson, Ernest Becker, Ira Progoff, and Rollo May) call themselves Adlerians, yet their belief in human development parallels Adler's. All of these "friends" acknowledge many of Adler's ideas in their own contributions to psychology, yet they qualify their similarities.

CURRENT STATUS

The North American Society of Adlerian Psychology (NASAP) is Individual Psychology's central organization in the United States and Canada. The society was founded in 1952, largely through Dreikurs's efforts. Dreikurs edited the *Journal of Individual Psychology* after Adler's death and disseminated Adlerian concepts across the North American continent, as well as abroad. Through his efforts and those of his colleagues, numerous local societies and organizations have emerged.

There are Adlerian training institutes in several cities, including Chicago, New York, and Minneapolis. When NASAP recently celebrated its 30th anniversary, it had more than 1,000 members. Although not yet impressive in numbers, the Adlerian movement is experiencing steady growth, and so is the number of practitioners who operate according to its guidelines.

The quarterly journal *Individual Psychology* now alternates issues devoted to theory and research and practice and application. NASAP has established six Interest Sections: Clinicians, Adlerian Counseling and Therapy, Family Education, Theory and Research, Education, and Business and Organizations.

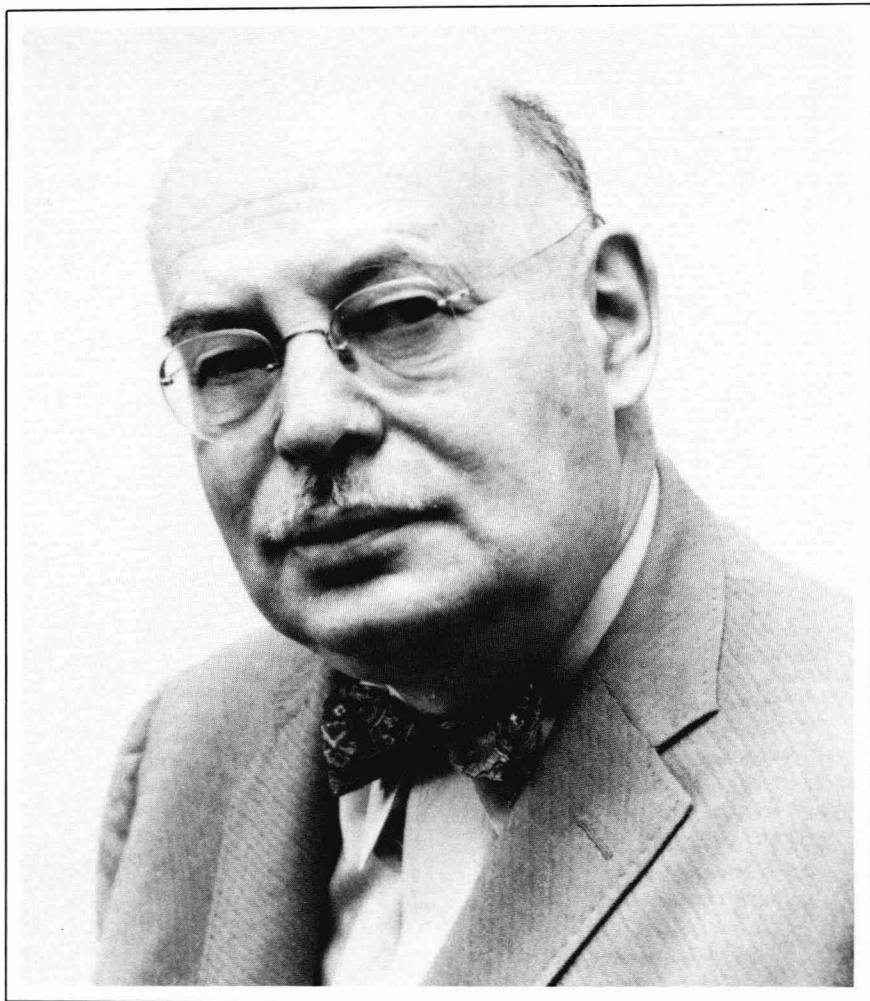
NASAP's annual convention is held each Memorial Day weekend; an annual Conference in Orlando, Florida, each February exposes many new people to Adlerian concepts. Dozens of regional and local meetings and

workshops are conducted each year across the United States and Canada. NASAP is a member of the International Association of Individual Psychology (IAIP). Once every three years, IAIP meets at a new site to bring together people who are interested in Individual Psychology; the last meeting drew attendance from more than 12 countries from Europe to Japan.

Successful practical applications of Adlerian tenets across the North American continent are so numerous that they exceed the scope of a brief review. In Chapters 15 and 16 we will discuss applications for parents and teachers, who have derived many practical educational concepts.

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2 Theoretical Foundations of Adlerian Counseling