

Adlerian Formulations for the Disorders

Gregory R. Anderson

Depression

Unipolar Depression

Here is a listing of the major Adlerian concepts with a sample item for each.

1. Inferiority – Do you feel inferior to others?
2. Hopelessness – Do you feel hopeless about making your life better?
3. Discouragement – Do you get discouraged with the way your life is going?

Other Very Strong Adlerian Formulations for Depression:

- Powerlessness – Do you feel you have little power to change?
- Negative Biased Apperception – Are you often so worried about things that you make your life miserable?
- Lack of Social Interest (especially belonging) – Do you feel isolated from most others?
- Lack of Courage (overwhelmed) – Do you fear you will not be able to cope when bad things happen?

Bipolar Depression

In Adlerian terms, the strongest predictors of bipolar disorder are:

1. A Lack of Social Interest – Do you lose interest in what other people are doing?
2. Lack of Courage (Overwhelmed) – Do you often get overwhelmed by what is happening to you?
3. Emotions in Service of Their Goals – Do you have a high level of emotional feelings, either positive or negative?
4. Lack of Courage (Overwhelmed) – Do you feel overwhelmed when things go awry?

Other Strong Adlerian Formulations Include:

- Catastrophizing – Do you see minor negative events as being a catastrophe and that bad has already happened?
- Negative Biased Apperceptions – Do you often feel others are judging you?
- Seeking Power to Control – Do you feel you have to win most arguments?
- Superiority to Hide Inferiority – At times do you feel you have lost self-esteem but at other times feel extremely high is self-esteem?
- Side Shows – Do you need to distract yourself from problems by repeating thoughts or behaviors?
- Inadequacy – Do you often feel keyed up and unable to cope?

Anxiety

Social Phobia

Here is a listing of the major Adlerian concepts for social phobia with a sample item for each.

1. Lack of Belonging/Lack of Social Interest – Do you feel you have lost connection with most other people?
2. Inferiority/Inadequacy – Do you feel inferior to others?
3. Lack of Courage – Do you feel you need to protect yourself from most others?
4. Isolation/Lack of Social Interest – Do you feel isolated from most others?

Other Strong Adlerian Formulations Include:

- Negative Biased Apperception – Do you feel others are often judging you?
- Powerlessness/Hopelessness – Do you feel you have little power to change the direction of your life?
- Discouragement – Do you feel more discouraged than other people?
- Hesitation – Do you think you have more difficulty than others in making decisions?

GAD

Here is a listing of the major Adlerian concepts for GAD with a sample item for each.

1. Lack of Courage – Do you feel overwhelmed when small things go awry?
2. Negative Biased Apperception – Do you go over and over about your misfortunes?
3. Discouraged – Do you feel you are more discouraged than most people?

Other Strong Adlerian Formulations Include:

- Lack of Social Interest/Isolation – Do you feel isolated and that others don't understand you?
- Lack of Belongingness/Inferiority – In social situations do you feel you don't belong?

OCD

Here is a listing of the major Adlerian concepts for OCD with a sample item for each.

1. Side Shows (to make predictable) – Do you feel you need to distract yourself from problems by repeating thoughts or behaviors? (OCD is a disorder of side shows)
2. Negative Biased Apperceptions/Lack of Courage – Are you so worried you make yourself miserable?
3. Emotions in Service of Their Goals – Do you react on emotions rather than on rational grounds?

While the above are by far the most predominant in OCD, Other Strong Adlerian Formulations Include:

- Seeking Power to Control – Do you need to show the world you are not weak?
- Lack of Social Interest – Do you feel very interested in people at times and not interested at other times?
- Catastrophizing – Do you see minor events as being a catastrophe and that bad has already happened?

PTSD

Here is a listing of the major Adlerian concepts for PTSD with a sample item for each.

1. Lack of Belongingness/Courage – Do you feel you need to protect yourself from most others?
2. Negative Biased Apperception – Do you think life is so unpredictable that you are often waiting for the other shoe to fall?
3. Powerlessness/Hopelessness – Do you feel you have little power to change the direction of your life?

These are the primary Adlerian themes which are repeated over and over again with PTSD.