

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT OF THE ADLERIAN GROUP

<u>Dimension</u>	<u>Initial Stage</u>	<u>Working Stage</u>	<u>Final Stage</u>
Key developmental tasks and goals	Central developmental tasks are establishing empathy and creating acceptance, setting goals and making commitments, understanding one's current life-style, and exploring one's premises and assumptions. The psychological investigation that occurs in the group involves exploration of the family atmosphere and subjective interpretation of childhood events.	Members are helped to understand their beliefs, feelings, motives, and goals; they develop insight into their mistaken goals and self-defeating behaviors; they work through interpersonal conflicts; and they explore the beliefs behind their feelings. A goal is to create meaning and significance in life. Through group interaction, one's basic values and life-style become evident.	This is a time when members explore multiple alternatives to problems and make a commitment to change. They translate insights into action and make new decisions. A goal is to facilitate members' awareness of their mistaken notions through observation of fellow group members and reality testing.
Role of group leader and tasks	Main goal of the group leader is to establish a collaborative relationship and to decide with clients on the goals of the group. Leader's tasks include providing encouragement, offering support and tentative hypotheses of behavior, and helping members assess and clarify their problems. Role of leader is to observe social context of behavior in group and to model attentive listening, caring, sincerity, and confrontation. Leader helps members recognize and utilize their strengths.	Functions of leader at the working stage include interpreting early recollections and family patterns, helping members identify basic mistakes, helping members become aware of their own unique life-style, challenging members to deal with life tasks, and helping members summarize and integrate what they've learned so that they can make new plans. Leader assumes that members can best be understood by looking at their strivings and goals.	At the final stage the focus is on reeducation. Leader helps members challenge attitudes and encourages them to take risks and experiment with new behavior by translating their new ideas into actual behavior outside the group. Leader's tasks include helping members recognize their mistaken beliefs and become aware of their own self-defeating beliefs and behaviors.
Role of group members	Members state their goals and establish contracts. They are expected to be active in the group and begin to assume responsibility for the ways they want to change. Members begin to work on trust issues, which are important in the encouragement process and in developing good morale within the group.	Members become increasingly aware of their life-style. They analyze impact of family constellation; they also begin to recognize that they are responsible for their own behavior. Members provide support and challenge others so that they can explore their basic inferiority feelings. Participants learn to believe in themselves.	Members are expected to establish realistic goals. They see new options and more functional alternatives. They learn problem-solving and decision-making skills. This is a time of reorientation. Members encourage one another to redirect their goals along realistic lines.

Techniques

Basic listening skills are crucial at this time. Analysis and assessment of one's life-style and how it affects current functioning are conducted. Other techniques include questioning, reflection, and clarification.

Some of the techniques used at this stage are confrontation, interpretation, modeling, paraphrasing, encouragement, "catching oneself" in old patterns; acting "as if," and teaching.

Basic procedures at the final stage consist of encouraging members to act and to change. Contracts are reestablished, and role-playing techniques are used to help members reorient their goals. There is a continuation of the encouragement process.

Questions to consider

How can you, as a leader, establish a collaborative relationship with the members?

Since Adlerians are concerned with the ways that people strive for significance, how can the group itself be used to help members understand the ways they find meaning and the ways they meet the challenge of life?

How well are the members dealing with current life tasks? Why are the members seeking this group now?

What are some themes to look for in obtaining the life-style assessment of members?

- parental influences
- family information
- memories of each sibling
- role in the family
- earliest recollections
- critical turning points in life

What are the values of focusing on clients' beliefs and motives with the intention of helping them develop insight into their mistaken goals?

How can early recollections and family patterns be interpreted in light of the members' current behavior in the group situation?

Leaders might think of this question in helping members become aware of their life-style: under what circumstances does the person acquire a particular life-style, and how is this being maintained currently?

What are some techniques of helping members catch themselves in old patterns and begin to behave in new and more effective ways?

How can members be challenged to make a commitment to change? How can insights be translated into action?

What are some ways that members can apply problem-solving and decision-making skills acquired in the group to actual behavior outside of the group?

To what degree are the members behaving as active and autonomous beings as opposed to acting as victims of fate?

To what extent have the members become actively involved with other people and developed a new life-style through relationships?

Can members summarize changes in attitudes, beliefs, goals, and behaviors? Are they feeling encouraged to take risks by acting on these changes?

Reactions: Summarize your reactions to the Adlerian perspective on group developmental stages. What do you like most? least? What aspects of this approach would you incorporate in your style of group leadership?