Intergenerational Parenting Styles: Applying an Adlerian Approach

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Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to understand how negative parenting patterns are initiated and reproduced throughout generations. “Intergenerational transmission posits that the influences of an individual’s complete history, historical factors, and childhood experiences inform how one functions as a parent” (O'Brien, 2010, p. 397). Understanding the impact of intergenerational parenting styles enables a therapist to work on shifting their client’s mindset and understanding of discouraged parenting. Parents are the first connection to the world for their child. The way parents interact with the child rest on how they view and treat the world around them. Utilizing the parent curriculum in the appendix section of this paper allows therapists and parents to identify parenting styles and incorporate Adlerian parenting concepts into a new approach to parenting. By using an Adlerian parenting approach, families could create the potential to move past their negative parenting styles and subsequently adapt new approaches. The curriculum was developed using seven Adlerian concepts to heal from past trauma and change the negative parenting styles into positive ones.

Keywords: Intergenerational, Parenting styles, parenting patterns
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Intergenerational Parenting Styles: Applying an Adlerian Approach

The purpose of this paper is to provide a comprehensive understanding of intergenerational parenting styles and how gaining insight may have a positive impact on the parenting styles of discouraged parents. Intergenerational parenting patterns allude that a child’s rearing influences their outlook on how to be a parent. According to Shaffer, Clark, and Jeglic (2009), numerous research studies have shown that negative parenting behaviors, such as harsh criticism, show significant continuity across generations. Adlerian psychology highlights that childhood experiences are not the only way that assist with shaping a person’s personality, but also how a person interprets and uses those experiences (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1992). Recognizing negative intergenerational parenting styles can prepare a therapist with more insight into how to positively shift discouraged parenting patterns. The following topics will be discussed in this paper: 1) intergenerational parenting, 2) Individual Psychology, 3) parenting styles, and 4) the effects of intergenerational parenting styles on child development. A parenting group curriculum (see Appendix), informed by Adlerian theory, will be developed to assist therapists in working with faulty intergenerational parenting styles.

Intergenerational Parenting

Intergenerational behaviors can affect future generations through family beliefs, attitudes, actions or habits that are spread throughout the family. A child’s immediate family, particularly their parents, mainly transfer the interest, attitudes, principles and morals to the next generation (Laghi, Pallini, & De Sclavis, 2012). “Intergenerational transmission posits that the influences of an individual’s complete history, historical factors, and childhood experiences inform how one functions as a parent” (O’Brien, 2010, p. 397). A family atmosphere that is unpredictable can negatively impact a child’s behaviors. Negative family behaviors pass down to the children, who
are then prone to repeat the same behaviors as adults with their own children, regenerating the intergenerational pattern (Brown, Li, Danko & Budd, 2011).

As children become adults they act out the observations and experiences from their childhood as they interact with others. Behaviors created during their childhood can be self-destructive, negative, and unhealthy. Various research studies have been conducted over the years to link parenting styles to outcomes of children and their behaviors. Van Meurs, Reef, Verhulst, and van der Ende (2009) performed a longitudinal community study of several challenging behaviors between two generations, spanning 24 years. The results showed the intergenerational transmission of numerous behaviors from parents onto their children. The results of the study validated the hypothesis that there is a correlation between child behavior of parents and their children. Chen and Kaplan (2001) studied the ongoing effects of negative and positive parenting. Second-generation parents reported on both first-generation parenting as adolescents and then on their own parenting values after they became parents. The outcome of the study proves that a reasonable amount of intergenerational continuity of constructive parenting validates the hypotheses. Interpersonal relations, social participation, and role specific modeling successfully links continuity of constructive parenting through generations. Conger, Neppl, Kim, and Scaramella (2003) studied intergenerational patterns of anger and aggressive parenting using observational methods of the parent and child relationship. The authors discovered that long term aggressive parenting patterns from first-generation parents during the upbringing of their children and second generation aggressive parenting of their own children were connected. According to Susan Jones (2012), it becomes disturbing when children begin to pick up the negative and self-destructive behaviors that are displayed by adults. The constant negative thoughts and behaviors allow parents and children to fall victim to the “cycle of
deprivation," which researchers use to refer to repetitive negative behaviors transferred through generations, such as domestic violence, teenage pregnancy and substance abuse (p 10). Based on these studies one may conclude that through positive interactions and observations children can learn accountability, positive communication, and how to care for others outside of oneself.

**Individual Psychology and Adlerian Concepts**

Individual Psychology was developed by Alfred Adler and was influenced by his life events. He understood the importance of prevention and shared his knowledge with other childhood educators, parents, and social service workers. Adler believed humans are their own inventors and creators of their own lives. People create a unique style of living that begins to form in childhood. According to Adler (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1964) life style is created throughout one’s childhood and incorporates the individual’s goal of importance in life and the strategies for accomplishing those goals. The following Adlerian concepts will be reviewed as they helped define Adler’s concept of lifestyle.

**Lifestyle**

A person’s lifestyle is formed by their experiences in the first few years of their life. Other contributing factors such as family atmosphere, mistaken beliefs, early recollections, private logic, and striving for belonging all contribute; however, an individual’s interpretation of their experience is as important as the environment of their upbringing. Adler proposed that individuals have one essential goal: to have a sense of belonging. The person’s lifestyle that was developed between ages five and nine is an array of beliefs that influences how people will think about themselves, and the world around them (Even & Armstrong, 2011). Parents and environment play a vital role in the development of a child’s lifestyle. According to Goldfinch (2009), trauma can affect how children discover themselves as well as the world around them.
Family Atmosphere

Family atmosphere is the interactions between family members in the household. The child’s interaction with family sets a foundation for how they will interact with the world (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1992, p. 19). Family atmosphere is created by the parents of the household and within the tone of the home the child develops values and morals that remain significant to them. The experience in the family atmosphere helps form the child’s thoughts about relationships, attitudes, and concepts (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1992, p. 19). Children look at how their parents interact with one another and with them. The parenting styles that are learned create a foundation that will guide the child’s way through life. More on family atmosphere and parenting in Adler and Parenting section.

Mistaken Beliefs

“The healthy individual, as well as the neurotic, would have to forego orientation in the world if he did not organize the picture of the world and his experiences according to fictions” (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1964, p. 93). Alfred Adler suggested that an individual is steadily driven towards a self-defined goal created in the perception of the world around them. Although, the perception of oneself may be inaccurate, the belief is embraced as truth and establishes itself as a belief that lacks evidence or credibility. An individual’s mistaken belief about themselves can influence their behavior, and often not in the conscious awareness of the individual (1964). This mistaken belief imprints on how a person views themselves as an individual and the relationships around them. The mistaken belief can negatively impact a person decisions and actions.

Dreikurs and Soltz (1992), demonstrated four mistaken goals of the discouraged child which are attention, power, revenge, and display of inadequacy. Children can become motivated
by one of the mistaken goals, and as a result the child will have negative views pertaining to their self-worth.

If children feel like they are not significant, they will begin trying to achieve a sense of belonging according to their mistaken belief scheme. The child will foster a belief system of leaning into a mistaken belief regardless of if it was true or not. As parents understand the development in their children, one has to acknowledge that children are not misbehaving just to misbehave, rather they are acting with the sense of discouragement and their mistaken beliefs have taken over. The foundation of a child misbehaving can be connected to the feeling of discouragement (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1992, p. 36). Children become discouraged by the interactions in their environments and the people who are in them. Encouragement is the medicine to children who are discouraged. The more encouragement a child receives in life builds the resiliency to overcome the mistaken beliefs that have formed.

**Early Recollections**

A person’s interpretations of early events impact behavior. Early recollections can be used in therapy to successfully recognize mistaken beliefs that were shaped from childhood. The individual’s early recollection gives the therapist insight into how the individual views themselves. An early recollection is “a complete story with beginning, middle, and end, or it may be an account of a single moment; it may describe activity, or it may be limited to the memory of a sensory perception” (Powers & Griffith, 1987, p. 87). Early recollections show faulty thinking in a person’s childhood memories which are a guide to their mistaken beliefs about themselves and the world around. The therapeutic advantage to obtaining early recollections is that they offer sincere and impartial information; the client does not view old memories as insightful to their current state, however more straightforward questions may obtain a more safeguarded
answer that the individual will think makes them appear better (Kern, Belangee, & Eckstein, 2004).

**Private Logic**

According to Griffith and Powers (2007) Private logic is a term that was adapted from Alfred Adler’s term, “private intelligence.” Private logic is the ideal of oneself that is derived from the person’s belief on who they are (p. 81). An individual’s Private logic is the thoughts and perceptions about the world that motivates them to make decisions no matter the reasoning behind it. Private logic is supporting to the persons self-identified values that the individual uses to try and make meaning of their world and justify ludacris behavior (Griffith & Powers, 2007). Clients who develop their life style based on the philosophy of their private logic have problems with personal coping and meeting the requirement of social living. It affects their concepts about self, others, and life (Corey, 2013).

Adlerian theory focuses on a person’s behavior, which portrays to the client that their private logic is required for their final decision. As the client works through therapy with the therapist one begins to unfold who they are and who they are to the world. Inferiority feelings develop early on when a child is still discovering the world around them, however a child’s perception of events can be amplified and feelings of inferiority can develop in certain environments or physical limitations. Parents can either directly or indirectly transmit their feelings, emotions, and reactions to life events onto their children.

**Striving for Belonging**

According to Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1964) the development of the child is increasingly permeated by the relationships of society to him. People yearn for a sense of belonging through relationships and community. Ferguson (2010) states “Feeling belonging is
crucial for the mental health of the individual, and at the societal level it is crucial that all members of the community feel belonging” (p. 2). The need to belong begins in the early stages of life. As children are determining the world around them, they are also figuring their place in the world. The need to belong can be considered a basic human need for a person’s mental well-being. A study completed at the University of Michigan suggested that certain experiences during childhood and adolescence are associated with sense of belonging as an adult (Hagerty, Williams, & Oe, 2002, p. 799). People’s insights into how they were cared for as children seem to be an exceedingly essential foundation for social interactions and the capability to believe in oneself as valued, important, and able to interact with others.

Striving for superiority is the individual’s psyche that begins to strive for superiority at birth. “When striving for superiority is done on the useful side of life, it contributes to the human community” (Griffith & Powers, 2007, p. 99). Individuals who strive for superiority on the useful side of life have the bravery to be themselves as they find their sense of belonging in the world. Adler states “the most sensible estimate of value of any activity is helpfulness to all mankind, present and future” (Adler, 1964, p. 78). Individuals striving for superiority and using their helpful side, adds to the lives of others in a significant way. The outcome allows the individual to discover more about who they are as a person.

Alfred Adler believed that inferiority was a human condition that we are all born with. Adler suggested that inferiority feelings begins when a child is young. “Inferiority feelings are those universal human feelings of incompleteness, smallness, weakness, ignorance, and dependency included in our first experiences in infancy and early childhood. Inferiority feelings continue to be experienced to greater or lesser degree throughout adult life” (Griffith & Powers, 2007, p. 60). Areas that the inferiority complex can interfere with is a person’s emotional,
physical, and intellectual feelings and then form a style of life based on this belief. The degree of inferiority that a child feels varies on the individuals own description of the incidents that took place (Ansbacher & Ansbacher, 1964, p. 116). Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1964) stated, “Each individual strives from a feeling of weakness and inferiority, as this is shown also in bodily development, towards a goal of an ‘ideal end-form,’ that is, toward overcoming all difficulties of life” (p. 254). Human beings are born feeling inferior and are constantly striving to move towards the more useful side of their lifestyle.

**Adler and Parenting**

Adlerian parenting is strongly founded on equality, social interest, and encouragement (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1992). The family atmosphere of a democratic household is thought to be equal, in which the children feel as though they are a part of the family and they are loved for who they are. Dreikurs said “Democracy is not just a political view but a way of life” (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1992, p. 7). Understanding that democracy is not only good for Americans as a whole, but for individual families to acquire the same philosophy in their household.

Democratic parenting, requires that parents have to understand that children have the right to make choices just like adults. A core belief and characteristic of democratic parenting is respect. Dreikurs and Soltz (1992) believed that in order for equality to be established in the home, every person in the family has a different role and is respected for what they bring to the family. The democratic family atmosphere can viewed as children having too much democracy and not enough autocracy with in the family. Dreikurs and Soltz (1992) suggested that children become independent and as they gather information and mature from birth. The parent’s role is to model positive and resilient behavior for the child, so the child can meet the task of life with self-confidence in their own lives.
Adler’s belief was that a misbehaving child was a discouraged child. A child may become discouraged or worried with low self-esteem and psychological traumas. The negative thoughts that a child has about themselves becomes their guiding principles in life. These principles are how children sum who they are to the world and their place in it. The discouraged child will begin to project their feelings outwards through various attention seeking behaviors. Typically, children who are discouraged believe attention seeking behaviors will fill the void that is missing which is encouragement (Dreikurs & Soltz, 1992, p. 58)

If a child is encouraged to use their guiding principles in a positive way instead of a negative, then one can begin to see the shift in behavior. Parents who have adopted positive social skills, which are essential in any relationship, assist children with forming a positive and encouraging bond with family. The child will be able to create a steady relationship with others (Liem, Cavell & Lustig, 2010). A child who grows up with a discouraged state of mind will struggle in areas of positive parenting and risk the transmission of the same behaviors to their children.

These intergenerational patterns are sometimes unconsciously engraved on future generations, doomed to be repeated unless a person can recognize, revise or decide to withdraw from those patterns (Zosuls, Miller, Ruble, Martin, & Fabes, 2011). The same patterns that the parent felt when they were a child can unconsciously and consciously transmit to the next generation of children if not confronted beforehand.

**Parenting Styles and Effects**

There are four very different types of parenting styles that attribute a child’s lifestyle (Baumrind, 1971, as cited by Driscoll, 2013). These are, 1) authoritarian parenting, 2)
permissive parenting, 3) authoritative parenting, and 4) uninvolved parenting. Below is a description of these parenting styles along with a description of these through an Adlerian lens.

**Authoritarian Parenting Style**

The authoritarian parent has high demands and expects that all will be accomplished. Parents view parenting as black-and-white not allowing for children to have any input around the house. Children are required to follow the demands of their parents, without any back talk or conversation (Driscoll, 2013). Authoritarian parents are rule setters and expect obedience and for their child to conform to what they want them to be. Children who are in an authoritarian family atmosphere display poor social skills, a lack in creativity, and can display signs of depression or inferior behavior. According to Hoskins (2014), adolescents from most Caucasian authoritarian families have been found to exhibit poor social skills, low levels of self-esteem, and high levels of depression (p. 509).

The Adlerian concept “over-coercive” closely aligns with an authoritarian parenting style. The autocratic parent controls their children by making demands and decisions for them. Dreikurs and Soltz (1992) suggested that an autocratic way of parenting does not establish an equal relationship amongst family members in the household. When parents make decisions for children, it tells the child that they are not capable enough to make choices on their own (Capron, 2004). The autocratic parent conveys minimum responsiveness to their children. Responsiveness is the affection, encouragement, and compassion toward children and their needs (Baumrind, Larzelere, & Owens, 2010). This style of parenting builds the foundation for the child to become discouraged.
Permissive Parenting

The permissive parenting style creates no structure for the child. The parent typically does not discipline their children due to wanting to avoid confrontation. Permissive parents do not have high demands of their children. These parents feel the need to compensate by buying gifts, and not giving rules or structure. The permissive parent is easy-going, can be seen as too involved and they tend to cave into their children’s demands (Driscoll, 2013). It can be challenging for permissive parents to say “no” to their children due to wanting to avoid conflict. These parents prefer to fix or save a situation in order to prevent confrontation or challenges with the child. (Darling, 1999). Children who have permissive parents can lack self-discipline, social skills, and low self-esteem. Permissive parents can be affirming with their child; however they lack discipline and structure. According to Hoskins (2014) “Adolescents from permissive families report a higher frequency of substance use, school misconduct, and are less engaged and less positively oriented to school compared to individuals from authoritative or authoritarian families” (p. 509).

Alfred Adler’s concept on the pampered child best describes the parent-child relationship that closely aligns with permissive and uninvolved parenting styles. Ansbacher and Ansbacher (1964), suggest that the pampered child receives everything in life easily but, is unable to cope with the struggles of everyday life. The parent who pampers their children builds a foundation for the child that is unrealistic. According to Mosak and Manniacci (1999), Adler believed that the pampered child could become negligent and will not be able to learn from one’s consequences. Mosak and Manniacci expressed that pampered children whose parents complete task for them will often feel neglected when other people refuse to treat them as their parents would.
Authoritative Parenting

Authoritative parents are the primary role models and they show the same behavior they expect from their children at all times. In return children are more likely to adopt their parents’ same behaviors and showcase them as well. “Adolescents with authoritative parents are less prone to externalizing behaviors, and specifically are less likely to engage in drug use than individuals with uninvolved parents” (Hoskins, 2014, p. 508). The authoritative parenting style allows for children to have a voice in the home. The Authoritative parents are warmhearted but firm (Kopko, 2007). The parent sets the rules; however, children are allowed to advocate for themselves or their siblings without worrying about being reprimanded. This approach to parenting gives clear requirements and places rules that are expected to be obeyed, however parents ponder opinions of their children (Driscoll, 2013).

Alfred Adler’s position on democratic parenting is parallel to the styles and technique of the authoritative parent. Adler used encouragement as a positive tool to establish a child’s autonomy. Dreikurs and Soltz (1992) believed encouragement was a constant development that assist the child with a sense of self-confidence and achievement. Encouragement allows parents to focus on the child’s uniqueness and ability to make a mistake. It also displays a positive mindset to have the courage to be imperfect.

Uninvolved Parenting Style

The uninvolved tend to be labeled as neglectful. Uninvolved parents are seen to have no regard to their children’s wants or needs and they are often preoccupied or inattentive; therefore, no rules or boundaries are set for the children (Driscoll, 2013, p. 5). These parents usually are emotionally unavailable, and they are not fully invested in their children’s needs. Uninvolved parents are frequently exhausted by their own situations that they become frustrated and
discouragement peaks (Kopko, 2007). Children with parents who are uninvolved in their well-being have been found to have more negative effects on the child. According to Hoeve, et al. (2009), parents who have uninvolved parenting styles have been linked to delinquent acts such as vandalism and petty theft to assault and rape (p. 20). The lack of structure and discipline allow the child to rummage through life without guidance or accountability.

**Parenting Patterns Through the Generations**

Intergenerational parenting are the direct mechanisms that are passed down through generations. Those mechanisms are often viewed as tangible; however, emotions and behavior are often overlooked. The term intergenerational can be unknown within families, which is why the constant negative behaviors continue. Without acknowledging negative parenting styles within the family, the pattern will only continue. The transmission of behaviors from generation to generation can affect the child’s physical and emotional development. The child who grows up in a household where negativity is the norm is one factor that plays into a child’s development. That child does not have the opportunity to view positive healthy relationships, which prevents the child from developing emotionally and cognitively. According to Conger et al. (2003), “An abundance of empirical work supports the theoretical expectation that highly reactive and emotionally negative children are at heightened risk for later conduct problems because of the hostile responses such reactivity elicits from parents.” There is evidence that social inequalities is linked to the transmission of economic status amongst parents and their children. Behaviors transmit from generations allowing the same patterns to continue. The same behaviors and thought patterns that children have pertaining to academics are learned by their parents. Negative behaviors are often correlated with a range of negative results as a teenager
and adult, including poor academic outcomes, substance abuse, and criminality (Bailey, Hill, Oesterle, & Hawkins, 2009).

Parents have a strong influence on the development of their children. Parents who are not conscious of having a negative parenting style risk causing trauma to their children such as abuse and neglect. In support of a child’s strong and positive cognitive development, it is important to encourage and empower growth, decision making, and independence. Parenting that is receptive, encouraging, and supportive creates a collaborative family atmosphere for children to engage nonverbal and verbal language in a respectful and exciting matter (Tamis-LeMonda, Bornstein, & Baumwell, 2001). According to Smith, Stagnitti, Lewis, and Pepin (2015) struggles in areas of healthy relationships, unemployment, and emotional health continue to play a significant role and interactions of parents to their children (p.874). Some of these patterns are affected by poverty and trauma.

**Poverty**

The disadvantage of socio-economics during childhood, can indirectly affect parenting outcomes and cause maternal stress. Hao and Matsueda (2006) suggest mothers that use cruel chastisement and early childhood poverty impacts child behavioral challenges. Although, economics and history are key factors in the transmission of parenting styles another important component to parenting is academic achievement. If the child’s basic needs are not being met, children often struggle in an educational atmosphere. Furthermore, children who live in poverty sometimes do not have access to educational resources and parents may not be able to assist with their homework (Mayo & Siraj, 2014). With lack of resources and knowledge, generational patterns are likely to occur. With parent’s inability to contribute assistance with homework and the disruption of every day life’s basic needs, this could negatively impact the child’s future in
the employment industry and contribute to the continuation of generational cycles of poverty (Mayo & Siraj, 2014). According to Kordi and Baharudin (2010), Adolescents who came from a neglectful family, used maladaptive behaviors that are described by high points of discouraged behavior’s and lack motivation and structure.

**Intergenerational Trauma**

Trauma is a negative experience that causes a deep emotional reaction to any situation. The experience can be emotional, physical, real or perceived, and the emotions that are tied to the trauma will transcend to the next generation if not addressed. According to Moehler, Biringen, and Poustka (2007), mothers whom have a history of early trauma are more invasive in relations with their infants. Trauma can be experienced one time, or it can be the result from exposures to multiple negative events over time. According to Juul et al. (2016), mothers with a history of childhood sexual abuse are more likely to engage in negative parenting strategies, including physical punishment.

Childhood abuse has been linked to a wide scale of difficulties in adulthood, including troubles in parent-child relationships. The relationship between a parent and their child is based on the interactions with one another. Parents who have experience traumatic experiences and have not gain closure, can project their own emotional state onto their children. According to DiLillo and Damashek (2003), some children of sexual abuse do not force power onto their children because they remember the discouraging experiences that they had being victims of abuse. Childhood sexual abuse can set children, adolescents, and adults in jeopardy of considerable mental health dilemmas, from depression and suicidal ideation to substance use and PTSD. During the developmental stage, children who experiences trauma along with dysregulation of life stressors can harmfully effect childhood brain development. According to
Jovanovic et al. (2011) “The negative impact of early adverse events on the brain has been established for more than a decade: animal models as well as human clinical studies of early life stress have found long-term neurobiological effects” (p. 844). A child who has been a victim of negative generational patterns are predisposed to having unhealthy interactions with other people including their children. Studies have revealed that mothers who have faced some form of abuse during their lifetime were more likely to participate in negative reactions and abusive conduct toward their children than mothers who did not experience any abuse.

**Application of Theory: Intergenerational Parenting**

The therapist can work with the parent to address intergenerational patterns in individual or group therapy. Applying the Adlerian approach to therapy can be used to assist with understanding the different patterns in a person’s life that may transmit over time through generations. The first step in the process is engagement between the therapist and the parent. This process consists of building a healthy positive and trusting relationship. After the relationship has a solid foundation of trust the therapist can then begin to complete the assessment.

The assessment allows for the parent to speak freely about their personal history, beliefs, feelings, early recollections, and family history. During the assessment the therapist will be noting the parent’s guided principles when it comes to parenting thoughts, fears, and mistaken beliefs. Once the therapist and the parent have developed a baseline the therapist will then work with the parent to develop insight into the things that they would like to change. Once a person is able to identify and recognize intergenerational patterns in their lives, they can begin the development of pinpointing which patterns are healthy and which patterns are unhealthy and need to change (Brown & Pool, 1966).
To begin the process of discovering negative intergenerational patterns the therapist collects early recollections with the client. Involving early recollections in therapy as a counseling method can be especially useful in pinpointing a client’s distinctive assessment of oneself, others, and events in life (Clark, 2002). The early recollections are used as a guide from the past to assist with the understanding of who a person is today. After the therapist and the client have obtained 3-5 early recollections the therapist can then begin to gather the client’s guiding principles. Every person is guided by morals, values, early recollections, and or by family atmosphere. Those beliefs are what guides individuals through life and depending on the person those principles can either be positive or negative. Once the counselor and client have carved out the negative beliefs the client will be able to see why and how their mistaken beliefs were formed.

In order for the parent to make a positive change, the parent’s mistaken beliefs about being a parent will have to be addressed in therapy. Goals surrounding misperceptions of life and life’s demands, false or impossible goals, overgeneralizations, and minimizations of one’s worth. In order to address mistaken beliefs in therapy the therapist will have to obtain early recollections for the parent to better understand a person’s private logic. Once the mistaken beliefs are addressed the therapist and the parent will work together to create positive thinking and parenting skills to break the negative patterns of parenting. Modern research upholds the belief that in spite of a child’s mental, physical, or emotional state, children do best when parents use a more positive style approach to parenting (Affrunti & Ginsburg, 2012).

Stopping behavioral patterns can be challenging, however, a person’s choice to change can produce a positive product. Without supportive assistance from the therapist or understanding of the development, change can be slower. If patterns are not modified, it is
possible to form, accept and transmit reactive patterns (Lauer & Lauer, 1991). A therapist whom can demonstrate a positive attitude and understanding can effectively work with a client’s who are prepared to gain self-awareness and direct their own lives during treatment. Person-centered therapy is a non-directive form of talk therapy, meaning it lets the client steer the conversation without any interjections from the therapist. The approach relies on one fundamental attribute: unconditional positive regard. This approach prohibits the therapist from criticizing the client for any reason, creating a space for complete acceptance and support (Cherry, 2017). “Person-centered therapy is based on faith in and empowerment of human beings to be joyful, creative, self-fulfilled and willing and able to connect with others, both socially and emotionally (Boyer, 2016, p. 343). Person-centered therapy and Adlerian therapy can be used in tandem with one another to be most effective with the client. Both therapies focus on the client and their belief in themselves. According to Corey (2013) Rogers has trust in the ability of the client to create optimistic and productive mindful choices. Therapists who are working with parents who appear in an intergenerational cycle can build stronger rapport by focusing on creating positive and productive mindful choices. According to Corey (2013), human being inheritances and heredity are not as essential as what we elect to do with the skills and imperfections we possess. People have the ability to become whatever they want to be. According to Corey (2013), it is said, Rogers’s belief is in the ability of the client to create an encouraging and beneficial mindful choice. This belief can be used in combination with Adler’s approach to encouragement. When the therapist uses encouragement as an approach to therapy the client will begin to create positive outlooks on life that they can then begin to pass down to their children.
**Multicultural Awareness**

Different cultures may have inherent ways in which they parent their children. It is important to recognize the patterns of different cultures and adapt one’s therapy to meet these needs. African American and Hispanic families are known to value respect through obedience from their children because obedience symbolizes respect for the elders in the home and community. The obedience typically is most often accomplished by an authoritarian parenting style (Baumrind, 1972; Rowe, Denmark, Jones Harden, & Stapleton, 2015). Understanding different cultural family atmospheres allow the therapist to work effectively with the parents in therapy. African American parents often feel that authoritarian parenting is a necessary method to help their children form coping skills to face racism and discrimination (Outley & Floyd, 2002; Pittman & Chase-Lansdale, 2001). During the initial building rapport and assessment, the therapist should take the time to understand the parent’s cultural beliefs and values. This will assist the therapist with decoding the parent’s early recollections and mistaken beliefs.

**Conclusion**

Parenting styles and how they correlate with intergenerational parenting patterns were presented, along with some ways to become mindful of negative patterns that can be passed down through generations. Using Adlerian approaches coupled with person-centered approaches will increase awareness in the patterns of negative parenting styles. The negative intergenerational behavioral patterns that endanger families are not going to fix themselves. The negative intergenerational patterns that lurk over families and keep them tied to the negative patterns are going to continue to transmit from parent to child without ending, unless a choice to change is created. Movement regarding life’s gratification and joy is possible for everyone (Dambrun & Ricard, 2011).
Learning about the parent’s lifestyle and mistaken beliefs through assessment and early recollections can create a portrait of the intergenerational patterns within the family. Predictable family dynamics can be examined to recognize intergenerational patterns, boost self-awareness, and create a space for change (Rohrbaugh, Rogers & McGoldrick, 1992). A person who wants to positively change negative patterns of behaviors before it can be transmitted on to the next generation, should change gain awareness of these patterns before parenthood (Kerr, Capaldi, Pears & Owen, 2009). Although gaining awareness into possible negative parenting patterns before having children would be ideal, however, that is not always the case. This author has created an Adolescent curriculum to use for expecting mothers. This group curriculum allows expecting mothers to make positive changes to their parenting styles before the child is born. While a person’s growth will always change over a lifespan, there is a limited gap of time between adolescence and parenthood that is best for any essential self-confrontation, pattern altering, and healing to occur (Kerr, Capaldi, Pears & Owen, 2009). The author of this paper believes that, if negative intergenerational patterns can be acknowledged in adolescence, allocating ample time for the process of change to happen, positive results for future generations are more likely to happen.
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Appendix:

Group Curriculum: Intergenerational Parenting Group Activities to Encourage Positive Parenting

The purpose of creating this Adlerian group curriculum is to assist parents and parents to be with acknowledging their past traumas and gain insight into how they can appear into their parenting style. The curriculum was developed to encourage parents to look into their mistaken beliefs and lifestyle in order to help prevent the transmission of unwanted parenting techniques onto their children. The hope with the curriculum is to establish a positive baseline for positive parenting and become aware of unwanted parenting behaviors. Each activity is meant to be conducted with parents of any age and can be done with multiple families or groups of families. A set of directions, example scenarios, and materials needed to run each activity is provided.
Week 1- Parenting Styles

Directions: The first class will begin with a brief introduction into the group therapy class. Parents will complete a check-in with high and lows from their week. After check-in parents will complete an ice breaker activity to get to know one another. The Ice breaker activity is where each individual will have a sticker on their back with a celebrity name and they have to go around the room and ask questions about who they are. After the ice breaker activity everyone can gather back around in a circle to discuss concerns about becoming a parent. A talking stick will be passed around the circle to manage interruptions and side conversations. Next the facilitator will discuss Adler’s democratic view on parenting and the 4 different parenting styles such as; authoritarian, authoritative/democratic, permissive, and uninvolved. The facilitator will discuss intergenerational parenting styles and how they can positively and negatively affect the way we interact with our children. Next, parents will break up into small groups with different scenarios that they will have to discuss how to handle each situation. This activity will be completed twice with the same groups and same questions. The second time parent will answer the questions with what they think their parents would say or do. A short 5-minute break should be given here.

Materials:

1. Stickers with famous names
2. Scenario cards

Activity 1: Each person should have a sticker placed on their back with different famous people names. Each person should be instructed to ask questions yes or no questions about who they are.

Activity 2: The facilitator should separate parents into the 4 parenting style groups. Each group will discuss how they will handle the different scenarios using that parenting style (below).
AUTHORITARIAN SCENARIOS:

1. Your child is crying because you told them no.
2. It is your child’s bedtime and they do not want to go to sleep.
3. Your child broke your favorite vase.

PERMISSIVE SCENARIOS:

1. Your child is crying because you told them no.
2. It is your child’s bedtime and they do not want to go to sleep.
3. Your child broke your favorite vase.

AUTHORITATIVE/DEMOCRATIC SCENARIOS:

1. Your child is crying because you told them no.
2. It is your child’s bedtime and they do not want to go to sleep.
3. Your child broke your favorite vase.

PERMISSIVE SCENARIOS:

1. Your child is crying because you told them no.
2. It is your child’s bedtime and they do not want to go to sleep.
3. Your child broke your favorite vase.

PROCESS: After the break, the facilitator will open the group up to discussion about the activity and end class with a closing question of the facilitator choice.
Week 2: Carving out Discouragement and Introducing Positive Parenting Through Encouragement.

**Directions:** Class will begin with would you rather questions from the book that was given to the facilitator. After everyone has a turn, the facilitator will use the talking stick for check-in with high and lows. After check-in the facilitator will discuss the Adlerian concepts encouragement and discouragement and the importance of understanding how that can affect your relationship with your children. A 5-minute break should be given here. After the break, the group will work together to develop discouraging and encouraging ways of parenting.

**Materials:**

1. Dry erase marker
2. Whiteboard
3. Magazines
4. Scissors
5. Markers
6. Tape
7. Glue
8. Crayons/Color pencils
9. Poster board

**Activity 1:** As a group whole group ask for 1 or 2 writers to make poster. As a group discuss discouraging statements and acts that can be hindering to a child’s upbringing. Discuss the different situations that were mentioned and come up with positive ways to handle the discouraging statements.
Activity 2: Break the group up into small groups to create a parent vision board. During this time parents can create their vision boards with goals they want to accomplish as parents.

Process: After the big group discussion another 5-minute break should be given. After everyone is back from the break the facilitator should break everyone into small groups and explain the next activity. After the activity come back for a large group discussion. End class with positive affirmation.

Week 3: Understanding Family Atmosphere

Directions: Class will begin with a one-word ice breaker activity on family atmosphere. The facilitator should explain the activity at the start of the session. After the ice breaker activity the group will use the talking stick to check in with highs and lows from the past week. After check in, facilitator will begin discussion on Adler’s concept of family atmosphere. After the discussion the parents will break up into small groups and create a poster board with words that best described their family atmosphere. After completing the poster board, parents will get back into a large group and go one by one and discuss their board and how it made them feel when they were creating it. After everyone has had a turn give 5-minute break. After everyone is back from the break start the next small group activity. The facilitator should remind everyone to keep their feelings about their own family atmosphere as they work to create a new board with their own parenting atmosphere. The facilitator should break everyone back into small groups and have each person create how they envision their family atmosphere. After 20 minutes everyone should come back and discuss their boards with the group.

1. Materials: Magazines
2. Scissors
3. Markers
4. Tape

5. Glue

6. Crayons/Color pencils

7. Poster board

Activity 1: Give small poster boards, markers, crayons, and color pencils to each group. Every parent should complete their own board of only one-word answers to how they remember their family atmosphere. Inform parents that they can be as creative as they want to be with this project.

Activity 2: Give another small poster board and inform the parents that this time they are going to create how they envision their family atmosphere. They can be as creative as they want with this project as well.

Process: After the break, the facilitator will open the group up to discuss any questions, thoughts, or concerns. End class with a positive affirmation that pertains to family atmosphere.

Week 4: Recognizing Mistaken Beliefs

Directions: Class will begin with fun and funny ice breaker questions. After everyone has had the opportunity to go the class with begin with their weekly check-in. Once everyone has checked in from their previous week the facilitator will discuss Adler’s concept of mistaken beliefs. The facilitator should link mistaken beliefs and intergenerational parenting styles together. The first activity will be completed in two parts. The first part parents will write a letter to themselves about their beliefs. The second part will have parents get into small groups and read their stories to other parents. After everyone has had a turn to share in the small group the facilitator should give a 5-minute break. After the break you can open the floor for questions,
comments, or concerns about the first activity. Do not pressure people to open up in large group
discussion. After the discussion close with a positive affirmation.

**Materials:**

1. Ice breaker questions.
2. Notebook paper.
3. Pen and pencils.
4. 

**Activity 1:** Provide pen and paper for parents to write a letter to themselves about their parenting
beliefs. The letter can be as personal as they would like it to be. Inform parents that this is for
them to begin to recognize things that they may want to change and no longer carry from
generation to generation. Give everyone about 20-30 minutes to write their story. After everyone
has finished allow 30-45 minutes for small group discussion. If you see a group struggling to get
started you should go and assist them with getting started.

**Process:** After the break, the facilitator will open the group up to discuss any questions,
thoughts, or concerns. End class with a positive affirmation that pertains to mistaken beliefs.
**Week 5: What is private logic?**

**Directions:** Class will begin with would you rather questions from the book in class. After would you rather questions parents will check-in with highs and lows from the previous week. Wrap up any leftover questions or concerns from the previous week. Next the facilitator will discuss Adler’s concept of private logic and how it can interfere with positive parenting. The first activity will be in 3 parts. Parents will write a life story of their past, present, and future. Give 30-45 minutes to complete activity. Once all 3 stories have been completed parents should take a 5-minute break. After everyone is back from break, ask if anyone is willing to come up and read their stories to the group. The second activity will be bridging the past, present, and future stories together. Handout the bridge worksheets and explain what parents should do. The bridge worksheet is will assist parents with pinpointing their private logic and taking control of it. After the completion of the bridge activity the group should come back together and go one by one and discuss how they are planning on using the bridge exercise to conquer their private logic and grow into who they want to be in the future. End class with a positive affirmation.

**Materials:**

1. **Book with would you rather questions.**
2. **Notebook paper**
3. **Pen and pencil**
4. **The bridge worksheets.**

**Activity 1:** Give each person three pieces of paper and a pen. Everyone should write a life story that includes their past, present, and future. The story should include any doubts or concerns that a person might have about being a parent.
Activity 2: Handout the bridge worksheets. Parents should focus on the private logic thoughts that are most disrupting to them. The worksheet will have three sections: where I’ve been, what will help me get across, and where I want to be.

Process: After the break, the facilitator will open the group up to discuss any questions, thoughts, or concerns. End class with a positive affirmation that pertains to private logic.
Week 6: Facing inferior feelings and combating them with positive thinking.

**Directions:** The Facilitator can provide the class with an opening ice breaker game or repeat one from earlier weeks. Facilitator should complete check-in with highs and lows from the previous week next. After everyone has checked in the facilitator will discuss inferior feelings and how they can be displayed through parenting. The first activity will be completed as a group. The facilitator should ask for someone to write on the board and explain the activity. After the first activity the group should take a 5-minute bathroom break. Once everyone is back from break, the group should be broken up into small groups and the next activity should be explained. After everyone has completed the task the group should take another 5-minute break. After the break class should discuss the last activity and any thoughts or concerns that anyone is having. Go around the room one by one and ask people to share their positive self-talk cards. Close with a positive affirmation.

**Materials:**

1. Two large post it paper.
2. Markers, color pencils, crayons.
3. Index cards.
4. Hole punch.
5. String to link cards together.

**Activity 1:** For this activity you will only need two large post it papers with markers. Inform the group that this activity is called what I can say about myself? On one side of the paper write instead of and on the other side write try thinking. Start first by asking for a volunteer to write on the board. Next go one by one and ask people to label at least one inferior feeling and write it on
the paper under instead of. After everyone has had a chance to go, then as a group start to come up with different ways of thinking.

Example: Instead of Try thinking

I am not going to be a good mom. How can I be the mom that I want to be?

**Activity 2:** Break the group up into smaller groups and explain the activity. Each person will make 5-10 positive talk cards. They will need 10 index cards that have a punch hole on the side of the cards. Also give marks, pens and color pencils. Explain to the group that each card should be positive thought for when you are feeling inferior. The cards should be laminated and linked together for easy access and use.

**Process:** After the break, the facilitator will open the group up to discuss any questions, thoughts, or concerns. End class with a positive affirmation that pertains to inferior feelings.
Week 7: What is lifestyle and how does it connect to intergenerational parenting?

**Description of class:** The facilitator can choose how they will like to begin class or use a previous ice breaker game such as fun and funny ice breaker questions. Next the facilitator should do check-ins with high and lows. The facilitator will discuss what lifestyle is and how it connects to intergenerational parenting. After the discussion introduce the activity, I don’t think I am, I think I am, and I am to the group. Give 20 minutes to complete the activity and offer a 5-minute break after everyone has finished. After break discuss how the activity went and let parents share what they came up with to the group. Once everyone has had time to share introduce the next activity, who does the world see. Give 20 minutes to complete this activity and allow a 5-minute break after everyone has finished. After everyone is back from break go around the room and have people describe their pictures to the group. After the person shows their picture the group should go one by one giving positive statements to the person showing their picture. End class with a thank you for participating in the parenting class and a positive parenting affirmation. Leave time for questions at the end.

**Materials:**

1. Poster boards
2. Pens, color pencils and markers.
3. A cut out picture of the human body.

**Activity 1:** Give the group a poster board and have them write on the top of the board I don’t think I am, I think I am, I am. Give each group a list of character traits and have them write down traits under each category. Inform the group to keep in mind the discussion about lifestyle as this should be your guide to completing this activity. The Group will need pens, color pencils, and markers. Parents can be as creative as they would like to be with posters.
Activity 2: Give the parents the cut out of the human body. Explain that you want them to write down a minimum of 5 words on how they think the world sees them and how they see the world pertaining to becoming a parent. The group can use the same materials from the previous activity. The words should be placed on the body and not around the picture. After the completion of the posters, have each person stand up and show everyone in the group. The group then should take turns going in a circle and giving a positive statement to one negative thought that is written on the paper.

Process: After the break, the facilitator will open the group up to discuss any questions, thoughts, or concerns. End class with a positive affirmation that pertains to lifestyle.