



FAMILY!

A Publication of the NASAP Family Education Section

Spring 2004

Taming the Media Monster

by Vivian Brault

*Vivian Brault is an FE associate member, affiliated with the Idaho Society of Individual Psychology. In this article which first appeared in **Boise Family Magazine** in December 2003, she again provides us with thought-provoking views. Excerpted by permission.*

Things were simpler when today's parents were kids. The Media menu back then was pretty limited – a few Saturday cartoons; Lamb Chops; Kookla, Fran and Ollie; Captain Kangaroo; and occasional Saturday matinees. But these amusements represented a manageable punctuation in the lives of kids. Now, we find kids being constantly bombarded with a plethora of options including VCRs, DVDs, 100 plus cable channels, countless web sites and chat rooms, e-mail, instant messaging, Satellite television, MTV, WebTV, video games, CD-Roms, cell phones, text messaging,

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Continuing Feature Dear Addy...

Guest Author: Char Wenc, Chicago-area member of NASAP's FE Section.

Dear Addy,

I hear a lot about the importance of encouraging our children. Please tell me how to do that.

--Puzzled

Dear Puzzled,

Parenting is like standing on railroad tracks. One track is being an encourager in our children's

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Promoting Resiliency in Children

A View from a PEP Parent - Part 1 of 2

by Lynne Ticknor

Lynne Ticknor is a parent educator with the Parent Encouragement Program in Kensington, MD. A freelance writer and senior editor with the Family and Home Network, she writes frequently about parenting and family life.

Each day after school, Sandy bursts through the front door, backpack swinging from one shoulder. If the day has gone well, Sandy is a delight to be around, cheerful and affectionate. But just as often she comes home in tears, sobbing, "I'm so stupid, I can't do anything right," or "The teacher is so mean, she hates me," or "Nobody likes me."

Member Memo

Visit Vivian Brault's website
www.parentingpath.com

Visit NASAP's Members Only Section: www.alfredadler.org

Send your Editor your email address, and join the conversation "between the lines" of **FAMILY!**

Write ParentEd@comcast.net

Sandy's mom says that it's her daughter's temperament, Sandy's just sensitive, and Mom does everything she can to bolster Sandy's self-esteem. Because Sandy seems to be even more fragile in fourth grade than she was in third, Mom works even harder to cuddle, love and protect her little girl.

In one sense, Sandy's mom is right, growing up is hard. Elementary school-aged children are faced with numerous stressors we wish

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FE Section Co-Chairs Report...

Dear Friends,

Just before the holidays, my husband and I [Linda] drove back to Maryland, where we had lived and raised our children for twenty-five years. I felt tremendous excitement begin to build as the terrain became increasingly familiar, and landmarks – a bridge here, an unusual barn there – appeared like dear friends on the remembered landscape. My sense of "going home" grew as we approached our old neighborhood, and reminded me of an important lesson a two-year-old taught me twenty years earlier about belonging.

I took care of both my own toddler son and two-year-old Nate, for a year while Nate's mother taught school. The boys and I worked out a regular routine of indoor and outdoor play, snacks and stories, naps, cooking, walks, pick up times, music, and organizing Nate's belongings by the door, before his mom arrived to retrieve him. After a few months Nate began to refer to our house his "home." I picked him up one day and said to him, "But Nate, your home is where you live with your mommy and daddy." Nate thoughtfully but emphatically corrected me. "No Linda. Dis be home! Where I yives wiv mommy and daddy, dat my home-home!"

Since that time I've realized I too have a number of wonderful, comforting "homes" in this world, but only a few real "home-homes." Our family place here in Maryland is one of the latter, along with my faith and Adlerian Psychology, all of which anchor me with a basic philosophical, moral and relational "home-home." Perhaps that strong sense of belonging is one reason attending an Adlerian conference fills me with such anticipation. As the June 3-6 week approaches, there's that gratifying sense of returning home yet again!

We both urge all of our readers, but especially those of you who are parent educators, to attend the NASAP Conference, this year a great beach party reunion in South Carolina of Adlerians from all across North America. Come in your play clothes, prepared to learn from both the Big Names and the Newer Names alike. The theme of this year's conference is *Work & Play*, two of the important individual and family Life Tasks, according to Alfred Adler. Did you know that your family members and friends are invited as well? The Family Education Section looks forward to welcoming newcomers and old timers alike into our friendly, dynamic and thriving Adlerian extended family, full of great purpose, great folks and great fun!

See you at Springmaid Beach! ■

Warm regards,

Linda & Mary

Bonus for Net Users

FAMILY! is posted as a PDF file on the NASAP website, often with photos! Click on "current" newsletter under FE Section.

Adlerian Wisdom

- *Take time for training. Make sure children understand what "clean the kitchen" means to you. To them it may mean simply putting the dishes in the sink. Parents and teachers may ask "What is your understanding of what is expected?"*
- *Teach and model mutual respect. One way is to be kind and firm at the same time—kind to show respect for the child, and firm to show respect for yourself and the "needs of the situation." This is difficult during conflict, so use the next guideline whenever you can.*

--from **Positive Discipline**
by Jane Nelsen

Thank you, Jane, for permission to reprint from your *Guidelines*.

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Publisher News

Active Parenting, AGS, Henry Stein provide Adlerian literature news

*AP Reports:
Dr. Popkin on Montel*

Michael Popkin appeared on a *Montel Williams Show* after Thanksgiving and was rebroadcast on Tuesday, April 6, 2004. Check his website for more details at <http://www.montelshow.com/>

Please note my new address:

Dr. Michael Popkin
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MPopkin@activeparenting.com

*STEP:
eNews from AGS in March'04*

Featured Parenting Ed Articles

The Magic of Movement by Don Dinkmeyer, Jr.: "Here in Kentucky, there is a hint of spring-warmer days, more daylight, and bulbs popping up! We are moving toward spring." <http://www.agsnet.com/url/parenting9.asp>

View the Parenting Article Archive at: <http://www.agsnet.com/url/parenting10.asp>

*Adler Institutes CA/WA:
Birth Order DVD, VHS*

from Henry Stein, PhD, Director Alfred Adler Institutes of San Francisco & Northwestern Washington Distance Training in Classical Adlerian Psychotherapy

Birth Order: Sense and Nonsense is now available in DVD disk as well as VHS tape formats at <http://go.ourworld.nu/hstein/birth-vcd.htm>.

HTStein@att.net ■

Brault on the Media Monster....continued from page 1

and more. Instead of punctuating the lives of our kids, media is now a central presence....

This unreal explosion of electronic innovations represents an amazing stride forward in the realms of entertainment, communication, and education. And yet, many parents, educators, child advocates and researchers have legitimate reservations about the overwhelming level of involvement on the part of American children of all ages. The two chief concerns are centered around **content** and **time**, i.e., quality and quantity. Content is perhaps the more obvious of the issues – any 4-year old armed with a remote control can now jump from the Disney channel to Hitchcock re-runs, to devastating scenes on the news channel. ...

In addition to the issue of content, the dimensions of electronic entertainment of all kinds also presents the more subtle but crucial problem of time. Recent research by Dr. Leonard Jason, Ph.D. confirmed that American children spend an average of 4 hours a day in front of the TV. ... Add to these totals the time kids are involved with video games and computer activities, and the total becomes phenomenal. The result: a generation of kids who become very media savvy. *The price: poor social skills, a lack of meaningful family interaction and positive relationships, a sacrifice of reading time (which affects cognitive development and academic achievement), little physical and imaginative play (which affects physical health and creativity).* On top of all this is the common perception that life should deliver easy, instant entertainment and gratification – a serious distortion of reality that can impede learning in a traditional classroom.

Television, video games, and computer activities are not all bad. On the contrary, quality games, software programs, and web sites can provide an entertaining and educational part of a child's day—when balanced with a combination of social, physical and creative pursuits. But the key word is balanced; when used as a 'baby sitter', in excess, or in doses inappropriate for the child's age, TV and electronic entertainment options create an unprofitable condition for children....

Experts (like Dr. Henry Shapiro of the American Academy of Pediatrics) ... agree [there are benefits] and emphasize that parents need to be aware that there are pitfalls, too....So much time in front of TVs can cause kids to become fat, eat junk foods, and not get enough sleep or adult interaction.

Parents: Take Charge

[While] the first reaction of parents may be to blame the media industry, parents must step in and do what is needed to tame the media monster for the sake of their own children....

The concern about media content is usually based on the assumption that kids are at the helm of the 'on' switch and the remote control. Think about that for a minute – children are intelligent and have great potential to learn, but they are not born with good judgment or self-restraint – those qualities take time, experience and guidance to develop along the path to young adulthood....

Where to begin?

Well, it's a good idea to start by finding out how much time your children are spending on media including the TV and computer, and then deciding

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Resiliency...continued from page 1

we could eliminate from their young lives—disagreements between friends, anxiety over school, peer pressure, sibling quarrels, overly scheduled lives, little time to play outside, even exposure to drugs and violence. But coddling doesn't help. Often what our children need is to learn resilience—to be as resistant to negative influences and difficulties as Teflon is to sticky food.

Resiliency is the ability to persevere and adjust when faced with adversity. We all face adversity, but it's the way we react that determines how we will feel and how well we will perform in those circumstances. Resilient children do better in school, have more positive social experiences and achieve high levels of personal and professional success. Children who are naturally resilient, or are taught to be resilient, thrive. And given all of the temptations with which our school-aged children are faced in today's world, teaching our children resiliency skills may be one of our best weapons to "fight back" against negative influences.

Resiliency Can Be Learned

The good news is that resiliency can be learned, according to Karen Reivich, Ph.D., co-director of the Penn Resilience Project at the University of Pennsylvania and co-author of *The Resilience Factor* (Broadway Books). "Resilience can be broken down into a set of specific abilities, and those abilities can be learned and applied over time," Reivich says. By altering the way we think about adversity, we can actually teach ourselves, and our children, to be more resilient.

With the right guidance, Sandy could learn to deal with the obstacles in her life in a far more constructive way. Just as with strength training for the body,

there are no "quick fixes" in this important but challenging task. Learning resiliency skills can take weeks or even months; internalizing them, for the skills to be used naturally without the need to consciously focus on them, will take even longer.

More often than not, like Sandy's mom, parents confuse resiliency training with the popular self-esteem movement. Although the two may appear to be similar on the surface, there are significant differences. Most self-esteem programs focus on getting children to feel good about themselves. They often encourage children to use positive affirmations ("I am graceful and strong") and self-awareness activities (such as looking into a mirror and identifying three things you like about yourself). The push for children to have high self-esteem is based on the belief that children who feel good about themselves will do well in life.

But, Reivich says, children won't succeed solely because they feel good about themselves. Some people with very high self-esteem engage in antisocial, immoral and sometimes even criminal behavior. Resiliency research, on the other hand, supports the notion that children who do well in life will feel good about themselves. What parents should be doing is teaching children the skills they need to embrace life with all its bumps and hurdles.

"The goal," Reivich says, "is to identify and develop a child's unique strengths and skills. It is the mastery of skills and abilities that leads to positive feelings about oneself." When a child does well or overcomes an obstacle (helps an elderly neighbor with yard work; tells the truth knowing she will be in trouble; works hard

on a project; gets a good grade; is a good friend), he will feel good about himself. Reivich would rather parents focus their attention on helping children learn skills for doing well in life instead of supporting self-esteem slogans and activities.

How do parents promote resiliency in their children?

It begins with how parents personally handle adversity. *Parents who can handle difficult situations with openness and grace provide their children with a role model to follow.* The atmosphere within the home and the way parents conduct their family life significantly influences their children's resiliency as well.

There is also a strong correlation between parenting styles and resiliency. Authoritarian parents who rule with an iron fist and use rules and heavy-handed controls to force unquestioning obedience squeeze out the creative thinking skills needed in resiliency.

Permissive or "laissez-faire" parents rarely exert control, set few limits, offer few boundaries and provide little parental guidance or supervision. They are not training their children to learn to live with boundaries, controls or limits.

The democratic parenting style is most conducive to fostering resilient, capable and competent children.

Democratic parents are supportive and communicative, monitor and supervise their children's activities and behaviors, provide consistent discipline in a way that is firm and friendly and teach their children self-control. Children raised in this environment are more likely to be socially competent, academically successful and respond well to adversity.

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Resiliency...continued from page 4

In addition to adopting a democratic parenting style (if you don't already have one) or strengthening your commitment to this style (if you are currently parenting democratically), *there are four specific skills you can teach your children to aid them in becoming more resilient.* These will be covered in the next issue of FAMILY! ■

If I could teach only one principle...

Recent on-line communication addressed the question

What single principle or technique do you most hope to teach to parents in your groups?

Respondents identified themselves by occupation, and included:

Janyse Hrynkow, MA, CCC (I am first a woman, a motherparent, then a parent educator and then a speaker and psychotherapist.)

What's the one thing I do that works very well? I connect with the parents and support them in the big job they are doing and help them learn to use their imperfection to their advantage. When children can see the humanness of parents they are encouraged to accept their mistakes and develop the courage that is needed to move forward, to take new risks and venture forth with humor, joy and focus on what is working rather than what is not. I think it's important for children to feel like they were wanted, loved and a delight to their parents and in order to help them feel that we need to enjoy parenting our children.

Edna Nash (As a counsellor working with parents with

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Take Time to Nurture Yourself

A Parenting Class Handout

by Dr. Robert McBrien, FE Section member and a licensed counselor and parent educator in Salisbury, Maryland

Parents today want their children to develop into positive, healthy and successful adults. In my parenting skills workshops, I often hear them describing their wish for each family member to grow in body, mind and spirit. But, a curious paradox exists.

These same parents often request information on managing their stress. The paradox is they want their children's self-fulfillment, yet while enmeshed in the "fast lane" our society admires, there is no way they can model the healthy habits they wish to establish for their child.

Our hectic schedules and fast-paced lifestyle bring on fatigue, frustration and friction with those we love. Working parents in my groups report finishing most work days feeling hassled, harried and hurried. Time spent in the evening with family is often filled with unpleasantness. As a parent, your interest in healthy approaches to building a strong family requires a set of values and skills that will encourage each child's growth toward a fulfilling life.

We know there is a better way to encourage self-fulfillment in each child than we see in the media. What we term nurturing the self is both a major stress management strategy and a positive model for the family. Mothers will be interested to know that this modeling aspect is especially true for daughters.

Do you take time each day just for yourself? If so, is that personal time nurturing your body, mind and spirit? Stress experts have good evidence that taking time to nurture self has long-term benefits. Taking personal quiet time (or PQT) each day is advised. Using this time to restore the balance of body, mind and spirit can promote a healthy sense of well-being and may slow the aging process, too. This holistic approach to self-care promotes balance which restores energy and increases effectiveness in guiding one's family toward a fulfilling life.

How do you renew your energy, find your center and restore your optimism? The key is to enjoy the benefits of the *relaxation response*. Taking time to let go of physical tension, feeling centered and relaxed is easy to learn. It takes about twenty minutes to step away from your busy pace and to wake up your natural powers of relaxation. Scheduling personal quiet time, going to a private space with no interruptions, and practicing some form of healthy relaxation are the necessary ingredients. You can wake up the relaxation response by slowing your breathing and quieting your busy mind. Choose relaxing music or meditation or aromatherapy. Or you may choose to soak in the tub, do yoga stretches or create a calm mood with uplifting reading. Practicing meditations found in *The Blooming of the Lotus* by Thich Nhat Hahn may be beneficial. (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993)

After about twenty minutes of personal quiet time, you may feel more energetic and your tolerance for frustration will be improved. Your family will definitely benefit when you take time to nurture yourself. ■

Dear Addy...continued from page 1

lives – a personal cheerleader. The other track is being a disciplinarian – to guide and set limits. We know how difficult it is to balance these two things. Here are some helpful phrases that will prove encouraging to your children.

Focus on a child's contributions and assets:

- Thanks, that helped a lot.
- It was thoughtful of you to...
- Thanks. I really appreciate...
- I need your help with...
- You have skill in...
- To a family group - I really enjoyed today. Thanks.

To build a child's confidence:

- Knowing you, I'm sure you'll do fine.
- You'll make it.
- I have confidence in you.
- That's a tough one, but I'm sure you'll work it out.

To show acceptance of your child:

- I like the way you handled that.
- I like the way you tackle a problem.
- I'm glad you enjoy learning.
- I'm glad you are pleased with it.
- Since you're not satisfied, what do you think you can do so you will be pleased with it?
- How do you feel about it?

To recognize effort and improvement:

- I appreciate your effort.
- It looks as if you worked really hard on that.
- It looks as if you spent a lot of time thinking that through.
- Look at the progress you've made (be specific).
- Look how far you have come.

These phrases mean a great deal to your children. (They also work well with spouses and employers.) Have fun with them! ■

Charlene C. Wenc, author of Parenting: Are We Having Fun Yet?, is a lecturer on parent education. Visit her website, www.CharWenc.com, for more information.

Media Monster...continued from page 3

how much TV time and computer time is acceptable to you. ...Then start planning how you will proceed to develop a proactive plan for positive changes in the media environment in your home. Set up some rules with clearly defined time limits for week days and week ends. Determine (in advance) the logical consequence of not adhering to the time limits. Children from the age of about eight on up can suggest a consequence to be agreed to by the parent; when kids have an investment in the decision they are more likely to adhere to it... Then watch the shows with them, and become the interpreter, translator, and even censor if necessary. Not only does this keep TV on the level of a family activity, it also serves as a forum for discussing consequence-free violence, sexual behavior, and other difficult topics. Rather than tyrannically declaring certain shows off limits, modeling and teaching them why you consider the production

concludes next column

inappropriate promotes judgment, values, and decision making skills for them and content limits seem more logical and less punitive.

A crucial part of your proactive efforts can be very profitably spent by establishing a home environment that de-emphasizes TV and encourages music, art, story telling, reading, imaginative play, nature, crafts, cooking, writing, and sports. ...

Working parents and single parent homes find it more difficult to monitor media habits. Those parents who are unable to keep track of the use of the TV, video and computer consumption might think of finding quality afterschool programs, or making certain homework or chore requirements are met, and developing a level of trust that TV privileges won't be abused. They might also investigate available products designed to limit and/or monitor kids' TV consumption in the absence of adult supervision. ...

Parents who want to be involved in content on a wider scale can contact their local stations and national networks. They can also follow up with boycotts and letter-writing campaigns and contact their federal Congressmen and women for a voice in content-based ratings. But though content is a key issue, even if every program aired on TV was suddenly stellar in content and motive, it would not benefit kids placed in TV's care hour after hour each and every day. There are trees to climb, friends to meet, books to read and a wide, wonderful world of experiences to explore. But that's only possible when parents do what is needed to tame the media monster in their homes. ■

For the full text of this article, go to www.parentingpath.com.

Principle...continued from page 5
children of any age, as Oscar Christensen always stressed, I am an educator!!)

Encouragement: Begins with attitude and encompasses 3Cs (capable, connect, contribution), the key concept of community feeling and action or social interest.

Gary McKay (author, consultant)

The principles of purpose, encouragement, and choice.

Alyson Schafer (I am a parent educator/parent coach. I work with parents of children under 10.)

This is such a good question and I have been really thinking hard about this and whether I am doing things the best way. I guess I spend a lot of my time with power distribution, social equality, and also with looking at goals of the child. I think I should stress encouragement even more than I do since I actually think that is of utmost importance. ■

More in the next issue! Let us hear from you, too!

Email Bag...

Send Central Office your email address, and get on our list to join the conversation! Recent messages:

December, 2003

Al Milliren

<millfe@peoplepc.com>

Linda, Mary, and Bryna:
Just received and read your newsletter. Really nice! I am impressed.

April, 2004

Joy Morassutti

<joymorassutti@sympatico.ca>

I've taken the Parent Coaching certificate at Adler in Toronto. I'll

continues on back page [click]

NASAP 2004 Preview

FE Section & More... Tempting Offerings

A little preview from Linda Jessup:

Rob Guttenburg's half day workshop on Thursday, "Funtastic" *Adlerian Techniques for Change*, provides a lot of nifty exercises for Parent Educators' classes, talks and workshops.

The *First Timers' Breakfast* on Friday morning helps newcomers feel comfortable right away. It's free and they can meet the Board Members and COR representatives. **Mary Hughes** and I are eager to get to know all Family Education newcomers, especially!

Robert McBrien's *Are We Having Fun Yet? Play, Fun and Humor As Encouragement for Families* will be both highly enjoyable and useful.

Good sessions for introducing people to Adlerian psychology or deepening their understanding of these concepts will be **Betty Lou Bettner's** *Connecting Adler, Dreikurs and the "Crucial Cs,"* and **Frank Walton's** *Introduction to Adlerian Psychology*.

For folks starting up or working with a Family Education Center, my session, *Leaders for Life - Training Adlerian Parent Educators*, (I notice there's a typo in the program guide, which may have confused readers.) and **Mary Jamin Maguire's** session on *FECs: A Design for the 21st Century* should be most useful.

Dr. **Lew Losoncy**, a delightful presenter, will speak on *Playing at Life and Work* at the luncheon on Friday. I have used many of his great ideas in my teaching!

Want to know more about Family Meetings or how to help other families with theirs? Our own **Mary** and **Gary Hughes** will be presenting *Family Meetings Matter!*.

Gary McKay's *Calming the Family Storm: Anger Management for Moms, Dads and Kids*, **Mary Jamin Maguire's** "ADHD": *Disorder or Difference?*, and **Riki Itner's** *Raising Money-Savvy Children*, and **Mel Markowski's** *Mistaken Games Adults and Children Play at Home and School*, should all be full of interesting information and practical ideas.

This listing is only a partial run-down on the excellent offerings this year. It's hard to go wrong with so many good things from which to choose!

Adds member **Joy Morassutti**: I'd REALLY suggest **Linda Page's** workshop at the conference to ALL parent educators: *State Shifting: Accessing Our Full Neurobiological Resources*. My "take" on resource states is that's a positive reframing of lifestyle, and helps parents focus on the positive side of life – what they are moving toward. When Linda conducted resource states with our class, and talked about how to access the state of being fully resourced, it left me feeling very encouraged (when lifestyle has been covered in Adlerian parent ed. classes, I've most often felt discouraged.) I hope she'll have her hand-outs at the conference on using resource states with parents, and how to help them state-shift to where they are most fully resourced. I don't know if I've given an accurate summary of what Linda will do at the conference, but I think she's got something terrific happening. I'd highly recommend it! ■

Email Bag...continued from page 7

have completed the course requirements on April 20th. I've launched my business this year, and I'm starting my first parenting class on April 12th. I'm really excited about this! I've got 6 registered so far (I'm hoping for 8, but we'll see).

April, 2004

Edna Nash

<ednanash@shaw.ca>

A query to our Section members: With what is happening to nuclear families, many children are coping with new partners, step parents, step grandparents etc., etc. A lawyer who is very familiar with *STEP, Children: The Challenge* and the usual Adlerian parenting programs and also works in Collaborative Divorce, stressed a real need for a book and program which focuses on step-families. I remember *Strengthening Stepfamilies* by Linda Albert and Elizabeth Einstein. What do our members use?

May, 2004

a reply from Linda Albert
<lindalbert@aol.com>

Our book, *Strengthening Your Stepfamily*, originally published by AGS, is being revised and will be available early in 2005 from Impact Publishers. And yes, the

Stepfamily Living series is still available, but the book is much better than the pamphlets. We'll announce publication in the NASAP News.

I'm not able to go to NASAP this year, so I'll miss seeing all my Adlerian friends. ■

You Are Wanted!

Family Education Section Co-Chair Positions Opening in 2005, 2006

We're looking for both Canadian and American candidates, one each for 2005 and 2006 elections. If you are a Section member ready to "give back", we'd love to hear from you! Linda Jessup and Mary Hughes will provide information, preparation and transitional guidance for candidates. Term of office is three years. You must be a member of NASAP. You must be available to attend two COR meetings annually, October in Hershey (partially subsidized) and in May/June (the day before and at the NASAP convention). Definite pluses: organizational experience, writing skills, people skills, reliability, a good sense of humor and a desire to contribute. ■

The mission of NASAP, the North American Society of Adlerian Psychology, is to foster and promote the research, knowledge, training and application of Adlerian Psychology, maintaining its principles and encouraging its growth. NASAP membership includes educators, psychologists, psychiatrists, counselors, parents, business people, community organizations and other interested people. The Family Education Section applies Adlerian principles to the home. Members are professionals and nonprofessionals dedicated to understanding and improving family relationships between children and adults, with couples, and among individuals.

Meet us in
Myrtle Beach
for NASAP 04

June 3-6
Enroll now!

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