Adler Graduate School
1550 East 78th Street

AGS Course Online 537
Advanced Counseling Skills

Spring 2017

1. Course Designation and Identifier

1.1. Adler Graduate School
1.2. Course number 537
1.3. Title Advanced Counseling Skills
1.4. Three (3) credits
1.5. Prerequisite: 511 or 710; completed or started individual didactics

2. Course Description

This course will advance students through a process of Adlerian basic skills review, mid-level skills development, and move to an advanced understanding of more mature clinical knowledge, awareness, and skills. The class will focus on skills related to creating and maintaining change with the use of Life Style Analysis.

3. Texts, Materials and Resources (required and optional)

3.1. Required textbooks:


2. Required Articles/Handouts:

To be posted in the Moodle classroom.

3. Optional Reading

You may find it helpful to keep the 511 or 710/712 books close during this advanced course
4. **Competencies and Learning Outcomes**

1. Students will review stages of Adlerian psychotherapy and major Adlerian therapeutic assumptions (useful vs. useless side of life, striving; neurotic disposition, compensation and overcompensation, social interest, creative self, soft determinism, holism; optimism; gender guiding lines; purposefulness of behavior, safeguarding, and other assumptions).

2. Students will be able to perform an integrative assessment, including a hypothesis about client’ mistaken beliefs, a direction and usefulness of psychological movement, the three life tasks, and other Life Style data for the purpose of assessing client’s readiness for change, promoting change, fostering treatment-promoting factors, and recognizing and resolving client’s resistance and ambivalence toward the intervention.

3. Students will be able to develop an Individual Psychology case conceptualization, and will create strategies that help the client gain insight into underlying beliefs interfering with one’s optimal well-being and therapeutic changes.

4. Students will learn how to use client’s Life Style to establish and maintain a treatment focus, to modify maladaptive cognitions, behaviors, affects, and interpersonal relations; and to monitor treatment progress.

5. Students will practice Life Style Analysis as a vehicle of change, as well as other change-promoting techniques, such as “The question”, “acting as if”, Push button technique”, encouragement, and others.

6. Students will become aware of self in the process of working with the client in an egalitarian, congruent, and empathetic way, will be able to use self in the process of doing psychotherapy, and to recognize and address therapeutic ruptures.

7. Students will learn to recognize and address cultural impact on treatment outcomes.

With most of the knowledge-based items above, will come a specific awareness, and an opportunity to try out some beginning skills. In the course outline below, these will be identified as K (knowledge), A (Awareness), and S (Skills).

These will be delivered/practiced via asynchronous online discussions, various experiential tasks, instructor’s presentation and comments in debates, reading, watching, and listening of various media, in addition to final academic exercises.
5. **AGS Course Overview**

5.1. This AGS course lasts a usual term, which is five weeks of classes and two weeks in completing final assignments. In this course, you should expect to spend approximately 135 hours on all course-related activities. Your instructor will be actively available for all class activities and individual consultations for the duration of the coursework and as needed until final papers grades are submitted.

5.2. Your course instructor will respond to your questions or comments within 48 hours (barring unforeseen circumstances). You will be expected to observe the same response time-- replying within 48 hours. During the class, your instructor will post specific office hours.

5.3. Please stay current in the class. Generally, you will be expected to complete reading assignments, reflective exercises, Life Style analysis as a vehicle for change, and will engage in other experiential activities.

5.4. Although you will likely find that you have a lot of experience in the discussed topics, please remember that the most convincing position is the one supported by the most current and relevant research. You will find these sources in peer-reviewed journals. Use APA style and format requirements in referencing sources.

5.5. Please review the following in preparation for this course – course 511 or 710/712 for general Adlerian terminology and the overview of Lifestyle Analysis; courses 504 and 514 for Adlerian definitions of psychopathology and patterns in developing a neurotic lifestyle; course 525 for effective interviewing skills as these can relate to gathering of the Lifestyle data; course 523 for cultural lens in interpreting Lifestyle data and hypothesis development; course 505 for developmental aspects of Adlerian view on personality, course 521 for general issues (Adlerian theory as ethics) and for specific issues concerning confidentiality and dealing with risk in this class.
6. Course Outline

1 Unit 1: Foundational concepts underlying Life Style and Life Style Analysis (outcome 1)

Reading for the class:


Knowledge (review): useful vs. useless side of life, striving; neurotic disposition, compensation and overcompensation, social interest, idiographic/creative self (self-determination and uniqueness), soft determinism, holism (unity of the individual); optimism; gender guiding lines; teleology (goal orientation, purposefulness of behavior), safeguarding, factionalism (“as if”), phenomenology, social context, family constellation, fundamentals of ERs; and other assumptions

Awareness: self in a process

Skills: observations and discussions: the techniques exemplifying the assumptions; ability to see an assumption underlying the technique and the process.

Discussions: The lifestyle is dynamic and creative and grows out of numerous “inputs”; one of these is family constellation and family atmosphere. Pair up with a classmate and interview that person about their family constellation and family atmosphere. If you were conducting an intake, what information could you glean based on this person’s birth order, family constellation and family atmosphere? Hint: don’t forget to ask about miscarriages, deaths, organ inferiorities, illnesses and consider how those might influence lifestyle. Please use the client number assigned to you when working with areas of the Lifestyle Assessment. As, clinician, share your hunches on the area provided on your Lifestyle form. You will be asked to share what this experience was like for you as a full group. Please remember that you are counselors in training and be respectful of confidences; if there is anything that your teammate does not wish shared, don’t. But do try to use this class as a safe, respectful place to practice your craft.

1 Unit 2: Foundational concepts underlying Life Style and Life Style Analysis (outcomes 1 and 2) Instructor: Liza Finlay

Reading for the class:

- Mock Case Study
- journal articles and other handouts as necessary.
Discussion Post: As you read the case study, please list 3 to 5 most important strengths and 3 most visible challenges in the “case” client’s LS. What clues do you have about the client’s mistaken beliefs/private logic? How do you know? How might you explore those clues? Share with the class by posting your thoughts. Hypothesize!* 

*This assignment (discussion post) will be entered on the Course page (online) for review and response from your unit instructor: Liza Finlay.

Self-reflection essay: When you have completed the readings for this week, please take a few moments to reflect. Then, think back as far back as you can and write down the earliest thing that you remember about yourself. Detail that scene. Think of the most vivid moment in that memory. Write it down. Think about the feelings that come with that MVM. Write those down. Ask yourself what you decided, on concluded in that moment. Write that down, too.**

**Please bring this reflective essay to class (Saturday) as we discuss Early Recollections, and their use in work with clients, as part of our unit 3.

Knowledge (review and introduction of new themes): A review of the 4 stages of Adlerian therapy and the therapeutic process. Collaborative assessment of the lifestyle of the client, including a hypothesis about client’s strengths, challenges, mistaken beliefs and purpose of symptoms, a direction and usefulness of psychological movement, safeguarding mechanisms, the fulfillment of the three life tasks, the degree of Social Interest as a measure of one’s health; a therapeutic contract through the use of ERs, and other Life Style data for the purpose of assessing client’s readiness for change, promoting change, fostering treatment-promoting factors, recognizing and resolving client’s resistance and ambivalence toward the intervention; therapist’s LS in the process of client’s change. Awareness: self and client in a process – both carrying LS; awareness of limitations of insight-based interventions and appropriateness of LSA for a particular client or a clinical situation; different approaches to LSA.

Skills: A review of the 4 stages of Adlerian therapy and the therapeutic process. Collaborative assessment of the lifestyle of the client, including a hypothesis about client’s strengths, challenges, mistaken beliefs and purpose of symptoms, a direction and usefulness of psychological movement, safeguarding mechanisms, the fulfillment of the three life tasks, a therapeutic contract through the use of ERs, and other Life Style data for the purpose of assessing client’s readiness for change, recognizing the client’s degree of social interest and promoting its increase and associated healthy change, fostering treatment-promoting factors, recognizing and resolving client’s resistance and ambivalence toward the intervention; ability to define and collect elements of Family Constellation (FC) data; assessment of therapist’s LS in the process of client’s change. Ability to define the next question.

1 Unit 3: Lifestyle Analysis as a vehicle of insight into neurosis

Reading:

• Isaac Lidsky (2016). What Reality Are You Creating For Yourself? [URL removed]

Knowledge: Life Style Analysis as a vehicle of insight and a therapeutic change (tested by skills)

Awareness: self in a process

Skills: Life style analysis – therapeutic data gathering, and insight development

small group Discussion: Discuss courage. What role does it, or its lack, play in the development of symptoms? Where might that lack of courage show up? What sorts of questions might you ask to deduce how/where the client lacks courage? How might you encourage?

6.4. Unit 4: Life Style Analysis as a vehicle of insight and therapeutic change: reading behaviors and developing therapeutic hypotheses

Reading:
- Powers & Griffith article, A Q&A on Lifestyle Assessment, posted in course room.

Discussion: Distancing is one way a client might safeguard against feelings of inferiority. There are others. Choose one to explore with a classmate, and share what you have learned with the class. Briefly sketch out what this safeguarding strategy might look like. (Often, we get clues to clients’ lifestyles as soon as they walk into the room, or even before we meet them!)

Self-reflection essay: Adler viewed symptoms not as a problem, but as the client’s attempt to solve a problem. Safeguards—like distancing—are ways in which the neurotic client attempts to preserve a sense of adequacy. Take a few moments to reflect on the ways in which you, or members of your family, use symptoms to preserve status or significance. If you are writing about a member of your nuclear family, think about how that person’s symptoms have affected you and others in the constellation.

Knowledge: Life Style Analysis as a vehicle of insight and a therapeutic change (tested by skills)

Awareness: self in a process

Skills: Life Style analysis – creating a summary with hypotheses and suggestions; ability to define a degree of SI and define suggestions of its change; use of Socratic questioning.

6.5. Unit 5: Using Social Interest as a measure of mental health, and a growth/wellness promoting approach in therapy. Life Style Analysis as a vehicle of insight and change.

Reading for this unit:
Knowledge (new): Social Interest as a measure of mental health, and a growth/wellness promoting approach in therapy. Life Style Analysis as a vehicle of insight and change. Use of client’s strengths in a therapeutic assessment.

Awareness: self and client in a process – both carrying LS; awareness of limitations of insight-based interventions and appropriateness of LSA for a particular client or a clinical situation; different approaches to LSA.

Skills: Life Style Analysis as a change-promoting exercise. Students will learn the importance of helping the client to develop social interest by assessing the client’s interest in others and the community and develop a plan for implementing a gradual increase in social feeling.

Discussion: Social interest can be used both diagnostically and prescriptively. Clients aren’t the only individuals who have creative power; therapists do too. So, construct two devices aimed at employing social interest—one to help you gain insight (diagnose) and one to promote change/healing.
6.6. Unit 6: Life Style Analysis as a vehicle of insight and therapeutic change: working through therapeutic hypotheses, developing an insight, and promoting change.

**Instructor: Liza Finlay**

*Reading:*

- *journal articles and other handouts as necessary*

**Knowledge:** Life Style Analysis as a vehicle of insight and a therapeutic change: analysis, working through therapeutic hypotheses, developing an insight, and promoting change.

**Awareness:** self in a process; client’s readiness to change and its impact on a process, resistance and other dynamics in the process

**Skills:** testing/developing the hypothesis and promoting change in one’s degree of SI in a collaborative, egalitarian, empathetic, insight-oriented therapy.

**Discussion Post:** Consider the various ways in which your own lifestyle might align or collide with a client’s. Briefly describe a scenario—make one up if you wish—to illustrate. What would be your plan for this? *

*This will be submitted through the Course page (online) for review and feedback from this units instructor: Liza Finlay

**Self-reflection essay:** Think of the word “change”. Now, think back as far back as you can and write down the earliest memory that comes to your mind. Think of the MVM. Write it down. Listen to your body, notice any “body talk”, and note these sensations in your essay. What are feelings that come with this MVM? Write this down. What do you think are your strengths and the challenges as it comes to building an alliance with and inviting change for a client, as you process this guided ER? *

*This reflection will also be submitted through the Course page.

6.7. Unit 7: Promoting growth, wellness and change in therapy. Developing interventions

*Reading:*

- Sweeney and Witmer article (in binder)
- *journal articles and other handouts as necessary*

**Knowledge:** Life Style Analysis as a vehicle of insight and a therapeutic change: analysis, working through therapeutic hypotheses, developing an insight, and promoting change.
Strengths: self in a process; client’s readiness to change and its impact on a process, resistance and other dynamics in the process

Skills: testing/developing the hypothesis and promoting change in a collaborative, egalitarian, empathetic, insight-oriented therapy.

Small group Discussion: The Sweeney and Witmer article in this week’s readings offers an Adlerian conceptualization of wellness. It expands upon the original three life tasks, incorporating both a fourth and fifth task of life and numerous Adlerian-endorsed ideas about the well person. Each aspect represents a spoke in a wheel that, collectively, represents a path to wellness. With classmates discuss how you might use this wheel with a client. Or, if you’d rather, focus on one aspect of the wheel that we haven’t yet fully discussed and explore how you might use that “spoke” with a client to promote healing.

6.8. Unit 8: Promoting growth, wellness and change in therapy. Dreams, devices and developing interventions.

Reading for the class:
- Mosak, H., Maniaci, M. P. Primer of Adlerian Psychology, chapter 3, posted in online classroom.

Skills: Ability to define a matching approach to LSA with respect to client’s characteristics, characteristics of a situation, and therapist’s characteristics.

Knowledge: Life Style Analysis as a vehicle of insight and a therapeutic change: analysis, working through therapeutic hypotheses, developing an insight, and promoting change.

Awareness: self in a process; client’s readiness to change and its impact on a process, resistance and other dynamics in the process.

Small group Discussion: Chapter 3 of Mosak’s and Maniacia’s Primer offers a consolidation of lifestyle factors and at the end of the chapter a case study is offered that integrates much of what we have been discussing. In light of the metaphors, symbols, dreams and tricks we’ve added to our toolkit, add another few paragraphs to the case study. If “Liz” was your client, what more could you, hypothetically, do to gain insight and what more might you add to our understanding of her lifestyle?

Closing Discussion: In the past few weeks you have taken a stroll through your own psyche to uncover your own private logic. Contained within that “self” are potential strengths and potential liabilities. Choose one of each that you’d be willing to share with your peers. Discuss a strength that you’ve unearthed by excavating your own past and share how this will be of use in a therapeutic relationship. Then share a possible liability and discuss how you might prevent this from tripping you up. Come prepared to our final evening class to share.

Self-Reflection Essay: No two therapists are exactly alike; we bring our subjective selves into the room. Similarly, no two clients are alike. While there is a science to acquiring lifestyle data, due to the dynamic relationship between therapist and client, there is also art. Knowing yourself—your strengths and weaknesses—reflect upon the lifestyle assessment tools and strategies that are best
suited to you and the ones that are more problematic. Why? Then, reflect on the clients (age, population, characteristics) that might require you to work harder. Why? And how will you ensure your toolbox is fully resourced? Eg. How will you work with a client who best learns non-verbally?


Reading for the class:

- Sonstegard article posted in the online classroom
- journal articles and other handouts as necessary

Knowledge: Life Style Analysis as a vehicle of insight and a therapeutic change: analysis, working through therapeutic hypotheses, developing an insight, and promoting change.

Awareness: self in a process; client’s readiness to change and its impact on a process, resistance and other dynamics in the process

Skills: testing/developing the hypothesis and promoting change in a collaborative, egalitarian, empathetic, insight-oriented therapy.

Self-reflection essay *: In the past few weeks you’ve started developing a professional self—a sense of who you are and who you will be in the therapy room. And, this week you’ve written about your own private logic. Having a plan for how you will nurture strengths and mitigate weaknesses is essential to professional wellness and ethical practice. What would you do to create and maintain an authentic and socially useful therapeutic environment? (The Sonstegard article may be inspiration here.) How would this plan help you in separating your private logic from that of your client? Take a few moments to diarize on this challenge and opportunity.

*Please submit your self-reflection essay through the courseroom for review and feedback from Instructor: Liza Finlay.

7. Assessment/Evaluation Procedures

7.1. Assignment Overview

There are different types of assessment in this course, aimed to assess your knowledge, awareness, and/or various academic and experiential skills.

A. Point Structure

1) Lifestyle Assessment (in class - experiential) = 25 points
2) Self-Reflection Essays – five essays/five points each = 25 points
3) Discussion posts (online) - units 2,6/five points each = 10 points
4) SPT- 20 points total
5) Final Paper – 20 points Total
7.2. Grading

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R = Retake – Needs more time or instruction to master the requirements of the class
NC = Quality of work or participation falls below minimum expectations, including:
  • Grade point is below 35
  • Not attending class
• Not properly notifying registrar of a withdrawal
• Missing class periods in excess of the number allowed by AGS's course attendance policy (see section 9 below).
• Not resolving a grade of incomplete within 45 days after the last class meeting (not the assignment due date) and an agreed upon extension has not been arranged by the student and instructor. The Incomplete turns to No Credit (NC) and the course must be repeated at full price.

8. Special Project Time

Special Project Time (SPT) allows students the opportunity to integrate course materials. SPT is meant to be a self-contained experience, requiring at least 45 hours to complete.

SPT experiences may be constructed in such a way that they pertain to students’ unique degree plans. This is done in consultation with the course instructor.

**SPT (20 points) * **

Options:

1. Create a video that would translate the benefits of LSA into a mainstream clinical language for a non-Adlerian clinician, with an emphasis on treatment and change. Send this video to one clinician or a clinician in training that is not Adlerian and solicit his or her feedback. Share the feedback (please do not use any identifiable information without permission) and the video link with the course instructor. Find an Adlerian quote, from your reading or elsewhere, that would make an attractive title for your video. *

2. Compile your 5 Self-reflection papers. Edit them into APA Style, but retain your use of the personal pronouns “I”, “me”, and “my” as you have used them in your papers. Then, add a discussion/analysis that identifies: themes that you have discovered and how they pertain to your LSA; revelations about prominent feelings and/or thoughts and beliefs; revelations about how the aforementioned are educative; how they may be triggers; how all of this helps you understand you and understand private logic overall. Your SPT should be a minimum of 10 pages (double-spaced), exclusive of title page and references. It should observe APA guidelines (with the exception of the personal pronouns that are required for this reflective paper). The references will include at least 5 articles from peer-reviewed sources.

*This will be submitted through the course page for review and feedback from Instructor: Liza Finlay

**Final assignment (20 points):**

Create a LSA template, and present it along with a narrative re a specific population (e.g. ethnic, cultural, specific clinical population, e.g. children, LGBTQ, etc…), and what specific considerations (e.g. cultural, religious, ethnic, age, etc…) you included in this template (or omitted).

Include in this instrument:
- A way to identify the therapist-client lifestyle alignment.
- Family constellation
- Use of a metaphor, dream or symbolic representation
- Use of Socratic questioning
- A non-verbal exercise/intervention
- An intervention designed to influence social interest

Provide supportive research to your considerations (e.g. defend why you have included these considerations to your population). It is expected your narrative (defensive) portion of the assignment be a minimum of two pages (with supportive resources/references) with a maximum of four pages.

This assignment will also be submitted through the course page for review and feedback from Instructor: Jill Sisk

10. **Writing Guidelines including APA Format**

10.1. All written assignments in courses at the Adler Graduate School, including those submitted in online courses, must be in APA format unless specifically noted by the course instructor (*Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association* (6th edition), 2009, American Psychological Association. ISBN 1-4338-0561-8).
10.2. Strict APA publication rules in Online Peer Discussions might prove difficult, if not impossible, to maintain. Following the “letter” of the Manual (i.e., not using “I”, or passive voice, keeping proper margins, or complying with headings requirements) may be either difficult or counterproductive in forums such as peer discussions. However, it is still important to adhere to the “spirit” of the APA Manual (i.e., grammar, orderly presentation of ideas, reducing bias in language, and presenting scholarly statements and arguments).

10.3. Prior to submitting a response, please proofread carefully. Grammar and spelling errors may make your response difficult for other students to appreciate.

10.4. Please keep in mind that, while the Internet offers a lot of exciting and up-to-date information, not all Internet sources are considered scholarly. For example, Wikipedia is not an academically peer-reviewed source. Rather, it is an “anybody-reviewed” source and, therefore, can’t be used in presenting your argument in AGS classes-related tasks.

11. Attendance and Participation Policy

Since courses are structured according to an intensive five-week format, regular and punctual attendance is of prime importance. Students are expected to attend all class meetings.

The AGS three credit courses are divided into nine units. One unit is equal to one evening class session, ½ of a weekend day session, one unit/ posting in an online class or, roughly, 3 ¼ hours of class time. In this class, students cannot continue attending a class if they miss the first class session or any class session involving a dyadic exercise. Please plan attending all class sessions. Students who miss any class without notification will automatically receive a grade of NC (No credit) for the class and are expected to retake the class at full price.

In online classes, the student fulfills the class session or unit by complying with posting and other submission deadlines

Questions or appeals about the implementation of the attendance policy may be directed to the Academic Vice President.

12. Participation Disclaimer

Active participation in class discussions/exercises/demonstrations is expected.

As with other AGS courses, in this course, individual students must determine for themselves the level of personal disclosure/intimacy that is appropriate for them.
Faculty members and students do not disclose confidential, personally identifiable information concerning their clients, students, research participants, organizational clients, or other recipients of their services.

Whenever confidential information/material is used in any AGS course, students and faculty members are expected to observe AGS policy concerning the handling of confidential information/material. Full descriptions of these policies are readily available on Moodle main page.

13. **Academic Integrity Policy**

Honesty and trust among students and between students and faculty are essential for a strong, functioning academic community. Consequently, students are expected to do their own work on all academic assignments, tests, projects, and research/term papers. Academic dishonesty, whether cheating, plagiarism, or some other form of dishonest conduct may result in failure for the work involved. Academic dishonesty could also result in failure for the course and, in the event of a second incident of academic dishonesty, suspension from the Adler Graduate School. Here are examples of academic dishonesty:

- **Cheating** - Intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term academic exercise includes all forms of work submitted for credit.

- **Fabrication** - Intentional and unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or citation in an academic exercise.

- **Facilitating academic dishonesty** - Intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to violate a provision of academic integrity.

- **Plagiarism** - The deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statements of another person as one's own without acknowledgment.

14. **Nondiscrimination Clause**

The Adler Graduate School is an equal opportunity educator and employer. The Adler Graduate School does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, age, sexual orientation, veteran status, or physical disability in the employment of faculty or staff, the admission or treatment of students, or in the operation of its educational programs and activities. The institution is committed to providing equal education and employment opportunities in accordance with all applicable State and federal laws.
15. **Learning Accommodations (including students with disabilities)**

If a student in this course has a documented learning disability, tell the instructor during the first week of class. The instructor needs to know on the front end so that he or she can work with you. The Adler Graduate School is committed to helping all students be successful, as best as can be reasonably accommodated. Documenting a learning disability occurs at the student’s expense. When documented appropriately, the Adler Graduate School makes all reasonable accommodations.

16. **Instructor Contact Information**

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<th>Jill Sisk, PhD</th>
<th>Liza Finlay, M.A.</th>
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<td>Core Faculty</td>
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<td><a href="mailto:jill.sisk@alfredadler.edu">jill.sisk@alfredadler.edu</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:liza.finlay@alfredadler.edu">liza.finlay@alfredadler.edu</a></td>
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