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About mental development of early-aged children conceived through in vitro fertilization (IVF) and maternal attitude to them

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In 2010-2012 we carried out a research of cognitive development of toddlers conceived through IVF. Data were collected at the Center for Family Planning and Reproduction (Moscow). We have formed two groups: IVF-group (135 mother-child dyads with IVF-conceiving) and SP-group i.e., spontaneous pregnancy (135 mother-child dyads with spontaneous conceiving). Children's age was 11-37 months; mother's age was 23-43 years. Both groups had the same boys-girls ratio, percentage of children of first, second and third years and basic socio-demographic parameters (maternal marital status, education level of mothers and family living standard). We used interview with mothers, diagnostics of infant and toddler nervous and mental development and medical history data. We found that in SP-group share of children with normal cognitive development was the same on 1st, 2nd and 3rd year; in IVF-group number of children with normal cognitive development increased from 1st to 3rd year, exactly during 1st year infants conceived through IVF demonstrated significantly more frequent cognitive development lags compared to those conceived naturally, on the 3rd year share of children with normal cognitive development in SP-group and IVF-group (conceived after 1-3 IVF cycles) were aligned. Children conceived after 4-9 IVF cycles during early childhood have demonstrated cognitive lags significantly more often than those conceived through 1-3 IVF cycles or naturally. Mothers who conceived spontaneously had more realistic expectations about actual possibilities and abilities of their children than did mothers conceived through IVF, who often imposed inadequate and excessive requirements to their children and had higher expectations from them.

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Eliciting advice from within: Using the three early recollections technique in (career) counseling

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A storied approach, embedded in a narrative framework, promotes the construction of new realities but simultaneously acknowledges past experiences and is aimed at dealing with a painful and traumatic past and transcending hard times and lack of resources. Although conscious and subconscious motives and drives as well as behavior acquired in social and less social contexts continue to influence human behavior long after the early childhood years, this approach draws from the existential-phenomenological belief that people know themselves better than anybody else and should be enabled to advise themselves. Earliest recollections often signal the sequence of events that constitute clients' life stories. Considering the three earliest recollections technique from an individual psychology, person-centered perspective, Adler (1933) maintains there is no such thing as 'chance' memories. Clients often remember or repeat stories to themselves in the process of reflexive constructing, deconstructing, reconstructing and co-constructing themselves. These stories are used to advise, soothe, caution or comfort themselves to keep themselves focused on their goals and to prepare themselves-through revisiting (drawing advice from) past experiences for the future with an established plan of action. A case study will be presented (working with a participant in a one-on-one research setting and incorporating an integrated, qualitative and quantitative, interpretive paradigm) to demonstrate the use of early recollections in (career) counseling and indeed psychotherapy. The participant was selected purposively with the selection criteria calling for an adolescent with an impaired sense of self who had sought (career) counseling. After the intervention, the participant demonstrated an enhanced sense of self including an enhanced self-concept and self-esteem as well as an increased sense of personal authorship and hope for the future. Future research should include the application of the approach in group contexts.

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