

Scheme of Analysis for Early Recollections by Yvonne Schürer and Nani Wirth (adapted from Else Andriessens)

Name Year of Birth

Date of Assessment

World / Environment	Human Beings	Behavior and Thoughts of the Child
<p>This is the stage where the drama is set.</p> <p>In this section we note the client's description of the physical place / the environment where the ER occurred. If a description sounds unrealistic, don't worry: We are not interested in the facts, but in the unique way a client perceives the world.</p> <p>We note all objects, animals, ghosts, weather phenomena, illnesses, etc. that are mentioned in the ER: 'a violin' 'a crowded beach' 'in grandmother's kitchen'; 'a huge dog' 'an angel from heaven' 'a dangerous disease' 'a tense atmosphere'</p> <p>If we get a sentence that is not connected to a human activity, we write the whole sentence down: 'It's the day before Christmas.' 'There is a big splash.' 'The place isn't safe.'</p>	<p>What do the actors do?</p> <p>In this section we note activities, expressions and words of the people involved.</p> <p>'My mother is standing in the door, looking very gloomy, because she doesn't like the disrespectful way my aunt is talking to grandmother.'</p> <p>'Hundreds of children are gathering at the beach.'</p> <p>In between these two sections we note activities that the child does together with others: 'We are collecting strawberries.' 'My sister and I are fighting.'</p>	<p>What is the role of the protagonist?</p> <p>All activity of the child, his passive behavior, and his thoughts are itemized here – but not his emotions.</p> <p>'I am jumping around. I sing and shout, because I want my uncle to notice me. I think he might take me for a ride on his motorbike.'</p> <p>'I suddenly realize that I am all alone in the room.'</p> <p>'I have homework to do, and I know that I can't finish it before supper.'</p>

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Emotions of the Child	Title	Wishes
<p>This is one of the most important sections. Here we note not only the emotions that our client has remembered spontaneously. We also try to catch the entire flow of his feelings while leading him step by step through his memory: 'How did you feel while you were waiting for the train?' 'How did you feel when you saw your father get off?' 'How did you feel when you realized that he was carrying a puppy in his arm?' etc.</p> <p>We also try to get a substantiation of his/her emotion: 'Why did you feel good?' 'I felt good because I knew that my Dad would spend the rest of the holidays with us. I had been longing to see him.' 'Why were you excited?' 'Because I knew that the next moment he would hug me and kiss me and throw me in the air.' 'Why were you shocked?' 'It was a blissful shock, I was startled, realizing that this puppy was a present for me. I was overwhelmed with happiness and with love. I knew that I was going to be happy for the rest of my life.'</p>	<p>The client gives a title to the story.</p>	<p>First of all we ask: 'Is this a good or a bad memory of yours?'</p> <p>If the client calls it a good memory, we leave this section empty.</p> <p>In this case we have valuable information about his lifestyle goal: The early recollection is a perfect metaphor of how the client wishes his life to be.</p> <p>If the client says it is a bad memory, we ask: 'How should it have been?' What changes would you like to make, to turn this memory into a good one?' Again, the client's answers show us how he thinks the world should treat him.</p>

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Life Dynamics

Taking the flow of the emotions noted in the section 'Emotions of the Child' we plot a curve.

We imagine a horizontal, middle line, which stands for a neutral emotion state, i.e. neither positive nor negative. Above this we mark the positive feelings, and below the negative ones.

Let your client guide you, as you read back this early recollection to him sentence by sentence. Ask where he wants to localize the feeling which goes with each sentence – above or below the neutral line?

'How did you feel when you were told to look after your brother? Did you like the idea?'

When a good feeling becomes even better, then the curve rises. When bad feelings becoming worse and worse, the curve goes down in progressive stages.

Some clients can become very agitated when the curve descends. They may tell you: 'No, no, go further down; right to the bottom of the sheet!'

This visualization of the emotional dynamics is a powerful method to help a client realize what is going on in his psyche.

Self-assessment

Here we take an overall view of the ER and try to find out how the protagonist sees himself compared with the others.

Does he perceive himself as being smaller? weaker? less intelligent? smarter? more reliable? morally better?

Can he handle the situation? Is he in control?

Does he depend on the help of others?

Are others dependent on him?

Is he the most responsible person in the play?

Does he understand what is going on around him, or is he confused?

Does his perceived self-image show him as winner or as loser?

Is his role that of a victim? – And if so: The victim of whom? Of the father? Of his peers? Of a higher power? (We can see a higher power coming into effect in the following statement: 'My brother and sister were going to Disneyland, but I had to stay home because I had the measles.')

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Relation to the Present

This sheet belongs entirely to the client,
who should take it home and try to find out
whether he sees parallels between the
ER and his present situation.

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Personal Strengths

In these two sections the tasty dessert is served to the client:

On this side we note all the qualities and capabilities that help him to master his life. ('I cried and cried and stamped on the floor until I finally got a cookie.' -This is not good social behavior, but we can surely attest to our client that he knows what he wants, that he can make himself heard, that he has endurance, and that he doesn't give up easily.

Even in a negative early recollection we can find a lot of assets that prove the client's creativity, his strength, his cunningness and his intelligence.

Contribution to the Community

What we write in this section would have made Alfred Adler happy! This is the column dedicated to the Gemeinschaftsgefühl.

All the assets that our client has used in order to contribute to the community are noted and appreciated; such as being helpful, a great listener, able to share, friendly, in tune with the overall mood, grateful for the contribution of others, able to accept help, compassionate, and having a resonance with the social environment.