*Positive Discipline: Adlerian Tools for Helping Children Develop Important Life Skills*

Presenters: Kelly Gfroerer, Ph.D., Jane Nelsen, Ph.D., and Roy Kern Ed.D.

Jane Nelsen, Founder of Positive Discipline, presented at NASAP with Kelly Gfroerer and Roy Kern on Adlerian-based Positive Discipline strategies for helping children develop important life skills. Positive Disciplinetools designed to help children develop feelings of belonging were demonstrated. It is logical that feeling connected to others and having a sense of social support buffers feelings of stress and promotes healthy functioning. Research in the area of belonging and coping resources shows a relationship between both children and adults’ levels of belonging and perceived coping resourcefulness (Edwards, Gfroerer, Flowers, & Summers, 2004; Kern, Gfroerer, Curlette, Whitaker, & Matheny, 1996). A child’s sense of belonging and perceptions about social support can be important protective factors. Positive Discipline tools help children develop the ability to connect with others and the life skills to focus on solutions.

Positive Discipline teaches children how to become responsible, respectful, and resourceful. Specific Positive Discipline tools that support the development of a child’s sense of belonging and the development of important social and life skills were introduced using several experiential activities. For example, Positive Time-Out helps children develop the important life skill of calming down before solving problems. Positive Time Out is based on the premise that people do better when they feel better. Thus, when children are taught to create a special place to calm down, they soon learn a valuable life skill for coping and managing strong feelings and difficult life situations. *Jared’s Cool Out Space* (2011) is a children’s book by Nelsen and Wilkins that teaches this important lesson. It is a valuable resource for parents, educators, and clinicians. This book was read aloud by Jane Nelsen and strategies for implementing Positive Time Out highlighted.

Helping a child connect through democratic methods, like family meetings, facilitates the development of social and life skills. Nelsen identifies the following benefits of Family Meetings:

* Listening skills
* Brainstorming skills
* Problem-solving skills
* Mutual respect
* The value of cooling off before solving a problem
* Concern for others
* Accountability
* Cooperation
* A Sense of Belonging
* Social Interest
* Mistakes are Opportunities for Learning

Family Meetings help children feel a sense of belonging and provide an important opportunity to learn brainstorming and problem-solving skills which are solution focused. Family Meetings are a valuable parenting tool.

To learn more about Positive Discipline and specific Adlerian-based tools for teaching children important life skillsgo to [www.positivediscipline.com](http://www.positivediscipline.com) . Also, an article on this presentation topic has been accepted for publication and will appear in the *Journal of Individual Psychology in 2014.*