

Final Narrative Report: Bringing Adlerian Lifestyle Assessment to Latino Communities

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I. Overview

The *Bringing Adlerian Lifestyle Assessment to Latino Communities Project* received a \$10,000 award on June 6, 2025 from the American Psychoanalytic Foundation to:

- 1) Recruit Latino clergy and behavioral health professionals to participate in an Adlerian psychology training;
- 2) Train Latino clergy and behavioral health professionals in Adlerian lifestyle assessment, a psychoanalytic diagnostic method developed by Alfred Adler and administered to clients via an approximately 45-minute interview;
- 3) Provide professional post-training guidance and advice to trainees; and
- 4) Evaluate project activities via a post-training evaluation form and a long-term survey.

II. Modifications to Original Proposal

The original proposal to APF requested \$17,200 to recruit, train, and offer follow-up guidance to 60 Latino-serving clergy and behavioral health professionals. The original proposal also noted that it would be possible to scale back on these services in the event of a smaller award. After the \$10,000 award was made by APF, the project was scaled back in the following ways:

- 1) Trainees were recruited only via the project partner, Hispanic Access Foundation, and not via the second proposed project partner, the National Latino Behavioral Health Association. As a result of this change, only clergy members and church volunteers were recruited as trainees.
- 2) The target number of trainees was scaled back from 60 to 30.

III. Project Activities

Planning

In Summer 2025, several preliminary meetings were held with the Adlerian counselors and with Hispanic Access Foundation to plan outreach and participant recruitment, post-session consultations, and course content. As a result of discussions between the PI and Hispanic Access Foundation, one substantive change was made to the workshop curriculum. Since most of the pastors foreseen to participate in the training were Protestant, it was decided to include a case study of the Reverend Martin Luther King Jr. rather than one of Pope Francis.

Training

A three-hour virtual training was offered to 28 Latino clergy members and church volunteers on January 12, 2025. The training included:

- 1) An overview of Adlerian personality theory;
- 2) A review of modern research supporting Adler's theories of personality and episodic memory;
- 3) Step-by-step guidance for how to conduct a lifestyle assessment;
- 4) Numerous group exercises and small break-out sessions to practice interpreting early memories, including the memories of Hillary Clinton and Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.;
- 5) A live demonstration of the lifestyle assessment technique being administered with a volunteer from the training; and
- 6) A guided discussion and group brainstorm on how to effectively and ethically integrate lifestyle assessment into ministry work.

In addition, trainees downloaded a free Kindle edition of a book on early memory interpretation, *Soul Metaphors*, during the training.

Follow-Up Sessions

After the training, participants were given the opportunity to sign up for a free consultation to receive further guidance on the technique with a trained Adlerian counselor. Appointments were made available over a three-month period from mid-January through mid-April.

IV. Challenges and Obstacles

While the training was originally scheduled for early November, the recruiting partner, Hispanic Access Foundation, experienced an unexpected staff absence and had to push back the training to January. This delay made it impossible to gather long-term evaluation results in time for the submission of the current report to APF.

In addition, fewer pastors than expected opted to participate in follow-up consultations. Hispanic Access therefore conducted additional outreach to recruit pastors, placing personal phone calls to

all training participants and encouraging them to schedule a follow-up session. In the end, six pastors took advantage of this opportunity. The Adlerian counselors consequently opted to offer longer and more in-depth sessions with this handful of pastors, fielding 60-90-minute consultations.

V. Results

Training Results

An online survey was administered to participants to assess the training immediately at the end of the event. Twenty-four of the 28 participants responded to this survey. Survey questions were presented on a Likert Scale with responses ranging from “strongly agree” to “agree,” “neutral,” “disagree,” and “strongly disagree,” with the opportunity to also provide open-ended comments.

The survey results indicated that the trainees had an overwhelmingly positive experience:

- 1) 83.3% of respondents rated the training as excellent and 12.5% rated it as good.
- 2) 62.5% of respondents strongly agreed and 33.3% agreed that they had learned from the training.
- 3) 66.7% strongly agreed that the training was “engaging and interesting” and 25% agreed.
- 4) In addition, 66.7% strongly agreed and 25% agreed that the interactive questions and activities were useful.
- 5) 66.7% strongly agreed and 20.8% agreed that the live demonstration was useful.
- 6) 62.5% strongly agreed and 16.7% agreed that they were interested in learning more about Adlerian psychology.
- 7) 54.2% strongly agreed and 16.7% agreed that they were interested in practicing lifestyle assessment in their ministries.

Only one attendee expressed dissatisfaction with the training, commenting, “I genuinely appreciate the time and effort everyone put into this presentation. That said, the topic didn’t really connect with me personally, and I found it hard to engage with the material.”

In general, though, open-ended answers to survey questions were overwhelmingly positive. Participants shared the following:

“What an experience to be a part of this training. To be able to see in real time how the connection from childhood experiences connect to our adult life decisions. I look forward to applying this tool with my one-on-one engagements in ministry and professional youth intervention work. Look forward to reading the book. Thank you so very much!”

“Very engaging! At first, I thought three hours was very long, but once I was in this training I desired more time to continue the training. I look forward to the follow-up time with the professional individuals. Thank you for this follow-up option!”

“(Adlerian psychology) is definitely very applicable to ministerial work and can be of great help to our faith communities.”

Regarding the live demonstration of lifestyle assessment with a volunteer from the audience, both the volunteer and most observers found this exercise to be both poignant and illuminating. The volunteer shared the following: “It was much more meaningful than I expected. I was brought to tears with the connection. I look forward to reading the book before actively using the model learned today. The demonstration was very helpful and the training would not be as effective if this was not demonstrated.” The observers appeared visibly moved by the volunteer’s openness, and a respectful and probing conversation among the training participants followed the demonstration.

Follow-Up Session Results

Six pastors opted to participate in a free 60-90-minute post-training consultation with a bilingual Adlerian counselor.

Session Approach:

The sessions began with an introduction to Individual Psychology and a Q&A on workshop topics. Participants then engaged in a guided interview process to interpret early childhood recollections. Finally, they developed a roadmap for applying the technique in their congregations, including setting boundaries and knowing when to refer individuals to a counselor or psychotherapist.

The structure moved from theory to practice, ensuring participants understood key concepts—such as lifestyle formation, private logic, social interest, and early experiences—and could apply them in pastoral contexts. Through discussion and reflection, the pastors connected these ideas to real ministry scenarios.

Next, in an interview phase, participants practiced eliciting and interpreting early memories, learning to identify themes, emotions, and symbolic elements. This strengthened their ability to facilitate meaningful conversations.

The final session stage focused on practical use in settings like pastoral counseling, emphasizing accessible language, ethical boundaries, and appropriate referrals, particularly in cases involving trauma or complex mental health concerns. By the end, participants had both a structured method and a framework for responsible, compassionate care.

Common Concerns and Questions:

The most common issues the pastors raised were questions about the technique that reflected a concern for responsible, effective use in pastoral settings. Participants sought clarity on how to apply the technique naturally in conversations, including how to introduce early recollection exploration without making congregants feel they were in a clinical environment. They also

asked about appropriate contexts—whether in one-on-one counseling, spiritual direction, or small groups—and how to discern when a congregant is ready for this reflection.

There was strong interest in the scope and limits of the technique from an Adlerian perspective. Pastors asked how deeply they could explore private logic and lifestyle patterns without crossing into areas requiring clinical training. This included recognizing signs of distress—such as trauma, depression, or anxiety—and responding in a supportive but non-intrusive way. They also examined ethical boundaries, including confidentiality, avoiding overinterpretation, and maintaining a role of guidance rather than of diagnosis.

Participants also emphasized distinguishing pastoral guidance from psychological counseling or psychotherapy. They discussed indicators for referral to a licensed counselor or psychotherapist, such as persistent dysfunction, unresolved trauma, or issues requiring specialized care.

Overall, their questions demonstrated engagement with the technique and a clear awareness of the responsibility involved in applying psychological tools in a ministry context.

Participant Quotes:

“Good morning, Natalie. I wanted to let you know that I had my session yesterday with Mio, one of the Adlerian facilitators. It was a unique experience. If you schedule a follow-up meeting, please count me in. Thank you for giving me this opportunity. Blessings, Lisa”

“You convinced me, I’m Adlerian” – Jesús

“The theory makes sense, and to see it in practice even more, the way our recollections can impact as a result of the decisions that we made and not because of what happened. I want to learn more.” – Eliu

“From the workshop, I found it fascinating to be able to look back at childhood in order to understand myself today—not as an excuse, but in an encouraging way. Doing the exercise during it made the experience even deeper.” – Jaime

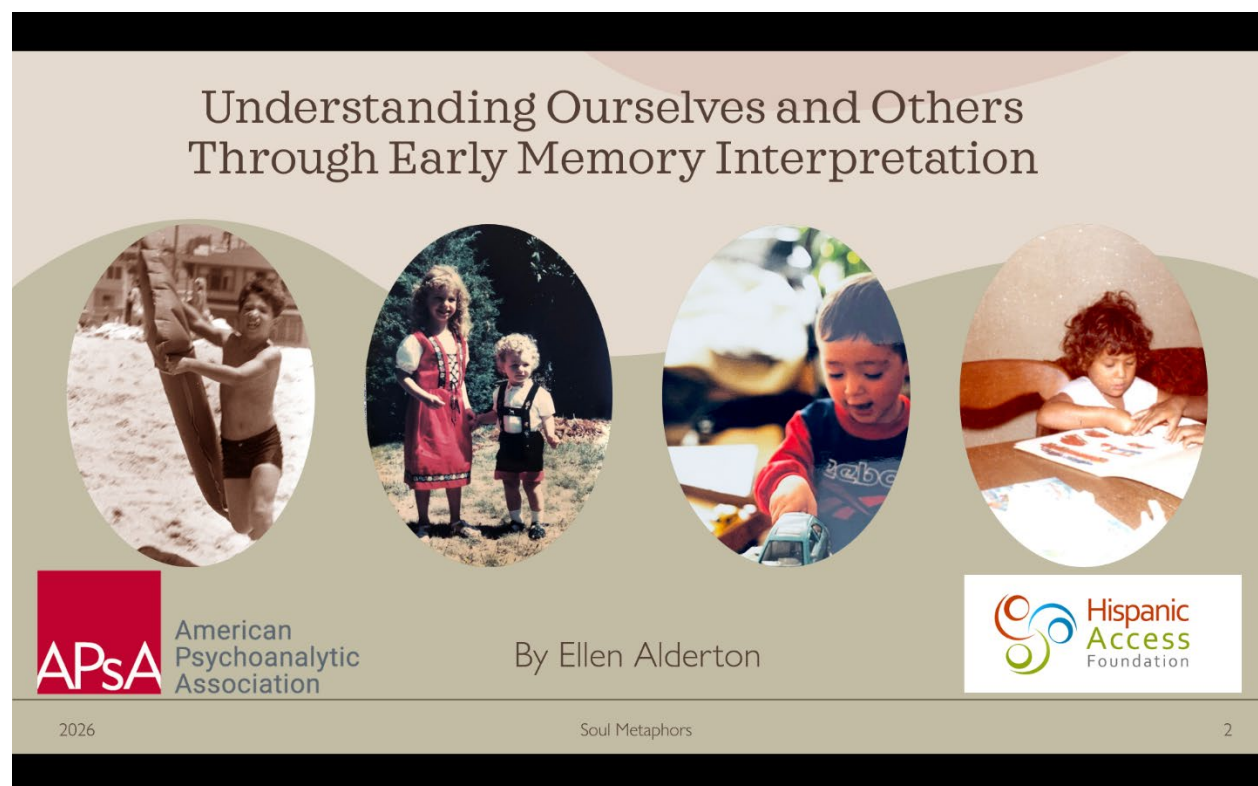
VI. Conclusions

The PI, the Adlerian counselors, Hispanic Access Foundation, and the vast majority of trainees found the project to be a success. The PI was delighted to have the resources to develop a training with a slide deck and activities that may be used with other training participants in the future. In addition, Hispanic Access Foundation was thrilled to offer this resource to its pastoral partners. Both parties are interested in offering future iterations of this training, including with simultaneous interpretation in Spanish, to additional Latino clergy. The questions and issues raised in the follow-up sessions, moreover, demonstrated a genuine commitment to adopting Adlerian approaches in ministerial work in a thoughtful and ethical manner.

Latino churches offer an important potential platform to help promote good mental health, encourage treatment seeking, and combat non-scientific and stigmatizing views on mental illness (Caplan, 2019). For many members of the Latino community, their pastor is often the first person they will turn to, outside of their immediate family, for support and guidance when facing a mental health challenge. Accordingly, equipping Latino clergy with lifestyle assessment skills can add an important component to their toolkit for supporting community members who present with mental health concerns.

The PI is most grateful to the American Psychoanalytic Foundation for this grant, which has allowed her to develop and pilot a training on Adlerian lifestyle assessment for Latino clergy. She looks forward to offering this training to additional clergy members in the future, thus equipping Latino faith leaders with a valuable tool for promoting self-understanding and understanding of others within the communities they serve.

Appendix: Sample Training Slides



The slide features a title at the top: "Understanding Ourselves and Others Through Early Memory Interpretation". Below the title are four oval-shaped photographs showing children in various settings: a boy on a beach, two girls in a field, a boy playing with a toy car, and a girl drawing. At the bottom left is the logo for the American Psychoanalytic Association (APsA). At the bottom center, it says "By Ellen Alderton". At the bottom right is the logo for the Hispanic Access Foundation. The footer contains the number "2026" on the left, "Soul Metaphors" in the center, and "2" on the right.

Understanding Ourselves and Others
Through Early Memory Interpretation

APsA American Psychoanalytic Association

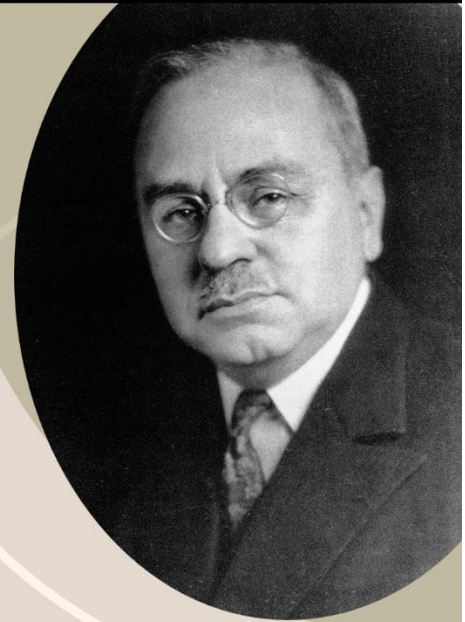
By Ellen Alderton

Hispanic Access Foundation

2026 Soul Metaphors 2

Who was Alfred Adler?

- Born in Rudolfsheim near Vienna, Austria in 1870.
- Studied medicine at the University of Vienna.
- Original member of Sigmund Freud's Wednesday Psychological Society (founded in 1902).
- Became president of Freud's Vienna Psychoanalytic Society in 1910. Resigned in 1911.
- Founded the Society for Individual Psychology in 1912.
- In 1924, appointed as professor at the Pedagogical Institute of the City of Vienna.
- Was a visiting professor at Columbia University in 1927.
- Died on a lecture tour in Aberdeen, Scotland in 1937.



Healthy early memories...

... may portray the child successfully solving a problem.

(An unhealthy memory might portray the child overwhelmed by a problem.)



End discussion at 5:40

Discussion: Martin Luther King, Jr.

1. What role do religious convictions play in this memory?
2. Describe this individual's relationship with his/her sister.
3. What adjectives might describe this individual?
4. Who might this individual be?

?? Any other comments or questions?



2026

Soul Metaphors

40

End at 6:25

Demonstration

Your assignment: Try and identify the graph of life.

X ————— X
(ER) (Adult Life)

Confidentiality: Do not discuss details of this demonstration outside of today's training.



2026

Soul Metaphors

43

Start this slide at 6:35

How might you use lifestyle assessment in your ministry?

1. Exercise confidentiality as you would in your regular pastoral duties.
2. Allow people to share only what they want.
3. Respond constructively to unhealthy ERs.
4. Follow your profession's ethical standards in reporting to parents.
5. If you have less time, focus on just the ERs and don't administer the full interview.
6. Try working with individuals and groups.
7. Try creative approaches like drawing the ERs and then discussing them in a group.

