

Theories and factors of group counselling



Abstract

In this essay, the author will discuss one theory of development as it relates to group counseling. There will be a discussion of theorist and theoretical objects as well as the techniques and applications to specific populations within a group setting. Finally, this paper will discuss group leader roles and responsibilities as it relates to group counseling.

Adlerian therapy is a short-term, goal-oriented, and positive psychodynamic therapy based on the theories of Alfred Adler—a one-time colleague of Sigmund Freud. Adler focused much of his research on feelings of inferiority versus superiority, discouragement, and a sense of belonging in the context of one's community and society at large. According to Adler, feelings of inferiority can result in neurotic behavior but, in the right setting, can also be used as motivation to strive for greater success. Adlerian therapy focuses on the development of individual personality while understanding and accepting the interconnectedness of all humans (Psychology Today, 2019).

According to the Adlerian vision, every single human being is born into a group, in which there is a need to survive. Therefore, according to the relationships established at a very young age, the child will develop helplessness that is parallel to inferiority feelings. The group will then provide the child with feelings of belonging, support, respect, and loyalty. All these elements will accommodate to every new child into the same group, promoting a different perception of the environment according to the birth order and interrelationship between family members and in defense of external forces as well (Sonstegard, Bitter, & Pelonis, 2004).

Adlerian counseling theory affirms that humans are characterized by unity across the broad spectrum of personality – cognitions, affect, and behavior. “Style of life,” the Adlerian term for personality, is a cognitive blueprint containing the person’s unique and individually created convictions, goals and personal beliefs for coping with the tasks and challenges of living (Watts, 2013).

Adler’s social view of the person is explained by the human necessity of setting both short-term and long-term goals, which influence to the behavioral development of the individual. Adler’s theoretical approach stresses self-determination and consciousness; also, the approach is based on decisions chosen by the client, the need to find meanings and the establishment of goals. Furthermore, Adlerian practitioners play the role of educators, collaborators and encouragers for the clients in the therapeutic process (Fall, Holden, and Marquis, 2010). Therefore, the individual’s behaviors can be understood only by taking a holistic methodology which includes an overview of the person’s lifestyle and social perspective.

Therefore everyone develops personal characteristics during the childhood that compensate and at times overcome inferiority feelings; these specific features distinguish the individual behaviors and decisions at the time of pursuing goals.

Core aspects of Adlerian theoretical approach: 1. Holism: this terminology refers to the view of the person as a unified whole which is indivisible. This concept means that the individual is more than the sum of the parts which includes cultural aspects, birth order, gender, social status, etc. 2. Teleology: aspect is based on the trend toward growth and expansion, according to this <https://assignbuster.com/theories-and-factors-of-group-counselling/>

vision the human being makes decisions according to past experiences, present situation and future goals. 3. Phenomenology: it emphasizes the way that individuals perceived the world in the widest aspect. 4. Creativity and choice: people are creative and strive toward perfection and self-determination. 5. Social interest and community feelings: this embedded positive interest toward others in the world. This theoretical approach equates social interest with sense of identification and empathy with others (Corey, 2000). These aspects are crucial in the practice of group counseling as the general goals of group therapy are to: increase self-esteem, interest in others, mistake assumptions, feeling equal to others and develop interest in others. 6. Inferiority-Superiority: according to Adler, children experience inferiority at some point in their growth; these feelings cannot be seen as negative, because they are the motor to overcome the sense of self-worth in order to ascend towards superiority. 7. Role of the family: The Adlerian approach emphasizes the role of the family constellation as a significant element in the development of the individual personality and behaviors. Birth order, family atmosphere, feminine or masculine guidelines, values, religion and role of the client in the family, among others are essential elements to consider during the therapy. 8. Lifestyle: this implies the selfconcept in relationship with personal and social orientation towards the social living. The perception of the world is attached to the aspects learned through family guidance. 9. Behavioral disorders: these can be considered mistaken ways of living or incorrect goals or decisions taken in life. According to this philosophy, the Adlerian approach based the therapy in education, rather than the medical model (Corey, 2000).

Adlerian group therapy starts from the assumption that the person is better understood in their social environment. The most-used methods in group therapy are: discussion groups, consulting, counseling, psychodrama, and group therapy, (Sweeney, 1989). Whether working with children or adults, with the application of the Adlerian approach, participants are considered as inherently equal, capable of assuming responsibility for their behaviors. Therefore participants are individually understood in a holistic manner as social beings, competent for changing unrealistic thoughts and dysfunctional behaviors, and able to being helped in the process of giving sense of their lives, (Sweeney, 1989).

According to some researches, Adlerian therapy is useful since people's conflicts are identifiable as social, not only because the group is suitable to identify public maladjustment but because the therapy modality challenges these behaviors offering corrective influences. Also, inferiority feelings may be challenged to offset the negative concepts and values that form the roots of social and emotional issues, (Corey, 2000). On the other hand, group therapy facilitates the social framework in which the participants may develop the sense of belonging and community. According to Dinkmeyer (1987), group participants bring to the therapy their interpersonal issues, community meaning and in order to help them in the most appropriate manner it is required for the therapist complete awareness of their socio-cultural framework to understand their goal settings. According to him, some of the therapeutic factors are: the identification between group members' behavior, participants can be beneficial from others group members' feedback, capability to help other and receive assistance from others participants.

Furthermore, the group facilitates the possibility of trying new behaviors, and encourages the members to take action over their lives. There are four stages in group therapy that correspond to four goals in counseling: 1.

Establishing and maintaining cohesive relationships with members: the therapy is based on the idea of equality between members, mutual respect and identical involvement. The introduction of democratic bases from the facilitator, who is the participant mediator, is very valid. Both, members and therapist work together in the process to explore and look for change during the sessions, (Corey, 2000). 2. Analysis and assessment: as the individual's lifestyle and goals are more evident during the therapeutic process; the facilitator might explore participants' functioning in the society. According to this theory approach, the counselor must assess clients through techniques like: early recollections, family constellation, birth order, relationship difficulties, dreams and goals as well. According to Mosak (1998), during the recollection of information, the counselor will find some of the most common mistakes made by clients. These are generalizations, false or impossible goals of security, misperception of life, minimizations of the facts and defective values. During this stage the counselor must integrate and summarize the data collected and analyze the mistaken notions of the individuals in order to help them to set rational goals. 3. Awareness and insight: according to this approach, insight is the only step to achieve change. Group sessions are more effective to reach self-awareness than individual therapy. This is because the interaction between members and feedbacks to each other's facilitate the process to recognize equality and social connection. Furthermore, the group members learn how to explore into their own goals, mistakes, and lifestyle. It is common to find some grade

of resistance to change that at the same time, it could be overcome by mutual motivation between participants. In order to facilitate the insight process, the therapist must explore with the group, feelings through the use of techniques as open-ended sharing that encourage the group members to respond to certain statements with a new understanding of themselves. This technique helps the group to develop fresh and constructive concepts about themselves, (Corey, 2000). 4. Reorientation and reeducation: this happens at the end of the group process, when both, leaders and participants working to challenge mistaken beliefs about self and others. During this stage, participants are encouraged to take action in concordance with the lessons learned within the group. Although, encouragement is important in all stages, during the reorientation, is essential to enforce encouragement in the group in order for the participants to start experiencing their own inner resources, to empower themselves and to choose according to the interests that they consider more appropriate in their lives. Therefore encouragement is necessary for the foundation of support by removing social distances and reducing the risk of self-disclosure. Furthermore, it serves for the members to accept themselves and find their own place in the world, (Sonstergard et al. 2004). The main goal of this last stage is to help the individuals to translate their insights into the creation of new actions; this is if the participants believe in change, then they must be willing to set tasks to achieve.

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