

Adlerian Theory and Addiction

Anyone can become an addict

A Theory's Use

- Pair of glasses
- Doctors curve glasses in a way that meets your individual needs

Adler's Glasses

- Social embeddedness
- Inferiority
- Phenomenology
- Holism and teleology (hands in conflict)
- General purpose of behavior
- Gemeinschaftsgefühl, Social interest, and courage

Holism and Teleology

The concepts of holism and teleology combine to explain that all of your thoughts, feelings, and actions move towards the same goal

Table Discussion

How might sleeplessness move someone to a
felt-plus situation?

Indecisive Spouse (thought exercise)

- Given holism and teleology, what can we conclude?
- What might be the purpose of his indecisiveness?

Phenomenology

- Spouses and blinds
- Concepts of holism, teleology, and phenomenology
 - Show us that the way you construct your way of striving for your goal depends on your unique interpretations of self, others, and life (McCarty & Christian, 2020)
- Striving for superiority looks different for everyone

What is a Lifestyle?

A set of convictions (i.e., premises) that lead to a conclusion.

- I am _____.
 - Others are _____.
 - Life is _____.
 - Therefore, I must _____.
-
- You used your creative power to make your template (i.e., pair of glasses) while still a child.
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- Free vs. restricted-creative power

Some Characteristics of an Addict

- High goals and little tolerance for life's burdens
 - Looks for the easy way out of troubles
- Impatient, fears failure, prone to emotional outbursts
- Escaping reality by self-medicating
- Guilt and emptiness
- Hypersensitive
- Denial
- Blames
- Self-destructiveness
- Deficient social interest
- Attach to anyone who gives assistance

The Road to Safeguarding

- Addicts are discouraged people who have lost hope of successfully meeting life's demands in a socially interested way.
 - This creates a shock effect (helps to discover when this first happened)
- Because they lack sufficient courage to meet life's demands in a way that benefits not only themselves but also others, they center their focus on themselves, becoming increasingly self-interested.
- Their goal becomes the salvaging of their self-esteem above all else.
 - Addictive behavior safeguards their self-esteem.
- You don't understand the sufferer until you see that, given his/her lifestyle convictions, addiction is a reasonable answer.

A question for you

If the problem involves them lacking the courage to approach life's demands with social interest—and being too self-centered—what might be the solution?

Treatment

- Complete abstinence—inpatient withdrawal often necessary
- Increase courage, social interest, and tolerance of inferiority feelings
- Understand the client
 - See purpose of their symptoms
 - What is gained? What is avoided?
 - The question: What would you do if you weren't addicted?
 - Find and change any unrealistic lifestyle conviction or goals that lead to using
- Treat before rock bottom—meet them where they are
 - Even if they want to moderate
- Cooperative relationship of equals

Build connection via groups

- Adlerians as early as 1931 promoted groups as treatment
- It leads to close community with other addicts
 - Creates feeling of belonging
- It trains the person in social interest
- Dispels distrust
- Builds sense of responsibility

Quote

- “A central factor in the therapy [and] prevention of alcoholism is encouragement and the introduction of the person in the human community” (Adler, 1931; as recorded by Tilde Krausz)
- Overcoming addiction requires the addict to “help others to overcome their addiction” (Dreikurs, 1990, p. 214).
 - He wrote this in 1932

Activity

Do activity

The 4 Cs

- Courage
- Connect
- Count
- Capable

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