

# Adlerian Counseling Techniques

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## Suggested Readings and Other Resources

- Carlson, J., Watts, R. E., & Maniaci, M. (2006). *Adlerian therapy: Theory and practice*. Washington, D.C.: APA.
- Healey, A. C., Watts, R. E., & Garza, Y. (2013). A framework for applying reflecting 'as if' with non-suicidal self-injurious clients. *Journal of Individual Psychology, 69*, 201-222.
- Juhnke, G. A., Juhnke, B. A., Watts, R. E., Coll, K. M., & Armstrong, N. F. (2014). Using the reflecting as if intervention to reduce bullying behaviors. *2014 ACA Vistas*. Alexandria VA: American Counseling Association.  
[http://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/vistas/article\\_77.pdf?sfvrsn=7](http://www.counseling.org/docs/default-source/vistas/article_77.pdf?sfvrsn=7)
- Sommers-Flanagan, J., & Sommers-Flanagan, R. (2012). *Counseling and psychotherapy theories in context and practice: Skills, strategies, and techniques* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Wiley.
- Sperry, L., & Sperry, J. (2012). *Case conceptualization: Mastering this competency with ease and confidence*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Watts, R. E. (2003). Adlerian therapy as a relational constructivist approach. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 11*, 139-147.
- Watts, R. E. (2003). Reflecting "as if": An integrative process in couples counseling. *The Family Journal: Counseling and Therapy for Couples and Families, 11*, 73-75.
- Watts, R. E. (2013, April). Reflecting as if. *Counseling Today, 55*(10). <http://ct.counseling.org/2013/04/reflecting-as-if/>
- Watts, R.E., & Critelli, J. (1997). Roots of contemporary cognitive theories in the Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler: A review. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy, 11*, 147-156.
- Watts, R. E., & Garza, Y. (2008). Using children's drawings to facilitate the acting "as if" procedure. *Journal of Individual Psychology, 64*, 113-118.
- Watts, R. E., Peluso, P. R., & Lewis, T. L. (2005). Expanding the acting as if technique: An Adlerian/constructive integration. *Journal of Individual Psychology, 61*, 380-387.
- Watts, R.E., & Phillips, K.A. (2004). Adlerian psychology and psychotherapy: A relational constructivist approach. In J. D. Raskin & S. Bridges (Eds.), *Studies in meaning: Exploring constructivist psychology* (Vol. 2, pp. 267-289). New York: Pace University Press.
- Watts, R. E., & Pietrzak, D. (2000). Adlerian "encouragement" and the therapeutic process of solution-focused brief therapy. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 78*, 442-447.
- Watts, R.E., & Shulman, B.H. (2003). Integrating Adlerian and constructive psychotherapies: An Adlerian perspective. In R. E. Watts (Ed.), *Adlerian, cognitive and constructivist theories of counseling and psychotherapy: An integrative dialogue* (pp. 9-37). New York: Springer Publishing Company.
- Watts, R. E., & Trusty, J. (2003). Using imaginary team members in reflecting "as if." *Journal of Constructivist Psychology, 16*, 335-340.
- Watts, R. E., Williamson, J., & Williamson, D. (2004). Adlerian psychology: A relational constructivist approach. *Adlerian Yearbook: 2004* (pp. 7-31). London: Adlerian Society (UK) and Institute for Individual Psychology.

ACA "Reflecting As If" Podcast: <http://www.counseling.org/Sub/Podcasts/HT026.mp3>

You can access copy of the updated handout/slides, the two brief *Style of Life* forms, and the list of suggested readings (and listening) at the following website: <https://sites.google.com/site/richardwattswebsite/>  
You can also google "Richard Watts counseling" and find my website listed at or near the top.

The *Journal of Individual Psychology* (the journal of Adlerian theory, research, and practice)

North American Society for Adlerian Psychology (NASAP): <https://nasap.memberclicks.net/>

2016 NASAP Conference in Minneapolis/St. Paul, MN: <https://nasap.memberclicks.net/annual-conference>

2016 Rudolf Dreikurs Summer Institute (the International Committee for Adlerian Summer School Institutes [ICASSI]) in Trenčianske Teplice, Slovakia Slovakia: <http://www.icassi.net/>

# Brief Style of Life Assessments

Below are two examples of style of life assessments you may use with clients, students, or supervisees. More extensive versions are available through some of the resources provided in the annotated bibliography.

## SALSA

A modified version is presented below. A fourth section would include early memories. This was designed to gather information regarding an individual's personal life-style.

One paragraph should be written per statement area.

### 1. Personal Views

- a. Your View of Self. *Indicate briefly how you currently see yourself as an individual (include behaviors, traits, strengths and areas for growth).*
- b. Your View of Others. *Share the impressions or thoughts you have when you think of people in general and the people around you.*
- c. Your View of Life. *Point out some of the basic assumptions or general ideas you have toward life; include your sense of control, fairness, and comfort.*

### 2. Your Approach to Life Tasks

- a. Your Approach to Work. *State briefly how you feel toward the work/school in which you are involved (likes and dislikes).*
- b. Your Approach to Social Relationships. *Provide some information as to how you approach your social relationships and how you would characterize yourself in those relationships.*
- c. Your Approach to Love Relationships. *Indicate how you view your love relationships; current and in the past.*

### 3. Description of and Relationship with Parents and Siblings

- a. Description of and Relationship with your Father. *Share a description of how you perceive your father and your relationship with him; indicate his age.*
- b. Description of and Relationship with your Mother. *Give a brief one-paragraph description of how you perceive your moth; then provide another descriptive paragraph on how you view your relationship with her. Indicate your mother's age.*
- c. Description of and Relationship with your Siblings. *Describe in one paragraph what your brothers and/or sisters are like; state what kinds of relationship you have with your siblings and provide their ages.*

### 4. Early recollections

## “How I Remember my Family” Questionnaire

***Not all questions will apply in all situations, so clients should be directed to answer the questions in a way that fits with her/his family experience.***

### **1. My Father**

- a. How would you describe your father? How would you describe his personality style?
- b. How would you describe your relationship to him?
- c. In what ways are you similar to your father? In what ways are you different?

### **2. My Mother**

- a. How would you describe your mother? How would you describe her personality style?
- b. How would you describe your relationship to her?
- c. In what ways are you similar to your mother? In what ways are you different?

### **3. My Parents' Relationship**

- a. How would you describe your parents' views of their roles and responsibilities? Was one partner more dominant, or was it a fairly equal relationship? What is your overall impression of their relationship?
- b. What was the decision-making process? That is, how were decisions made, and who usually made them?
- c. How would you describe the communication between your parents in their relationship?
- d. How was relational conflict handled between your parents?
- e. How did your parents manage finances?
- f. What was the division of labor in managing the home, possessions, social life, vacations, and the like?
- g. How did your parents relate to extended family members (in-laws, other relatives, and close family friends)?
- h. How did your parents view human sexuality? How was intimacy and sexuality understood and expressed in their relationship?
- i. How did your parents address the subject of religion?
- j. What impact did your father's and mother's vocations have on their relationship?
- k. What aspects of your parents' relationship do you want to incorporate into your relationship? Why? (Be sure to check your response to a-j above)

### **4. Your Parents as Parents**

- a. How did your parents feel about having children? Do you want children? Why or why not? How is your perspective of children similar and/or different to that of your parents?
- b. Describe your parents' *parenting* style. That is, describe your parents as parents. Were they in agreement on how the children should be reared? Please explain your answer.
- c. What aspects of their parenting style do you want to incorporate into your family? Why?
- d. What aspects of their parenting style do you want to avoid? Why?

**5. Your Siblings**

- a. How many brothers and sisters do you have? In what order were they born (come to the family)?
- b. How would you describe your brother(s) when you were children? How would you describe him/them now?
- c. How would you describe your sister(s) when you were children? How would you describe her/them now?
- d. Which of your siblings are you most like? Please explain.
- e. Which of your siblings are you most unlike? Please explain.

Watts, R. E. (1995). How I remember my family: A premarital/marriage counseling questionnaire. *The Family Journal, 3*, 155-157.

# 'Spitting in the Soup' Worksheet

*Use this table to help clients assess the possible meanings for their current behaviors, the consequences that typically result from their problem behaviors, and how they could take control and be intentionally different in the future.*

Current Behavior	Context & Intention	Consequence	New Behavior	Purpose & Meaning
1.				
2.				

# Basic Misperception Songbook

Watts, R.E. (1996). Some contemporary rational-emotive-behavior therapy songs.  
*Journal of Humanistic Education and Development, 35, 117-119.*

***Fallibility*** (Tune: "Dinah Won't You Blow Your Horn")

1. Every time I make a mistake, then I think I'm not good enough.  
It means I don't have what it takes, if it's not perfect, it's "fluff."

Chorus: Fallibility, fallibility, absolutely will not work for me.  
Worthless I will be with fallibility, got to do life perfectly.

2. Upon even further reflection, oh, I can see it's my job.  
For I can't stand imperfection, because it means I'm a slob.

Chorus: Fallibility, fallibility, absolutely will not work for me.  
Worthless I will be with fallibility, got to do life perfectly.

***Give Me What I Want Right Now!*** (Tune: "My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean")

1. Oh, I want quick gratification. I can't stand to wait or delay.  
And if there's a question in your mind, you'd better let me have my way.

Chorus: Give me, give me, oh, give me what I want right now. RIGHT NOW!!!  
Give me, give me, oh, give me what I want right now.

2. Don't ask me to tolerate frustration. It's not something that I do well.  
I want what I want when I want it. If it's not forthcoming there's hell.

Chorus: Give me, give me, oh, give me what I want right now. RIGHT NOW!!!  
Give me, give me, oh, give me what I want right now.

3. I cannot control my behavior. My childhood has made me this way.  
For I'm just a poor little victim, that's why I continually say:

Chorus: Give me, give me, oh, give me what I want right now. RIGHT NOW!!!  
Give me, give me, oh, give me what I want right now.

***You Must Love Me, Yes It's True*** (Tune: "Jimmy Cracked Corn and I Don't Care")

1. Oh, you must love me, yes it's true. For if you don't I'll be so blue.  
I'll pout and wail and scream "boo hoo", if you don't love me true.
2. I cannot live without you dear. I can't go on without you here.  
I cannot live without you near; oh, you must love me dear.
3. If you decide that you won't stay, I'll never make another day.  
Just like a worm I'll crawl away, that's all I have to say.

***Why Do I Choose Misery?*** (Tune: “Billy Boy”)

1. Oh, why do I choose misery, misery?  
Oh, why do I choose to be nauseous?  
‘Cause I just refuse to say, “I will learn a better way,”  
And I blame it instead on being cautious.
2. Oh, why do I keep silly thoughts, silly thoughts?  
Oh, why do I keep *stinking thinking*?  
‘Cause I just refuse to say, “I will learn a better way,”  
I’m too lazy to keep myself from sinking.
3. Oh, when will I be sound of mind, sound of mind?  
Oh, when will I be finally stable?  
When I do the work to say, “I have learned a better way,”  
But I won’t hold my breath until I’m able.

***Perfectionist’s Refrain*** (Tune: “Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star”)

Perfect, perfect, I must be or I’m worthless don’t you see.  
I must never slip and fall. I must never fail at all.  
Perfect, perfect, I must be or I’m worthless don’t you see.

***Whiner’s Lullaby*** (Tune: “Brahms’ Lullaby”)

Oh, I hate when my fate is to not get my way.  
It’s not fair when I’m where others don’t do what I say.  
Don’t they see that it’s me that knows better than they?  
I know best—others less—what is just the right way.

***Rejected Love Song*** (Tune: “On Top of Old Smokey”)

1. Oh, sweetie, you’ve left me. Oh, lover, you’re gone.  
Since I’ve been rejected, I cannot go on.
2. Oh, why did you leave me, what’s that all about?  
I guess that I’m worthless and you figured it out.
3. I really deserve this; I know that it’s true.  
If I only could dear, why I’d leave me too!

***The Culture of My Victimhood*** (Tune: "O Suzanna")

1. Other just don't understand how hard it's been for me,  
And that is why I'd don't take on responsibility.
2. I work so hard to blame my past for everything I do,  
And if you dare to say I'm wrong, I'll blame it all on you.

Chorus: That's my story; don't try to change my mind,  
For the culture of my victimhood it suits me very fine.

3. I like to whine, I like to moan and just be in the pit,  
But if I do not get my way I'll throw a hissy-fit!

Chorus: That's my story; don't try to change my mind,  
For the culture of my victimhood it suits me very fine.

***This Old World*** (Tune: "This Old Man")

1. This old world, it's not fair, I can't stand it anywhere.  
Yes, it's just awful living everyday, when I do not get my way.
2. Others should be condemned when they don't obey my whims.  
So I will pout and swell up like a toad, 'til they treat me like they should.

***Why Must this Life Be So Hard?*** (Tune: "Mary Had a Little Lamb")

1. Why must this life be so hard, be so hard, be so hard?  
Why must this life be so hard? It ought not be this way.
2. They should let me be in charge, be in charge, be in charge.  
They should let me be in charge of every single day.
3. But they won't so damn them all, damn them all, damn them all.  
But they won't so damn them all, they're worthless anyway.
4. No one seems to like me much, like me much, like me much.  
No one seems to like me much. [Spoken] WHAT IS THEIR PROBLEM?

***I Can't Be a Fallible Human*** (Tune: "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow")

1. I can't be a fallible human, I can't be a fallible human,  
I can't be a fallible human, for that would be terrible.  
That would be terrible. That would be terrible.  
I can't be a fallible human, I can't be a fallible human,  
I can't be a fallible human, for that would be terrible.
2. I must not let you be one either, I must not let you be one either,  
I must not let you be one either, for that would be even worse!  
That would be even worse. That would be even worse.  
I must not let you be one either, I must not let you be one either,  
I must not let you be one either, for that would be even worse!