Developing a Cohesive Identity through Courage and Adventure Therapy

A Research Paper

Presented to

The Faculty of the Adler Graduate School

In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for

the Degree of Master of Arts in

Adlerian Counseling and Psychotherapy

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November 2012
Abstract
This literature review explores how courage and adventure therapy can be used to promote healthy identity development in adolescents. Courage as a psychological construct is reviewed and compared with other psychological constructs that are similar to courage. Erikson's theory of identity and Marcia's (1966) four identity statuses are presented and how courage can be used to promote a cohesive identity according to these theories. A model of adventure therapy is proposed to promote healthy identity development that aligns Marcia's (1966) four identity statuses, psychological constructs that are similar to courage, and adventure therapy elements. Concepts of Adler's individual psychology are presented and compared to courage and identity.

Keywords: courage, identity, adventure therapy, individual psychology, adolescents
Acknowledgements

This project has been a culmination of many experiences and it would be impossible to name everyone who contributed to this work. I would like to specifically acknowledge my parents, who always provided me with so much encouragement. I would like to thank all my instructors at the Adler Graduate School for contributing to my theoretical orientation and clinical knowledge. I would like to thank my chairperson, Dr. Premo, for challenging me to pursue a work I am passionate about. I have so much appreciation to my editors, Anna and Jay, for pushing me towards a strong and finished work. I would also like to thank my reader, Craig Balfany.
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COURAGE AND IDENTITY

Adventure Therapy

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Definitions

**Adventure Based Counseling** – A form of adventure therapy that is most closely aligned to the therapy proposed by this researcher. It uses a ropes course as its mode of adventure.

**Adventure Therapy** - Adventure therapy challenges individuals to take risks though adventure activities that induce real fear. These challenges can then be used as metaphors for the individual's real life challenges.

**Authenticity** - rooted in existential philosophy, authenticity means being true to oneself. It is sticking to one's values, convictions, and beliefs in the face of anxieties that are inherent to the physical world.

**Belonging** – The goal of all human striving according to Dreikurs (Griffith & Powers, 2007, p. 9). Children strive for belonging in the family. Adults strive for belonging in society. Adolescents must transition between the two.

**Catwalk** - a high-rope element where an individual walks on a log suspended between two posts.

**Cohesive Identity** - Alignment between an individual's identity elements

**Commitment** – One of Marcia's two pillars to his identity statuses. It is through committing to an identity (along with exploration) that individuals reach identity achievement.

**Community Feeling** - “The individual's awareness of belonging in the human community and the cosmos of which it is a part, and an understanding of his or her responsibility for the way the life of the community is being shaped by his or her actions” (Griffin & Powers, 2007, p. 11).

**Courage** - Doing a freely chosen action for a noble purpose that puts the actor at substantial risk, where fear is often but not necessarily present.

**Discouragement** – To dissuade another from courage.
Encouragement – To give and promote courage in another

Exploration - One of Marcia's two pillars to his identity statuses. It is through exploring an identity (along with commitment) that individuals reach identity achievement.

External Locus of Control - A belief that the world has a greater influence on oneself rather than oneself on the world.

Grit - The ability to persevere to achieve long-term goals

Hardiness - A combination of personality variables help individuals manage stress. The three main components of hardiness are commitment, control, and challenge.

High Rope Elements – Ropes course elements that are usually around 30 feet above the ground, in which the individual is wearing a harness and belayed from the ground by an instructor or other group member.

Identity - An individual’s personal sameness and continuity created by one's individuality and the totality of personal identifications to groups, interests, values, and ideologies.

Identity Achievement – One of Marcia's identity statuses where individuals have explored many alternatives and have committed to an identity. This is theorized as Marcia's healthiest identity status.

Identity Confusion – Significant misalignment between an individual's identity elements

Identity Crisis - A period in an individual's life where an individual is experiencing identity confusion and has the potential for a significant amount of identity development to occur.

Identity Diffusion - One of Marcia's identity statuses where individuals have not explored or committed to an identity.

Identity Elements – Activities, interests, occupations, people, and other parts of the world that an individual identifies with.
Identity Foreclosure - Committing to an identity without exploring other potential identity options. One of Marcia's four identity statuses

Identity Moratorium - One of Marcia's identity statuses where individuals are still currently exploring their identity, but a commitment has not been reached. A moratorium is also used as an exploration phase by this researcher.

Identity Versus Role Confusion - Erikson's fifth stage of psychosocial development which occurs during adolescence and is the most critical for identity development. During this psychosocial stage, adolescents must learn to balance the conflicting forces of identity and role confusion. Properly balancing these forces leads to development of a cohesive and healthy identity.

Individual Psychology – A holistic psychology created by Alfred Adler. This researcher is being trained at an Adlerian school.

Internal Locus of Control - A belief that one has a greater influence on the world rather than the world on oneself.

Locus of Control – Individuals' beliefs about how much control they have over their life.

Low Elements – Ropes course elements that are group-oriented problems to solve, low to the ground, and involve physical activity.

Leap of Faith – A high rope element where an individual climbs a single post about 30 feet high and stand at the very top of it. When ready, he or she will jump into the air and be caught from the belay by the other group members

Moral Courage – Morally doing the right thing with the risk of social disapproval. One of the three types of courage.

Physical Courage – Putting oneself in physical danger to achieve a task. One of the three types
of courage.

**Psychological Courage** - Facing one's fears, anxieties, and destructive patterns in attempt to overcome them. One of the three types of courage.

**Resilience** - a multidimensional process in which individuals experience adversity and yet maintain their mental health. Resilience is a combination of personality, biological, and environmental factors helping one manage adversity

**Rock Climbing** – This researcher uses rock climbing as a therapeutic tool to work on identity development.

**Self-awareness** - the ability of individuals to recognize their own thoughts, feelings, behaviors, patterns, history, and influence on the environment and others

**Self-efficacy** - An individual's beliefs of how capable he or she is.

**Self-efficacy (general)** – The totality of an individual's beliefs of how capable he or she is.

**Self-efficacy (specific)** - An individual's beliefs of how capable he or she is related to an aspect of that individual's identity.

**Self-esteem** - The overall self-evaluation of one's worth

**Swinging Bridge** – A high rope-element in which a bridge suspended between two posts. The bridge is made of wooden planks, swings back-and-forth, and has no hand holds.

**Two-line Bridge** - A high-ropes element with two cables to cross between two posts. One of the cable is to walk on and the other is for the individual's hands.

**Whale-watch** - A low element that is basically a giant seesaw, in which the whole group must get on the seesaw while keeping it balanced.
Developing a Cohesive Identity through Courage and Adventure Therapy

A critical juncture in development is adolescence. Adolescents are confronted with the question of how they fit into society. Before adolescence, children are primarily concerned with their role in the family. As children move into adolescence, they become more autonomous in their decision-making. They are faced with choosing friendships, establishing ideologies, dating, and deciding to specialize in educational and occupational fields. Adolescents are required to use the skills, strengths, and the role they obtained in the family to bridge the gap between their family and society. Adolescents must discover how they belong in the greater world. Erik Erikson (1950) has called this psychosocial developmental stage “identity versus role confusion.” Adolescents must explore this stage and develop a cohesive identity to find belonging and continue healthy development.

Undoubtedly, adolescents are greatly challenged at this stage in development. The undertaking of developing a cohesive identity can be treacherous and have many pitfalls. This, combined with numerous other psychological, social, and biological factors can result in: bullying behavior, association with gangs, mental illness, suicide, and experimentation with drugs. This may differ significantly from many individuals' experience in childhood, where advantageous decisions are made for them by their caretakers. For adolescents who have not had a healthy development thus far, this stage of development can be even more challenging.

Therapists can help foster the healthy development of an adolescent's identity. Adolescents must learn to navigate through this stage of development without giving up or becoming too discouraged. Part of the role of a therapist is to promote courage. Promoting courage in adolescents will better equip them to face the challenges of adolescence, and also explore many options before committing to an identity. Erikson (1968, p. 128) stated that
adolescents need an exploration phase to move towards healthy identity development. Especially important is that adolescents explore many and diverse ideas, people, and roles to develop a cohesive identity. For an individual to explore, one must have the courage to explore.

Adventure therapy is rooted with strong exploration and courage components to. Adventure therapy combines outdoor adventure activities such as rock climbing, ropes courses, backpacking, or kayaking with psychotherapy. Through adventure therapy, individuals will experience fear, courage, and exploration in a safe, supportive, and therapeutic setting. The adventure experiences during sessions are metaphors for real situations where individuals must use courage and take risks.

Identity, courage, and adventure therapy share many similarities to Adlerian theory. This researcher is being trained at an individual psychology school with a theoretical orientation is deeply rooted in Adlerian theory. The concepts and therapeutic approaches will be compared to Adlerian theory and therapeutic approaches. Through an Adlerian theory lens, this researcher will describe how courage and adventure therapy can be used to facilitate Erik Erikson's cohesive identity in adolescents.

**Courage**

Courage is found in one who can make a mistake and fail without feeling lowered in his self-esteem. This “courage to be imperfect” is equally needed by children and adults. (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964, p. 36)

Courage is essential for the healthy development of adolescents. Adolescence brings great changes, and courage is needed to meet these challenges. Fostering courage will better enable the adolescent to develop a cohesive identity. While courage is essential to adolescence, defining courage is challenging. The individuals who have studied courage have use varied definitions. A
better understanding of what courage is allows one to foster courage in adolescents. This researcher will describe the challenges of defining courage and how courage can be better understood by categorizing it into three types: physical, moral, and psychological. This researcher will then compare this to the individual psychology definition of courage, which is more holistic and a cornerstone to individual psychology. Since research on the benefits of courage is limited, this researcher will identify healthy psychological constructs that are similar to courage and are beneficial in fostering identity development in adolescent. Each psychological construct will be compared to courage to show its benefit in fostering identity development.

**History of Courage**

Courage is a virtue that extends across cultures, religions, and time. Its use in philosophy has been extensive including: Aristotle, Epictetus and the Stoics, Saint Thomas Aquinas, John Stuart Mill, Immanuel Kant, Jean-Paul Sartre, Confucianism, Buddhism, Hinduism, Taoism, and many others (Putman, 2010). Each of these philosophies have varied uses and definitions of courage. Its use as a psychological construct began near the beginning of psychology. Alfred Adler introduced the psychological concept of courage and made it a central component of his individual psychology. Courage continues to be used by many in the field of psychology, but differs in terms of definition and categorization. Despite being a main component to many philosophical theories, the research behind courage is limited. Woodard and Pury (2007) claim that it has not been studied more because of the difficulty in creating a clear and concise definition. The recent development of positive psychology has created a growing interest in courage, although the concept is still not well defined.

**Defining Courage**

With the interest growing in a psychological construct of courage, many have attempted
to compose a definition. Despite substantial efforts, an agreed upon, all-encompassing definition is still elusive. This is troubling for a few reasons. The first concern is that courage is a virtue necessary to human existence that extends across cultures, religion, and time. Scholars spanning thousands of years have endeavored a definition, but the issue is still unsettled. Secondly, many people use the concept every day and refer to it as if everyone understands it. These individuals may be able to describe courage and courageous acts, but not create an all-encompassing definition. An agreed upon definition be beneficial for common dialogue. Thirdly, an agreed-upon, all-encompassing definition would make it easier to measure courage. Through measurement, we could gauge ways to increase courage in individuals.

One challenge in defining courage is categorizing the nature of the construct. Many researchers have tried, and their hypotheses have varied. Three areas researchers and philosophers have struggled with are:

1. *Is courage a personality construct or an action?* If courage is a personality construct, individuals would have varying levels of courage along a spectrum. Individuals would then be somewhere in the middle of very high and low levels of courage. Although, is courage really in individuals? When individuals are referred to as courageous, the reference is actually to the individual's actions. Individuals are courageous because of their courageous actions. What should be defined is the actions of individuals.

2. *Pury and Starkley (2010) question whether courage is an accolade or a process.* Is it an accolade being attributed to someone who overcame a rare feat? Or is it a process which is something more common that individuals overcome frequently throughout the day?

3. *Does fear have to be present for one to act courageously?* Fear is often a factor in individuals who act courageously. Although, can't individuals act courageous without
experiencing fear?

Rate (2010) explored 20 definitions of courage including definitions from lexicons, philosophy, social sciences, and literature. Overall he found seven features of courage, but each of these definitions varied in the features it included. After more analysis and having 300 marines rate 30 vignettes, he concluded there were three main features of courage:

(a) “the action was freely chosen

(b) the actor seeks to bring about a noble purpose

(c) the act is attempted or accomplished at substantial risk to the actor” (p.61).

Rate (2010) also identified affect/emotion and cognitive processes as two contingency factors (factors that are often present in courage, but not necessary for courage to exist). This would explain why fear is often present with courage, but is not necessary for one to act courageously. Based on Rate's (2010) finding, this researcher has defined courage as: doing a freely chosen action for a noble purpose that puts the actor at substantial risk, where fear is often but not necessarily present.

Categorizing Courage

Part of the challenge in studying courage is the broadness of the construct. One way researchers have tried to define and understand courage is by splitting it into types. Even though courage cannot be neatly categorized, it is beneficial to examine types of courage. By understanding its parts, one will have a better understanding of the whole. One of the more widely acknowledged categorizations involves three types of courage: physical, moral, and psychological. These types of courage focus on the risk involved and the purpose for that behavior (two of the features of courage from above). The empirical research on this categorization is minimal, but this categorization has slowly evolved through the literature.
Physical courage. Physical courage involves putting oneself in physical danger to achieve a desired outcome. Fighting in a war, rescuing someone from danger, and rock climbing are examples of physical courage. Physical courage emphasized the risk rather than the purpose of the behavior. Although the purpose for physical courage is also important, otherwise the physical risk wouldn't be worthwhile.

Moral courage. Moral courage is putting oneself at risk of social disapproval in order to do the “right” thing. Protesting for civil rights, standing up for a friend, and sticking to your convictions in the face of adversity are examples of moral courage. Moral courage focuses on the moral purpose the actor has in mind, motivating the action. Moral courage also includes the risk of societal disapproval.

Psychological courage. Putman (1997) introduced a new subset of courage called psychological courage. Psychological courage is facing one's fears, anxieties, and destructive patterns. Overcoming a mental illness, quitting smoking, and making oneself vulnerable to another individual are examples of psychological courage. This type of courage focuses both on the purpose behind the action and what the actor is attempting to overcome.

Real situations do not fit neatly into one of the types described above. Courageous acts often involve two, if not all three, types of courage. A courageous act could have physical danger, a moral purpose, and anxiety. To fight in a war, one must use their physical, moral, and psychological aspects of courage. Exploring and categorizing various aspects of a scenario is helpful to understanding the risks, goals, emotions, and cognitive processes in play. Partitioning courage into physical, moral, and psychological is only one way courage has been categorized. Numerous other designations have been created to encompass the varying aspects of courage.

Individual psychology is a holistic psychology. To split courage into parts would go
against this holistic nature. By splitting courage into types, one can gain a better understanding. However, by splitting courage into types, one will undoubtedly lose certain aspects of courage. It is impossible to name every barrier to overcoming, or purpose for individual actions? Individual psychology is a holistic psychology. In holism, the whole is greater than the sum of its parts. All three types of courage will integrate and be used to overcome a barrier. To have only physical courage, one may take great physical risks but put oneself at useless physical danger without a moral purpose. To have only moral courage, one wouldn't be able to overcome the physical or psychological risks to achieve the moral goal. To have only psychological courage, one would not have a moral purpose for being psychologically healthy. Courage is a holistic concept, and cannot be fully separated into parts.

**Courage in Individual Psychology**

**Courage.** Courage is an integral component of individual psychology. Adler saw courage as a holistic movement of that individual. Courage to Adler was doing anything, mentally or physically, for the betterment of the world. Adler's view was that all healthy individuals exhibited courage, including adolescents:

Others (healthy adolescents) are stimulated by their new freedom. They see the road towards the fulfillment of their ambitions clear before them. They are full of new ideas and new projects. Their creative life is intensified, and their interest in all the aspects of our human process becomes more vivid and eager. These are the children who have kept their courage, and to whom independence mean, not difficulty and the risk of defeat, but wider opportunity to make achievement and contributions. (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 441)

This quote shows how Adler viewed the healthy adolescent, which includes being interested in
others and contributing to society. The adolescent is exploring their world with courage, and is excited to be independent.

In individual psychology, courage is described as “the willingness to act in line with community feeling (social interest) in any situation” (Griffith & Powers, 2007, p. 20). This quote shows that in individual psychology, courage is the action component of community feeling. Individuals cannot display courage in individual psychology without acting in line with community feeling. Thus courage cannot be separated from community feeling. Many other definitions and theories of courage have a moral aspect to them, but that does not necessarily include acting in line with community feeling. Griffith & Powers (2007) describe community feeling as:

The individual's awareness of belonging in the human community and the cosmos of which it is a part, and an understanding of his or her responsibility for the way the life of the community is being shaped by his or her actions. (p. 11)

Acting courageously means acting for the benefit of the human community. Individuals would be acting courageously by contributing and doing things for others in the community. Individuals would also act courageously by taking care of themselves, so they can continue to contribute to society. Acting with courage also means to take care of one’s own mental health. In fact, community feeling and mental health are directly tied. Griffith and Powers point out that community feeling is thought of as an index for mental health (2007, p. 11).

Adler believed that discouragement was a main component to psychopathology (Sperry, 1996, p. 5). Acting without courage is discouragement. Thus, to act with courage is a path towards an improvement in mental health. According to individual psychology, individuals use symptoms to avoid meeting the tasks of life or to safeguard their self-esteem (Sperry, 1996, p. 5).
By using symptoms to protect self-esteem, individuals are creating barriers to mental health. Through courage, individuals are able to overcome these barriers.

**Encouragement.** In individual psychology, encouragement is essential to raising a healthy child and successful psychotherapy. Encouragement means to give another courage. Since community feeling is integrated in the individual psychology definition of courage, encouragement is promoting community feeling in an individual. “Each child needs continuous encouragement just as a plant needs water. He cannot grow and develop and gain a sense of belonging without encouragement” (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964, p. 36). Encouragement gives children a sense of worth, significance, safety, and belonging. Without sufficient encouragement, the child will become discouraged. Discouragement results in misbehavior. Since a discouraged child still tries to belong, the child will become a discouraged adolescent if nothing is done to meet their need for belonging.

Half of encouragement is avoiding discouragement (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964, p. 38). To avoid discouragement, individuals should avoid saying or doing anything that makes children or adolescents think that they are incompetent. Overprotecting, saying discouraging comments, or putting people in discouraging situations are examples of discouragement. The other half of encouragement involves actively encouraging individuals. “Whenever we act to support the child in a courageous and confident self-concept, we offer encouragement” (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964, p. 39). To encourage another, one is promoting courage in that individual.

Encouragement is an essential technique Adlerian therapists use in psychotherapy. Adler stated, “in every step of treatment, we must not deviate from the path of encouragement” (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1956, p. 342). There are many purposes for encouraging an individual in psychotherapy:
1. *Encouragement gives the individual the courage to change a unhealthy belief, behavior, or pattern.* It is through courage that one will truly make changes in their lives.

2. *Encouragement gives the client a sense of significance, belonging, and worth.* This is the same as offering encouragement in raising a child, though the language would change to match the individual's developmental level.

3. *Encouragement promotes community feeling within that individual.* Community feeling is one's feeling of belonging to the global society and the responsibility one takes towards improving the world. Promoting community feeling within an individual promotes an improvement in relationships, societal view, and view of oneself. As stated earlier, community feeling is an index for mental health (Griffith & Powers, 2007, p. 11). Encouragement promotes an overall improvement in mental health. Encouragement is not only a technique, it can be embedded in the therapeutic relationship one has with a client.

**Psychological Constructs**

Courage shares many similarities with, or is necessary, to other healthy psychological constructs, including: hardiness, resilience, authenticity, vulnerability, grit, self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-awareness, locus-of-control, exploration, and commitment. Many of these constructs are well studied and are associated with healthy psychological functioning. There are large components of courage in each of these psychological constructs. Working with individuals on any of these constructs allows one to work on these in conjunction with courage. Improvement in these psychological constructs will help individuals be more courageous and develop a cohesive identity.

**Hardiness.** Kolbasa (1979) identified a combination of personality variables that helped manage stress. Kolbasa postulated that there were three main components of hardiness:
commitment, control, and challenge. Individuals who possessed these traits were identified as “hardy” in comparison to the other individuals who did not possess these traits and failed to deal with stress in a healthy way. Commitment is defined as being interested in oneself and the surrounding world. Control is the belief that one has the ability to influence his or her environment. Challenge is the belief that obstacles present an opportunity for growth, rather than a source of threat.

A meta-analysis by Eschleman, Bowling, and Alarcon (2010) found hardiness to be associated with self-esteem, optimism, extraversion, sense of coherence, and self-efficacy. The research singles out commitment as being the most valuable of the three components of hardiness, underscoring how important commitment is in managing stress (Eschleman, Bowling, & Alarcon, 2010). Although Kolbas’s definition of commitment varies from how this researcher uses it, each definition shares a similar foundation.

Another way to define hardiness is the courage to manage stress. Hardiness is very similar to psychological courage. Woodward (2004) proposed courage plays a role in hardiness. When one is in a stressful situation, one has the courage to face and manage that stress. According to the components of hardiness (commitment, control, and challenge), that stress should be looked at as interesting, able to be influenced, and surmountable. By continually having the courage to face and manage stress, one would be a hardy individual.

**Resilience.** Resilience is a multidimensional process in which individuals experience adversity and yet maintain their mental health. Resilience is a combination of personality, biological, and environmental factors helping one manage adversity. Hardiness differs from resilience in that hardiness is a combination of personality variables and focuses on stress. Resilience is a larger process which includes healthy personality characteristics, healthy
relationships, a support system, and anything that one can use to help overcome adversity. Since hardiness helps one manage stress, it is a component of resilience.

Despite the uncontrollable nature of many factors of resilience such as a strong support network or community resources, courage helps an individual be more resilient. Overcoming adversity is inherent in both definitions of resilience and courage. Psychological, moral, and physical courage would all make an individual more resilient and better able to overcome adversity. Whether it be persisting mentally through the adversity, having the courage to form healthy relationships, or having the courage to access the community resources, courage will undoubtedly make an individual more resilient.

**Authenticity.** Authenticity is rooted in existential philosophy, which has transferred over to existential psychology. According to existential philosophy, anxieties are inherent to living in the physical world and with the people in it. To live authentically, one must face these anxieties and be true to oneself. Authenticity is sticking to one's values, convictions, and beliefs in the face of anxiety. Authenticity has a commitment component. By sticking to one's authentic values, convictions, and beliefs, one has to be committed to these values, convictions, and beliefs. It is through this commitment that one can be authentic.

Courage is inherent in authenticity. Living authentically requires a constant choice to do so. This choice requires courage. It takes courage to be true and genuine to oneself throughout the day. Another way to define authenticity is the courage to be one's true self. Authenticity falls between the psychological and moral courage described above. Authenticity is psychological courage because of the constant facing of one's anxieties. Authenticity is moral courage because of having to stick to one's true convictions in the face of external pressures.

**Vulnerability.** Brown's (2007) shame research postulates acknowledging vulnerability is
an act of courage. Accepting and recognizing vulnerabilities builds resilience to shame. Brown further asserts that vulnerabilities should not be seen as weaknesses, but as a source of strength. Brown suggests vulnerabilities should not be suppressed, but instead, embraced.

Vulnerabilities makes a person connect more intimately with their imperfect human nature. “The courage to be imperfect” is a phrase Dreikurs (1957) used that is similar to vulnerability. This phrase describes individuals who will embrace imperfections and will not hesitate to act because of them. These individuals will not be focused on perfectionism, but on trying to do the right thing despite the possibility of making a mistake. They will not become discouraged by mistakes, but instead, use them as an opportunity to grow.

Facing one's vulnerabilities is an act of courage, Brown (2007) describes. Vulnerability is the “substantial risk to the actor” in Rate's definition of courage (2010, p. 61). The goal might be one's own psychological health. Facing and acknowledging vulnerabilities falls between moral and psychological courage; psychological because of how stressful acknowledging vulnerability is, and moral because of the commitment to an attribute that one might believe society will not accept. Another way to describe vulnerability is the courage to be imperfect.

**Grit.** Duckworth (1997) questioned why individuals with similar intelligence scores achieve at varying levels, and proposed the answer might be the psychological trait of grit. Grit describes the ability to persevere to achieve long-term goals. Individuals with grit are less likely persuaded by adversity. These people stay the course and are committed to their long-term goals.

Duckworth (2007) found that grit accounted for a variance in achievement over and above IQ. In fact, grit was found not to be positively related with IQ (Duckworth, 2007). Grit is proposed to be independent of cognitive ability. Individuals with grit were found to have higher levels of education, have higher GPA, performed better in the National Spelling Bee, and
was the best predictor of summer retention at West Point. Individuals with grit also made fewer career changes, which speaks to their commitment to long-term goals. Those with more grit were also correlated with Contentiousness of the Big Five factors of personality (Duckworth, 2007).

The definition of Grit is very similar to Rates (2010) definition of courage, except Grit is focused towards achievement. The definition of grit includes all three of Rate’s (2010) components of courage: the goal is freely chosen by the individual, there is a noble purpose (the long-term goal), and there is substantial risk to the actor (what the individual must persevere through). Another way grit can be defined is the courage to persevere and achieve a long-term goal. Depending on the goals and the obstacles one must persevere through, Grit could fall under all three types of courage described above.

**Self-esteem.** Self-esteem is a central component to mental health originating in the work of William James in 1890 (Sowislo & Orth, 2012). Self-esteem is the overall self-evaluation of one's worth. A strong relation to self-esteem and depression is generally recognized (Sowislo & Orth, 2012). Varying slightly from self-concept, self-esteem encompasses the thoughts and feelings one has about oneself. Self-concept focuses mainly on the beliefs one has about oneself.

The relationship between courage and self-esteem has not received significant study. The limited work thus far has produced inconclusive results. However, there does appear to be a logical link between the two. The relationship between depression and low self-esteem provides this logical link. Individuals experiencing depression have a tendency to isolate, have low energy, experience feelings of hopelessness, and lose interest in things they once enjoyed. These depressive symptoms make it challenging for individuals to display courage. Since there is a relationship between self-esteem and depression, individuals with a low self-esteem are probably not displaying courage. Individuals with a low self-esteem do not value themselves enough to
take risks and overcome adversity. It is thus logical that courage would be very beneficial to an individual with a low self-esteem.

Individuals with a low self-esteem benefit from displaying all three types of courage. Persisting with a low self-esteem is a psychological act of courage. Overcoming the social disapproval of others to achieve a morally useful goal is morally courageous. Physical courage is very beneficial for individuals with a low self-esteem. Physical courage is very apparent which allows individuals with a low self-esteem to clearly see their act of courage. This allows individuals with a low self-esteem to reevaluate their self-esteem after this obviously courageous act.

**Self-efficacy.** Bandura (1977) developed the concept of self-efficacy, which is based in social-cognitive theory. Self-efficacy describes an individual's belief of whether or not one can achieve a particular goal. Self-efficacy differs from self-esteem because it is focused on the belief of capability rather than one's personal value. Individuals can believe they can achieve something, but still not value themselves. Self-efficacy can relate to self-esteem if the goal one is trying to achieve can influence their self-esteem. For example, individuals who believes they are bad cooks may still have high self-esteem because they do not relate cooking to their worth. However, if an individual has beliefs that he or she should be a good cook, then one's self-esteem may be affected. Since self-efficacy is the belief that one is capable, self-efficacy is the beliefs behind the courageous individual. Courageous behavior stems from the belief that an individual is capable.

Important to note that an individual may believe he or she is capable in one situation but not in another. Therefore, this researcher has split self-efficacy into two categories. One is more general, which is representative of the totality of one's self efficacy. The other is more
specifically concerned with an individual's perceived capability to activities that align with one's identity. Distinguishing between the two is important as certain individuals may believe they are only capable at activities that do not align with their identity, making it a challenge to find existential meaning.

**Self-awareness.** Self-awareness is the ability of individuals to recognize their own thoughts, feelings, behaviors, patterns, history, and influence on the environment and others. Self-awareness is central to mental health and has been since the beginning of psychoanalysis. Freud contributed greatly to the concept of self-awareness, as he developed the practice psychoanalysis. Central to Freud's psychoanalysis is trying to make the unconscious conscious. All psychotherapy has some elements of having one become more self-aware.

The concept of self-awareness extends beyond psychotherapy. Self-awareness has been central to various cultures' practice of mental health. The Buddhist technique of mindfulness is very similar to self-awareness. Being mindful requires individuals to be in the present moment and aware of their thoughts, feelings, behaviors, perceptions, and environment. A meta-analysis by Hofmann et al. (2010) found mindfulness-based therapy to be a promising intervention for anxiety and depression.

Self-awareness requires courage to look at oneself accurately. Individuals might not necessarily like what they find and must be prepared for this realization. Courage is needed for individuals to overcome and confront the fear of what they might find during the process of self-examination. Individuals engaged in this process often have a goal to better themselves and change or accept what they find through introspection. Self-awareness falls primarily into the psychological type of courage.

**Locus of control.** Rotter (1954) developed the locus of control personality trait.
Individuals are on a spectrum between an internal or external locus of control. An internal locus of control means that individuals believe that they can influence the world around them. An external locus of control means that individuals believe that the world has a greater influence on themselves. An example is an adolescent doing poorly on a test. An adolescent with an external locus of control may blame the difficulty of the test as the reason for doing poorly. An adolescent with an internal locus of control may take responsibility for the poor performance by saying they did not study hard enough. An internal locus of control gives individuals more control over their lives. They are more likely to change unsatisfying aspects of their lives.

An internal locus of control is generally seen as healthier a healthier personality trait. Benassi, Sweeney, and Dufour (1988) conducted a meta-analysis on the relation between depression and locus-of-control. They found that greater externality in locus-of-control related to greater depression. Judge and Bono (2001) concluded locus-of-control, self-esteem, and generalized self-efficacy were some of the best dispositional predictors for job performance and job satisfaction. It may, however, be dangerous to look at locus-of-control with such simplicity. If individuals with low self-esteem and low self-efficacy believe they are in control of their life, they may view themselves as more of a failure because of an internal locus of control.

Moving from an external to an internal locus of control requires a display of courage. Individuals need courage to face themselves. Courage is essential for individuals to take responsibility for their actions and the influence they have on others. It takes courage to accept one's ability to influence the world. With this courage to accept, there is nothing standing in one's way but oneself. Consequently, by taking responsibility for one's actions, one's self-esteem may be more exposed. For example, if an individual with an internal locus-of-control fails at something, that individual may see this failure as a result of his or her own actions. The
individual may therefore view oneself as failure because of this. Facing oneself requires psychological courage.

Commitment. Marcia (1966) uses commitment, along with exploration, as his two pillars of his identity statuses. An individual developing a healthy identity necessitates commitments. These types of commitments include values, beliefs, ideologies, interests, and occupational choices. For example, a young college woman isn't sure what major in school to choose. After exploring various options, she commits to an engineering major. She will now start to identify with this, and it becomes part of her identity. Making commitments are steps towards a healthy identity.

Sternberg (1986) developed a triangular theory of love. According to his theory, love is comprised of: intimacy, passion, and commitment. W. J. Premo expanded on Sternberg’s theory by developing three stages of commitment: comfort, confidence, and competence (personal communication, June 12, 2012). While the triangle theory of love focuses on love and relationships, this commitment also applies to identity development. Commitment to an identity aspect forces one to go through the stages of comfort, confidence, and competence.

The courage to commit is a psychological form of courage. Psychological courage to persist is essential to overcoming each stage of commitment. Commitment is challenging for multiple reasons. Making a commitment to one thing precludes committing to something else. For example, committing to being a lawyer requires committing to not being a doctor. It takes courage to give up the potential identity of a doctor. Another reason commitment is challenging is because once somebody commits to something, one faces judgment for what one committed to. It takes courage, comfort, confidence, and competence to dissuade this judgment. The courage to commit also has a moral courage component. Commitment based on morals in the
face of external pressure could be described as moral courage.

Exploration. Erikson (1968) concluded a moratorium was vital to identity achievement. A moratorium is a period where individuals can explore the world and themselves. Individuals can explore and evaluate what they want their identities to be. Marcia (1966) uses exploration as one of the tenants of his identity development theory. The term exploration will be used to describe this process. Exploration is a complex process and follows no set path. Individuals explore in many ways, such as: trying new things, meeting new people, finding things out about oneself, comparing new and old things and, questioning personal beliefs and ideologies.

Exploration takes a lot of courage. Trying new things, means individuals must overcome the fear of failure. To meet new people, individuals must overcome the fear that others will not like them. To explore oneself, individuals must overcome the fear of what they might find. Questioning personal beliefs requires individuals to face the fear of discovering that what they believe might not be true. Exploration can involve any number of obstacles individuals may have to overcome; when individuals explore, they will never be sure of what they will find. Depending on the goal and what need to be overcome, exploration can be physical, moral, or psychological courage.

Summary

Despite the dearth of research and the challenge of defining courage, courage is clearly essential to developing a cohesive identity in adolescents. Courage is a cornerstone to Adlerian theory. An improvement in courage is an improvement in mental health. Adlerian theory defines courage holistically, a view shared by this researcher. Splitting courage into three types: physical, moral, and psychological, provides a better understanding of what courage is. Since research on courage is minimal, this researcher identified healthy psychological constructs sharing a similar
nature to courage. Courage is essential in all of these constructs, and a therapist can work in conjunction with courage with individuals towards healthy identity development.

**Identity**

The youth who is not sure of his identity shies away from interpersonal intimacy; but the surer he becomes of himself, the more he seeks it in the form of friendship, combat, leadership, love, and inspiration. (Erikson, 1959, p. 101)

Many of the adolescent challenges are the result of the developmental stage adolescents are going through. They are trying find out who they are and how they fit in. Adolescents are transitioning from childhood to adulthood, and are figuring out how they will fit in the world as an adult. Identity is central to this developmental stage. Erikson (1950) called this stage of development Identity versus Role confusion. Marcia (1966) developed four identity statuses of adolescents based on Erikson's theory. This researcher will describe each of these identity statuses and how the aforementioned psychological constructs align with each identity status.

Courage, along with each psychological construct is essential to healthy development in each of the identity statuses.

**Identity and Identity Crisis**

Erikson's biggest contribution to the field of psychology is his eight psychosocial stages of development. Central to these stages, and especially the adolescent stage of development, is identity. Erikson is credited as being one of the earliest psychologists to study identity. Another large contribution to psychology is coining the term identity crisis. In his book *Identity: Youth and Crisis*, Erik Erikson (1968) did not define these identity and identity crisis concretely.

“Identity” and “identity crisis” have in popular and scientific usage become terms which alternately circumscribe something so large and so seemingly self-
evident that to demand a definition would almost seem petty, while at other times they designate something made so narrow for purposes of measurement that the over-all meaning is lost, and it could just as well be called something else.” (p. 15)

Even in one of his largest works on identity, Erickson does not give concrete definitions to two of the most central concepts to his theory. Crain (2011, p. 304) indicated that Erik Erikson wrote in “beautiful prose”, but there was a “conceptual vagueness” to his writings. In defining identity and identity crisis for the purpose of this paper, this researcher will not confine Erikson's original meaning for the terms. However, it is necessary to define and limit the scope of how identity and identity crisis will be used by this researcher because of their broad nature.

Erikson (1968) routinely referred to identity as a “personal sameness and continuity”. Identity is what makes one unique. Identity is an individual’s personal sameness and continuity created by one's individuality and the totality of personal identifications to groups, interests, values, and ideologies. This includes occupation, education, culture, and spiritual views. An individual may, for example, view oneself as a policeman, a catholic, an African American, a soccer fan, and a fair person.

Erikson (1968, p. 17) described individuals with identity confusion as people who had “lost a sense of personal sameness and historical continuity.” Erikson is referring to how well an individual's identity elements align. Alignment between an individual's identity elements will be referred to as having a cohesive identity. Individuals with significant misalignment between identity elements will be referred to as individuals experiencing identity confusion. For example, an adolescents holding contrasting values, or is unsure of their own values, they are misaligned. This misalignment leads an individual towards identity confusion. If an adolescent is holding
complimentary values, this leads towards identity cohesion.

Popular culture often construes an identity crisis as a breakdown. This is not the way Erikson describes it. Erikson (1968, p. 16) describes an identity crisis as “a necessary turning point, a crucial moment, when development must move one way or another, marshaling resources of growth, recovery, and further differentiation.” This researcher will largely use the term in reference to the adolescent period when a great deal of identity development occurs, even though identity crises can happen throughout a lifetime. Adolescence is a period in development where so many changes are happening that an identity crisis will almost surely occur. This researcher will define an identity crisis as a time in an individual's life where an individual is experiencing identity confusion and has the potential for a significant amount of identity development to occur.

Identity versus Role Confusion

Erikson (1950) identified eight psychosocial stages of development that correspond with various periods throughout one's life. A healthy individual will navigate through and complete each stage. Each stage presents a challenge of balancing two conflicting forces. The inability to balance these two forces will result in problems later in that individual's life as they try to complete the other developmental stages. For example, Erikson's first psychosocial stage of development, occurring in the first two years of life, is trust versus mistrust. Children must learn who they can and cannot trust. If the stage is uncompleted, children will then have difficulty trusting others, becoming overly trustworthy, or a combination of the two. This will make it challenging for the child to complete the other psychosocial stages later in life.

Erikson's (1950) fifth stage of psychosocial development is identity versus role confusion. One is challenged by this stage in adolescence. This stage is the most critical for
identity development. The significant amount of changes adolescence presents prompts an
identity crisis. During this crisis adolescents must learn to balance the conflicting forces of
identity and role confusion. Properly balancing these forces leads to development of a cohesive
and healthy identity. Erikson believed a moratorium, the exploration phase previously identified,
is very beneficial in establishing one's identity (Erikson, 1968, p. 128). Taking the time to
explore the world and oneself allows the individual to make choices and commitments about
who he or she is.

Adolescence presents the question about how one is going to fit into the greater world
(identity crisis). The adolescent will explore interests, educational topics, ideologies,
occupations, social roles, and an infinite number of other things. The adolescent will choose what
to identify with during this time. These identifications grow an adolescent growing into a young
adult by forming a cohesive identity. A cohesive identity is essential to a healthy functioning
adult. Erikson postulated that this fifth stage occurs between the baseline ages of 13 and 19.
Currently, with the rise in enrollment in college and graduate school, the range is much higher
since many individuals are still figuring out their occupations after 19. Even after this stage, the
individual's identity will continue to develop and change.

A cohesive identity is important for an individual to complete Erikson's three final stages.
Erikson's sixth stage is intimacy versus isolation. With a cohesive identity, individuals can learn
to develop greater intimacy and be ready commit to a long-term relationship. Erikson's seventh
stage is generativity versus stagnation. In this stage, a cohesive identity allows one to be
productive, contribute, and have concern for future generations. Erikson's final stage is ego-
integrity versus despair. A cohesive identity has allowed one to live a fulfilling and purposeful
life. With a cohesive identity, the individual can look back on his or her life with contentment.
Identity and Belonging

According to Dreikurs “belonging” is the goal of all human striving (Griffith & Powers, 2007, p. 9). Dreikurs greatly contributed to Adler's individual psychology, focusing much of his work on raising children. When a child is born into a family, the child strives to find how he or she belongs in the family. “His security or lack of it depends upon his feeling of belonging within the group” (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1964, p. 14). The child needs to develop a unique role, but still be part of the family. Childhood identity will be developed based on how the child feels he or she belongs in the family.

Many factors contribute to how individuals find a role and belonging in the family. Birth order is one of most influential factors. A second born will seek belonging that is much different than a first born. The first child will have already found his or her role in the family. A second child is born into a much different world than the first born. Therefore, the second child must also find an individual role with belonging in the family. When third child is born, the family changes again. The second child must continuously evolve the way he or she belongs in the family.

Adolescence does not stop this search; adolescents continue to strive towards belonging. Now the challenge is adolescents must find belonging in society. Adolescents must mediate how they found belonging in the family with how they will belong in society. Healthy adolescents will develop an identity that is unique while still being part of society. Adolescents must explore childhood values, interests, and roles and determine which of those values, interests, and roles will give them belonging in society as adults. They must mediate their childhood values, interests, and roles with the new values, interests, and roles, they are exploring as adolescents. Belonging is essential to developing a cohesive identity because adolescents must find how they
can be an individual and still belong to the greater society.

The adolescents' need to belong is very similar to how Erikson described what adolescents are experiencing during his adolescent stage of development. Erikson (1950) described this stage as:

The growing and developing youths . . . are now primarily concerned with what they appear to be in the eyes of others as compared with what they feel they are, and with the question of how to connect the roles and skills cultivated earlier with the occupational prototypes of the day. (p. 261)

As stated above, this stage challenges individuals to become part of the larger society. Previously, children were solely concerned with how they fit into, and appeared in the eyes of, the family. Now adolescents are challenged by the task of how to find their roles in the greater world. Adolescent are very concerned with how they appear to others. Adolescents must reconcile this intrapersonal perception of they are viewed by others.

Identity Statuses

Marcia (1966) expanded on Erikson's identity theory. He created four identity statuses to describe the variances in adolescent identities. Marcia kept many of the same elements of Erikson's theory, but divided it into four identity statuses: identity foreclosure, identity diffusion, identity moratorium, and identity achievement. The statuses are divided in terms of how much exploration or commitment an individual is exhibiting. The table below summarizes Marcia's identity statuses.

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<tr>
<th>Identity Status</th>
<th>Exploration</th>
<th>Commitment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Identity Diffusion</td>
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<tr>
<td>Identity Foreclosure</td>
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Identity diffusion. Individuals in identity diffusion are not committed to a particular identity and do not have great intention to doing so. They may have done some minimal exploring, but are not concerned about it becoming part of their identity. Individuals in diffusion are not committed to an occupation or ideology. They may have some idea about what they may become, but they are easily influenced and may change positions frequently. Diffused individuals are the most confused about their identity. Identity diffusion is the least healthy of the identity statuses. Individuals in identity diffusion have the lowest positive psychosocial functioning of the identity statuses, which includes self-esteem, internal locus of control, presence of meaning in life, satisfaction with life, psychological well-being, and eudaimonic well-being (Swartz et al., 2011). Individuals in identity diffusion also score very high on depression and social-anxiety metrics (Swartz et al., 2011).

Identity foreclosure. Identity foreclosure is committing to an identity without exploring other potential identity options. Many of these individuals may have decided on their identity based on parental or society's wants. “A certain rigidity characterizes his personality; one feels that if he were faced with a situation in which parental values were nonfunctional, he would feel extremely threatened” (Marcia, 1966, p. 552). Individuals in this status lack the independence one would gain through exploration. When met with a challenge, they will turn to what their parents or society wanted, not what they want. Marcia (1966) found that individuals in identity foreclosure indorsed authoritarian values more compared to the other identity statuses.

According to Swartz et al. (2011), college students in identity foreclosure have many
positives to their psychosocial functioning, including self-esteem, meaning in life, satisfaction with life, psychological well-being, and eudaimonic well-being. While their level of psychosocial functioning is not as high as the Achievement status, these individuals appear to be functioning well in many areas. With the positives in psychosocial functioning, it doesn't appear as if therapists would get as many clients in foreclosure as they would in diffusion and moratorium. Internal locus of control, however, did score much lower than the achievement and moratorium statuses (Swartz et al., 2011). This suggests that these individuals do not believe they have as much control of over their lives. Having control over one's life may be something individuals in foreclosure may want to work on. Authenticity may also be a potential issue to work on, since these individuals have not done much exploration.

**Identity moratorium.** In identity moratorium, individuals are still currently exploring their identity, but a commitment has not been reached. These individuals are currently struggling with attempts at commitment which separates them from the identity diffused (Marcia, 1966, p. 552). Moratorium can often be very healthy to individuals and can be a step towards identity achievement. It does not, however, always appear healthy to others since individuals are often experimenting and testing the boundaries of their identity. “Although his parents' wishes are still important to him, he is attempting a compromise among them, society's demands, and his own capabilities” (Marcia, 1966, p. 552). Marcia (1967) found individuals in this stage to be experiencing the most anxiety. This is expected due to all the new things these individuals are trying and the difficulty they have with commitment. Individuals in moratorium also exhibit more rebelliousness and risk-taking behavior. This can, however, be viewed as a healthy step since individuals in identity achievement exhibit more past rebelliousness and past risk-taking behavior (Bukobza, 2009). This suggests the importance of prior exploration before reaching
Identity achievement. Individuals in identity achievement have explored many alternatives and have committed to an identity. This has been done on their own terms, and may or may not align with the view of their parents. They have developed a strong sense of who they are in relation to their ideology, educational goals, and occupation. This is the healthiest of the four identity statuses. Swartz et al. (2011) support this with their study on college students. Their study showed individuals in identity achievement scored highest of the statuses on the positive psychosocial functioning indices, which included: self-esteem, internal locus-of-control, meaning in life, satisfaction with life, psychological well-being, and eudaimonic well-being. Identity achievement also prepares individuals to move to Erikson's next stage of intimacy versus isolation. Årseth, Kroger, Martinussen, and Marcia (2009) give evidence to this preparation as they found a positive association between identity and intimacy status.

Clancy and Dollinger (1993) researched how Marcia's four identity statuses related to the five factor model of personality. They found that individuals in identity achievement were low in neuroticism and high in conscientiousness. They also found that individuals in identity foreclosure had a negative correlation to openness to experience. These findings show the health of individuals in identity achievement and provides additional evidence that individuals in identity foreclosure need to work on exploration. Both identity moratorium and identity diffusion were also related to neuroticism.

Adolescents need to exhibit courage to develop a cohesive identity. Courage is the vehicle that allows adolescents to move through the adolescent identity crisis. Courage provides continued movement through Marcia's identity statuses. Through courage, individuals are able to explore the world and explore themselves. Exploration allows individuals to try out new
occupations, educational topics, ideologies, and relationships. Courage also allows one to commit to an identity that will provide meaning and belonging. Identity is defined through this exploration, commitment, and courage.

### Level of Psychological Constructs in Identity Statuses

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<tr>
<td>Vulnerability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authenticity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Locus of Control</td>
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### Therapy in Identity Statuses

Since individuals in the diffusion, foreclosure, and moratorium identity statuses have various levels of courage, therapy will be very different for each status (individuals in achievement probably would not seek therapy for identity development). In each status, different psychological constructs rooted in courage should be targeted for individuals to be more courageous and move towards identity achievement.

**Identity diffusion.** Individuals in identity diffusion have not explored or committed to an identity. They have low levels of courage and have low levels in all the psychological constructs. Moreover, these individuals will not be ready to develop some of the psychological constructs. With low self-esteem, it will be very challenging for individuals to commit and pursue a long-term goal (grit). The therapy in this stage should focus on developing exploration, hardiness/resiliency, self-esteem, and self-efficacy (general).
Exploration should be a major focus with individuals in identity diffusion. Individuals in diffusion are not moving towards a particular identity. They are not trying new things that may help them in the future. Individuals in diffusion are stuck and do not have much intention of moving. These individuals need to conduct self-exploration. Exploring beliefs, ideology, potential occupations, and areas of interest is an important step in transitioning out of identity diffusion. Through exploration, individuals can move towards moratorium.

Hardiness and resilience should also be a focus when working with individuals in identity diffusion. Managing stress and adversity is the main component of both hardiness and resilience. Hardiness is the personality component and resilience is the overarching process. Individuals in identity diffusion have a very difficult time managing stress and overcoming adversity. When they experience stress or adversity, they shut down and remain immobile. This becomes a cyclical process, every time individuals in identity diffusion experiences stress or adversity, they stop exploring. These individuals then become even more discouraged. To begin exploring themselves and the world around them, these individuals need the skills to manage stress and overcome adversity.

Individuals in identity diffusion have a very low self-esteem. Marcia (1967) found that, compared to the lower identity statuses (diffusion and foreclosure), individuals in the higher identity statuses (achievement and moratorium) are less prone to self-esteem manipulation. They may view themselves as worthless, therefore unable to form an identity of their own. Without this sense of self-worth, these individuals will not move forward and take risks. They will not try new activities, explore occupational choices, or commit to an ideology. They will be unable to look hard at themselves and evaluate who they are as an individual for fear of what they may find. Therefore, therapy must center on self-esteem building for these individuals.
Individuals in identity diffusion also need to work on self-efficacy. These individuals do not believe that they are, or can be, capable. Individuals in diffusion easily become discouraged trying to complete tasks and will not persist towards improvement. Past discouragement will act as a roadblock to trying new things. Therapy with individuals in identity diffusion should focus on self-efficacy in a more general sense, in comparison to individuals in moratorium. They need to learn that they are capable and can succeed in a variety of things.

**Identity foreclosure.** Individuals in identity foreclosure have committed to an identity without exploring what they want or who they believe they truly are. Although they know they can be capable in some areas, they do not believe they can be themselves or be competent in what they truly want to do. The therapy with individuals in identity foreclosure should focus on exploration, self-awareness, authenticity, and locus of control.

Individuals in identity foreclosure have committed to an identity that is not theirs. They have been pushed by society and parents to commit to things that do not align with themselves. These individuals have not explored themselves and the world. They are doing things for other people's reasons and not their own. It is important for individuals in identity foreclosure to work on exploration. They need to explore their beliefs, ideologies, potential occupations, and areas of interest to know what they align with. This exploration is the gateway towards identity achievement.

Increased self-awareness is very beneficial to individuals in identity foreclosure. These individuals do not know what they truly want out of life and have committed to an identity based on other's values. They need to become aware of their own values, beliefs, and ideologies. It is beneficial for these individuals to learn how these were formed, and how they are currently using them. What was the reason for choosing their particular occupation? Does their belief system
align with how they are living? Individuals in foreclosure benefit from learning more about themselves and what path it is they truly want to be on.

Authenticity is what individuals in identity foreclosure are missing. They received many of their beliefs, convictions, and values from somebody else. When faced with anxiety, these individuals will not stick to these beliefs, convictions, and values. These individuals need to become in touch with their authentic self and what they believe in and value. Self-awareness is a very important part of being more authentic. When individuals become aware of their authentic selves they can start living authentically.

Individuals in identity foreclosure will benefit from an increased internal locus of control. These individuals have committed to an identity with someone else's standards. Very likely, these individuals did not feel they had a choice in choosing their identity. By believing they can influence their own life and the world around them, these individuals will understand they have a choice. They have a choice to become in touch with their authentic self and develop an identity that aligns with their beliefs, convictions, and values.

**Moratorium.** Individuals in moratorium are actively exploring their beliefs, convictions, values, interests, and occupations. Struggles with commitment catalyzes frequent anxiety. They are currently experiencing a lot of movement, although this movement is in many different directions. The main task of these individuals is to settle on a particular direction for this movement and commit to an identity. For individuals in moratorium, it is beneficial to focus on commitment, grit, self-efficacy (specific), and vulnerability.

Individuals in moratorium are actively exploring their identity but have difficulty committing to an identity. They are experiencing anxiety from trying to manage society, family, and other external expectations. At the same time, they are trying to explore who they are and
what they want. When working with individuals in moratorium, commitment is the main task to work on. It is through commitment that one will have a cohesive identity. If individuals do not commit or stand for something, they do not stand for anything at all. One will also not be contributing to society with community feeling and gain a sense of belonging. Without commitment, individuals will not contribute to society, express community feeling, or gain a sense of belonging.

Grit is another construct for the therapist to work on with individuals in moratorium. In identity achievement, the individual is committed to a long-term goal and effectively manages adversity. Grit requires commitment to a long-term goal. Committing to a long-term goal gives the individual a direction to pursue. The other part of grit is managing the adversity associated with pursuing a long-term goal. While there are many ways to manage this adversity, each situation is unique to the individual. The individual must have the courage to find a way to manage each situation of adversity. Having the goal makes it easier to stay the path and not get caught in the adversity.

Self-efficacy is another construct that is beneficial for individuals in moratorium to work on. This is much more specific and focused compared to the self-efficacy in identity diffusion. These individuals need to believe they are capable and can succeed in areas that align with their identities. Part of committing to an identity requires a belief of success and capability with that identity. Without belief, it is very difficult to commit to an identity that one does not believe one can succeed with. In exploring various identities, individuals need to find an identity that aligns with their values while believing they can be successful and capable with it.

Another area that helps individuals move from moratorium to identity achievement is acknowledging their vulnerabilities. By acknowledging their weaknesses, they will be able to fail
and make mistakes without becoming too discouraged. This benefits individuals in moratorium mainly in two ways. Individuals will be able to commit to an identity and know that mistakes are part of the process. The fear of failure will not discourage individuals from committing to an identity. Managing adversity is the other way this will benefit individuals in moratorium. Individuals will be able to make mistakes and maintain their path toward identity achievement. Recognizing their own vulnerabilities allows individuals to commit to a cohesive identity.

**Constructs to Target in Each Stage**

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<tr>
<td>Hardiness/Resiliency</td>
<td>Self-Awareness</td>
<td>Grit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>Authenticity</td>
<td>Self-Efficacy (Specific)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Efficacy (General)</td>
<td>Locus of Control</td>
<td>Vulnerability</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Summary**

After finding belonging in their family, adolescents are trying to figure out how they belong in society. Through exploring and committing to an identity, they will find belonging. Courage is necessary for adolescents to explore and make commitments. Without courage, adolescents will continue to experience identity confusion. Individuals in the three identity statuses all have their psychological constructs they need to work on. All of these psychological constructs are rooted in courage. Courage and the psychological constructs identified help adolescents develop Erikson's cohesive identity. With a cohesive identity adolescents will find a sense of belonging in greater society as adults.
Adventure Therapy

The big question is whether you are going to be able to say a hearty yes to your adventure. (Campbell & Moyers, 1988, p. 206)

Identity Development is a multifaceted process. The therapy used to help individuals with identity development needs to be flexible enough to meet the individual in that individual's particular identity stage. The therapy should be flexible enough to challenge individuals to develop courage, exploration, commitment, and the other psychological constructs described above. Adventure therapy provides the requisite flexibility to challenge individuals in each stage of identity development. It also provides adolescents the excitement and challenge to engage them in the therapeutic process.

A distinguishing feature of adventure therapy is its typical outdoor setting. It is done in conjunction with adventure activities, including rock climbing, kayaking, hiking, ropes courses, challenge courses, and many more. Adventure therapy challenges individuals to take risks though adventure activities that induce real fear. These challenges can then be used as metaphors for the individual's real life challenges. For example, rock climbing can be used as a metaphor for overcoming challenges in becoming a nurse. Becoming a nurse takes a large commitment and coupled with many challenges along the way. Persistence through these challenges allows someone to ultimately become a nurse. The objectives behind these adventure activities are many and can be designed towards one goal. Some of these objectives include group cohesion, trust, assertiveness, leadership, risk taking, personal growth and self-esteem. Although its use for identity development has not been well studied, this researcher found it to be a good match.

A central component and objective of adventure therapy is real versus perceived risk. Real risk is when individuals are confronted with a situation where they can actually be harmed.
Perceived risk invokes the same fear, but individuals are completely safe from harm. Many of these activities create actual fear in the individual. By creating a situation that is fearful, individuals are able to process, with the help of a therapist, what risk is perceived and what risk is real. These fearful situations are then processed through the use of metaphor towards real life situations in the individuals' lives. By overcoming the fear in the outdoor activity and comparing this to a fearful situation in their life they are struggling with, individuals will be able to make progress in their real lives. By being able to take risks and overcome these fearful challenges, individuals will develop courage and move towards a cohesive identity. Risk-taking is essential to healthy identity development.

**Roots of Adventure Therapy**

Using adventure as a therapeutic and developmental tool can be traced back to many cultures in multiple forms. One of the most well-known examples of this is the vision quest by various Native American tribes. Some of the earliest outdoor education dates back to France in the late 1800s (Nassar-Mcmillan & Cashwell, 1997). Adventure therapy in its current form evolved out of the experiential education movement of Outward Bound created by Kurt Hahn and Lawrence Holt in 1941. Outward bound has taken many forms, one of which is adventure therapy. Project Adventure also evolved out of Outward Bound. Project Adventure is credited for developing many of the ropes course elements and challenges.

There are many forms and ways to use adventure therapy as a therapeutic tool. Adventure based counseling uses many of the ropes course elements developed by Project Adventure. Adventure based counseling is an experiential therapeutic approach based on individual, group, family counseling, and experiential education (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002, p. 279). Adventure based counseling shares theoretical roots with many therapies, including cognitive, rational
emotive, behavioral, gestalt, reality, narrative, and constructivist (Fletcher & Hinkle, 2002, p.279). Adventure based counseling also shares many similarities with Adlerian therapy, such as, natural and logical consequences, encouragement, and cooperation. The ropes course elements chosen by this researcher are most closely related to adventure based counseling.

**Research in Adventure Therapy**

The research on Adventure therapy's impact on identity development is minimal. One of the main reasons for this is the challenges with measuring adventure therapy. Every adventure therapy program is designed differently. Each program utilizes different techniques and has different goals. The programs differ in terms of length, intensity, staff, setting, number and type of client, and many other variables. With all of these differences, additional research needs to be done before conclusions can be made on its impact on identity development. Theoretically, however, it greatly aligns with other research and appears to point in the direction of adventure therapy being very beneficial for identity development.

Another challenge in studying the effects of adventure therapy is that many of the studies on adventure programming are considered educational and development oriented, rather than therapy. While both of these categories focus on developing the individual and share many similarities, they are inherently different. Adventure therapy outcomes have been shown to be stronger than those for outdoor education (Neill, 2003, p. 318).

Since many of the adventure programming studies differed in what they were studying, Cason and Gillis (1994) did a meta-analysis on the overall effectiveness. They concluded that adolescents who attended adventure programming were 62% better off than individuals who did not. The measures they found to be significant included self-concept, behavioral assessment by others, attitude surveys, locus of control, clinical scales, grades, and school attendance. This
included programs that were therapeutic, recreational, and educational (Cason & Gillis, 1994).

It does appear that non-therapeutic adventure programming positively influences identity development. Duerden, Widmer, Taniguchi, and McCoy (2009) studied the impact of a two week adventure recreation program on the identity development of 11-15 year old adolescents. They found that the adolescents who participated in the adventure program had significantly more identity development than the comparison group. Kaly and Heesacker (2003) studied the effects of a ship-based adventure program on identity development. They found a significant decrease in identity diffusion. It is unclear, however, how adventure therapy affects identity development. It seems logical that adventure therapy would have just as great of an impact, if not more, on identity development of adolescents, especially if the therapy was tailored towards identity development.

**Ropes Course**

There are many styles of adventure therapy and various ways each can be done. Many kinds of therapy could be designed to facilitate identity development, but the therapy needs to be tailored towards its purpose. This researcher chose to use a ropes course to facilitate identity development. This researcher chose the ropes course because a ropes course provides easy access to challenges that are physically demanding and create actual fear. It is much easier and more convenient to bring a group to a ropes course than on a weeklong backpacking or kayaking trip. The ropes course still provides a high level of fear and challenge that cannot be imitated in an office setting. Additionally, the ropes course can also be adaptable and manipulated to provide the appropriate level of challenge for the individuals on the course. This researcher proposes different elements for individuals in identity diffusion then for individuals in moratorium. The level of difficulty of each element can be made higher or lower depending on the age and
courage of the individuals. An example of this would be to do one of the high rope elements without hands. This researcher also chose the ropes course because of personal experience facilitating ropes courses. In the decision making process on which techniques to include, this researcher looked at the literature for effective techniques. Although many of the techniques chosen for this design have been included in effective treatments, there has been no research on which techniques in adventure therapy are more effective or efficacious than others.

Ropes courses contain both high-rope and low elements. The high rope elements are usually around 30 feet above the ground. In all of the high rope-elements, the individual is wearing a harness and belayed from the ground by an instructor or other group member. The rest of the group is watching the individual doing the high-rope element and providing encouragement. The low elements are usually group-oriented problems to solve. They are low to the ground and involve physical activity. An example of this is giant tee-totter, in which the whole group must get on and balance. Many of the low elements force the group to explore various options and depend on each other to solve them.

The therapy also includes a pre- and post-orientation. This will educate the group about what will be worked on during the therapy as well as make real life connections to the elements. The pre-orientation will include some safety concerns, education on the elements, psycho-education, self-disclosure, goal-setting, and the creation of metaphors. The post-orientation will include a debriefing of the therapy, goal check-in, psycho-education, and self-disclosure.

**Identity Diffusion**

The adventure therapy techniques chosen for individuals should parallel their identity status. Individuals in identity diffusion are really struggling with identity development, as they can neither explore nor commit to an identity. Exploration should be the primary task these
individuals are working on, but individuals will need some commitment to the self to complete the elements. The catwalk and whale watch parallel the struggles of individuals in identity diffusion. In the catwalk and whale watch individuals can strengthen and become more aware of the psychological constructs of exploration, hardiness/resilience, self-efficacy, and self-esteem. The catwalk and whale watch will help individuals move out of diffusion.

**Whale watch.** The whale watch is a low element that is basically a giant seesaw about 10' x 6' with one end only going about one foot off the ground. For this challenge, the whole group must get on the seesaw while keeping it balanced. If this is too easy for the group, other challenges can be added, such as getting everyone off the seesaw, certain group members have to lay down, or everyone has to go to the opposite side of where they started. A good way to get adolescents engaged in this activity is to create a make believe situation they would be interested in.

The whale watch is a good element for individuals in identity diffusion because it is challenging without being too discouraging. The group will struggle along the way, thus working on hardiness and resilience. Other challenges can be added to make sure that this activity is the appropriate challenge. The group will ultimately succeed, which makes individuals' aware of their self-efficacy. They will start to realize they are capable as individuals and as part of a group. This element will also strengthen and make individuals aware of their self-esteem. They are completing something challenging as part of a group. Each individual was necessary in completing the task, thus showing individuals they are worthwhile. Central to this task is exploration. The individuals in the group must explore various solutions to complete this element. They may also try out various social roles in the group and start to identity with what they contribute to the group.
**Catwalk.** This high-rope element is a log suspended between two posts. The task is to walk from one end of the log to the other. The challenge of this element is that individuals know they could walk across a log if it was not this high off the ground. This really shows how fear effects our perception of what individuals are capable of. This high-rope element is not as challenging as some of the other elements and would be an appropriate challenge for individuals in identity diffusion.

When individuals let go of one end and step onto the log, they are working on exploration. Taking that first step can often be the most challenging part. By completing the full length of the log, it shows how individuals can explore and experience fear, while still being safe afterwards. The catwalk also works on self-efficacy. This will show individuals that they are capable of things that are challenging and fear provoking. This can be used as a metaphor for other challenges in individuals' lives. Resilience and hardiness are very apparent in this therapeutic tool. Individuals will need to work through all of the stress and fear this element stimulates. They will also be able to utilize the encouragement and support of the group, as well as other strategies that individuals come up with, to complete the element. Completing the catwalk will help improve the diffused individuals' self-esteem. Completing such a challenging task will make individuals feel more worthwhile. The encouragement and inclusion of the group will also benefit individuals' self-esteem.

**Identity Foreclosure**

The adventure therapy for individuals in identity foreclosure should parallel this stage of identity development. Individuals in identity foreclosure have committed to an identity based on others values and have not explored their own identity. Individuals in identity foreclosure will benefit from working on the psychological constructs of exploration, self-awareness,
authenticity, and locus-of-control. The swinging bridge and the leap of faith are two high-rope elements that parallel the challenges individuals in identity foreclosure are going through. These two elements will target the four psychological constructs mentioned above, making their struggles apparent while providing them awareness of areas to work on.

Swinging bridge. This high rope-element is a bridge suspended between two posts. The bridge is made of many wooden planks about a foot apart. The challenging part about this element is there is nothing for an individual's hands to hold onto. This causes the bridge to swing back and forth. Each movement by the individual greatly affects the bridge. Balance is very important to the swinging bridge.

The swinging bridge will make the four psychological constructs identified above very clear to foreclosed individuals. Individuals will need to be self-aware of every movement they make, for it will affect the bridge. This will also make individuals aware of internal sensations and their effect on the body. If an individual is really nervous, the individual will likely be less steady on the bridge. If an individual is calm, the bridge will be more stable. This element helps individuals work on exploration. Individuals will be trying something new and challenging; they will learn that it can be quite fun and rewarding in the end. This activity will also show individuals how much control they have over this situation, thus working on locus-of-control.

The way individuals move their feet directly influences the whole bridge. The swing bridge will also expose parts of their true identity. This helps individuals live more authentically. This element will create authentic fear in individual and expose their authentic beliefs. Individuals will be much more successful to acknowledge aspects of their authentic self.

Leap of faith. This is high-ropes element in which the individual wears a full body harness. The other group members will belay this individual from below. The individual will
climb a single post about 30 feet high and stand at the very top of it. When ready, he or she will jump into the air and be caught from the belay by the other group members. The individual jumping will fall about ten to fifteen feet from where he or she has jumped from, before he or she is caught.

This therapeutic element will be most beneficial for exploration. Often times, the hardest part of exploring something new is the initial exploration. The leap of faith is a great metaphor for this. Individuals need to have the courage to make the initial jump. This is also a great element for self-awareness. Standing up on a single post thirty feet in the air all alone, requires overcoming fear and other emotions. The challenge is identifying these emotions and having the courage to jump anyway. Locus-of-control is also apparent in this element. Nobody or anything else can make this jump for them. Individuals need to take this jump themselves. They are the only ones that can make this happen. The fear created by this element will make individuals more aware of their authentic self. During the jump, individuals will be exposed to their beliefs and fears. To be honest with their fears and beliefs allows them to be more authentic.

**Identity Moratorium**

Individuals in identity moratorium are currently exploring their identity, but are having difficulty with commitment. These individuals will benefit from doing the two-line bridge and rock climbing. This will make individuals in moratorium become more aware of and strengthen commitment, self-efficacy (specific), vulnerability, and grit. The two-line bridge and rock climbing are great metaphors for the challenges individuals in identity moratorium are experiencing.

**Two-line bridge.** This is a high-ropes element with two cables to cross between two posts. One of the cables is to walk on, while the other is about chest high for one's hands. This is
one of the harder high elements, since there is not much to walk on. Another challenge individuals must face is the hand cable gets looser towards the middle of the element. Individuals must then adjust to how they use the cable along the way.

The two-line bridge is a great therapeutic tool for individuals in identity moratorium to complete. The two-line bridge is a great metaphor for what individuals in moratorium are going through. They need commitment to take the first few steps onto the line. Without complete commitment, the line will move even more, which creates more fear. Individuals also need to commit to stay the course. The element gets more challenging along the way, and individuals must adjust to these challenges. Individuals must show grit, committing to the goal of completing the element despite encountering challenges along the way. This element will also expose their vulnerability. After thinking they have mastered the element, it become more challenging along the way. This makes it more beneficial for individuals to embrace their difficulties and change the way they approach the problem. This element also reinforces self-efficacy, and how individuals can be capable when committing to a long-term goal.

**Rock climbing.** Rock climbing as a therapeutic tool is a great match for individuals in moratorium. This can be done on real rock, an indoor climbing wall, or another climbing element on a ropes course. The individual will climb a single route on a rock climbing wall with another individual belaying the climber. This should be designed to match the individual with a rock climbing route that is just above their ability level. The route should be chosen by the individual in therapy, requiring the individual to commit to a long-term goal.

By having the individuals choose their own route just above their ability level, it will benefit their ability to commit to something and work towards it. Individuals in moratorium need to primarily work on commitment, and rock climbing is a great match for this. Rock climbing
also works on individuals' grit as they will be working towards a long-term goal. Individuals will also encounter many obstacles while climbing a challenging route. If the route is challenging enough, they will not be able to climb it the first time. They will fail along the way, thus working on their vulnerability. By recognizing where they had difficulty with the climb, they can work on achieving the goal while being vulnerable. By completing the route, they will be working on their self-efficacy. Individuals will realize they can be capable in something that they personally choose. They will have committed to a unique long-term goal, worked to overcome challenges, and felt capable in achieving something important to them.

Summary

Even though the research on adventure therapy's effect on identity development is yet to be studied, it appears to be the perfect match. The research supports the effectiveness of adventure therapy, and there is research to support adventure-based programming to positively influence identity. Along with the research pointing to the effectiveness, adventure therapy appears to be a logical fit to promote adolescent identity development. Adventure therapy is flexible enough to be tailored to each of the identity statuses. With adventure therapy, one can work on the psychological constructs that align with each identity status. It creates difficult challenges that take a significant amount of courage to complete. Adventure therapy is also unique in its experiential nature; it will keep adolescents interested and engaged.

Final Summary

Adolescence is a very challenging time. Adolescents are newly challenged to specialize in an educational and occupational field, choose friendships, establish an ideology, and date for the first time. While facing these challenges, they must also navigate their way through various negative influences, such as bullying, gangs, and drugs. Adolescents need courage to face these
challenges and navigate their way through these negative influences. Therapists have the opportunity to help adolescents with this journey by giving them skills to meet these challenges. Therapists can promote courage and the identified psychological constructs in adolescents, so they can face the challenges of adolescence and develop a healthy, cohesive identity.

Promoting courage is central to the individual psychology concept of encouragement. Encouragement means to give another person courage. Past researchers and philosophers have varied in how they defined courage. After a thorough investigation, this researcher has developed a definition of courage based on Rate’s findings (2010). This researcher has defined courage as doing a freely chosen action for a noble purpose that puts the actor at substantial risk, where fear is often but not necessarily present. This definition is very specific, but still encompasses numerous human behaviors. Courage can be physical, moral, and/or psychological. Courage is similar to or is an essential part of many healthy psychological constructs. By encouraging adolescents, therapists can promote courage and these psychological constructs within them. Courage is essential to healthy identity development.

Adolescents must bridge the gap from their child to adult identity. Many children find their belonging within the family. An identity crisis follows during adolescence, and presents the challenge of exploring and committing to an identity to reach adulthood. Along this path, adolescents can get stuck in identity confusion, which is made up of three identity statuses: identity diffusion, identity foreclosure, and identity moratorium. Adolescents must display courage to explore and make commitments in order to move towards a cohesive identity. In each identity status, there are different ways in which adolescents must be courageous to grow. The psychological constructs uniquely align with a different identity status. Therapists can help adolescents move out of identity confusion and towards a cohesive identity by promoting.
courage and the psychological constructs that align with each identity status. Identity achievement (a cohesive identity) has been shown to be the healthiest of the identity statuses (Swartz et al., 2011). A cohesive identity will allow the adolescent to continue to healthily develop into adulthood.

Research on adventure therapy's effect on identity development has been minimally studied, although, other research does point to it being effective. Non-therapeutic adventure programming has been shown to positively impact identity (Duerden et al., 2009; Kaly & Heesacker, 2003). Adventure therapy may also be more effective than adventure programming. The outcomes of adventure therapy have been shown to be stronger than outdoor education (Neill, 2003). A significant amount of research still needs to be done before any conclusions can be made about the effectiveness of adventure therapy on identity development. Although, the available research points to adventure therapy being a logical fit for identity development.

This researcher has proposed a method of adventure therapy oriented towards identity development. The method proposed uses a ropes course to provide experiential challenge. In this method of adventure therapy, each of the identity statuses are targeted with adventure therapy elements that align with each status. The adventure therapy elements also specifically target the psychological constructs each status needs to work on. This provides the specialized challenge each identity status needs to work on and summons the adolescent to use the necessary courage.

No one can fully prepare children for the challenges of adolescence. Adolescents must meet many of these challenges independently. The best preparation is to encourage adolescents, so they believe they are capable, worthwhile, and belong. Adventure therapy uniquely fits with the identity development of adolescents and allows them to display the courage necessary to develop a cohesive identity. With courage and a cohesive identity, adolescents can find belonging
as adults.
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*Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 59*(2), 135-147. doi:

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