

# Welcome

## Attachment, Trauma and Recovery

## Learning Outcomes

- to demonstrate a clear understanding of attachment and trauma.
- to identify the major theorists involved in attachment thinking and identify differing attachment models
- to consider the children and young people that you care for and relate your learning to your practice
- to consider the differing roles in the recovery of children affected by attachment challenges and trauma

# ???What is Attachment???

## Bonding

Bonding is the physical and psychological connection between mother and infant that begins at conception, grows during pregnancy, intensifies at birth and exists forever. All children are bonded to their biological mothers, regardless of what transpires after birth.

Levy & Orlans –

Attachment Trauma & Healing, p.224

**???What is a trauma bond???**

# ATTACHMENT

(LOVE RELATIONSHIP)

- ~ Attunement for pleasure and security
- ~ Focus on own wellbeing
- ~ Obedience with some protest and resistance
- ~ Exploration of environment with periodic "checking in"
- ~ Full range of expression of own feelings
- ~ Age appropriate functioning in all areas
- ~ Cohesive and competent self-concept

# TRAUMA BOND

(SLAVE RELATIONSHIP)

- ~ Attunement for survival
- ~ Focus on other's needs, wants, emotional state
- ~ Spontaneous unwavering obedience
- ~ Stay close to anticipate needs of other, or stay at a distance to avoid notice of other
- ~ Exaggerated expression of feelings that reflect other's need-state
- ~ Inhibition in all areas of cognitive, emotional, physical, social and spiritual functioning
- ~ Fragmented and limited self-concept

## **A Child Needs Healthy Attachments to.....**

- Develop Emotionally, Socially, Psychologically, Physically, Morally and Spiritually
- Develop Develop Develop Achieve self worth and esteem
- Cope with change and stress
- Cope with separation and loss
- Become independent
- Develop future relationships

## First – Year Attachment Cycle



## Second Year Attachment Cycle



## Attunement

- Is the key to attachment
- the parent is sensitive to the child and able to understand the mind and the feeling state of the child
- Attuned parental responses impart meaning to the ‘inner world’ of body signals e.g. hunger, thought and emotions.

## Attunement

“In affective attunement, the mother’s activities match the *feeling* state of her infant and do not simply imitate his behaviour”

Daniel Stern 1985

- **Touching**
- **Cooing**
- **Eye contact**
- **Holding**
- **Smiling**
- **Talking**
- **Rocking**
- **Singing**

**“A securely attached child....will have a working model of the world in which she herself is worthy of love and attention, others are expected to be responsive and reliable and relationships with others are seen as rewarding and fun”**

**Beckett C (2002)**

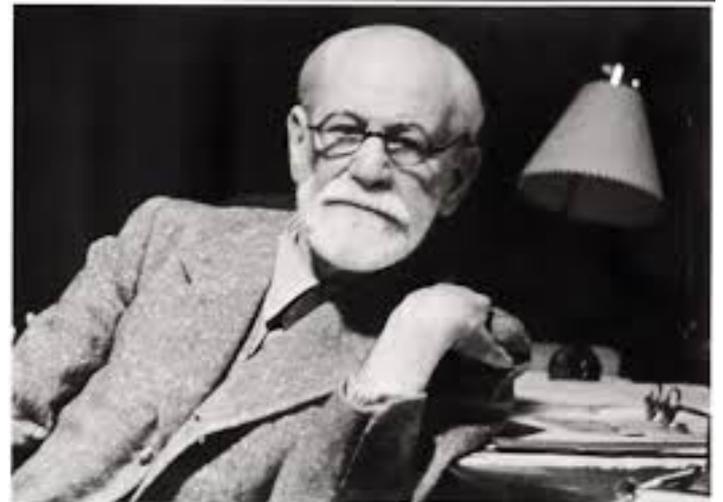
# Theory and Practice

# Sigmund Freud - 1857-1939

Experiences in early childhood influence later development. Assumes sexual factors are major factors, even in early childhood.

## Key words

Psychodynamic; psychosexual; libido; oral stage; anal stage; phallic stage; latency stage; genital stage; id; ego; super-ego; Electra complex; Oedipal complex; conscious; unconscious; psychoanalysis



## More on Freud

Freud's work was heavily criticised for lack of substantial evidence. He regarded basic sexual instincts as being the driving force behind virtually all behaviour.

He regarded the development of personality as being the balance between the Id, the Ego and the Super-Ego. The Id strives for unrealistic gratification of basic desires, the Super-Ego strives for unrealistic moral responsibility and conscience while the Ego acts to compromise these two opposing forces.

# John Watson



- Early 20th century, "Father of American Behaviorist theory."
- Based his work on Pavlov's experiments on the digestive system of dogs
- Researched classical conditioning
- Children are passive beings who can be molded by controlling the stimulus-response associations.

# Erik Erikson - 1902-1994

Develops beyond Freud's ideas. More stages (8) and more influence of environmental factors.

Key words

Psychodynamic; psychosexual; psychosocial; 8 development stages; identity; crises/dilemmas



# More on Erikson

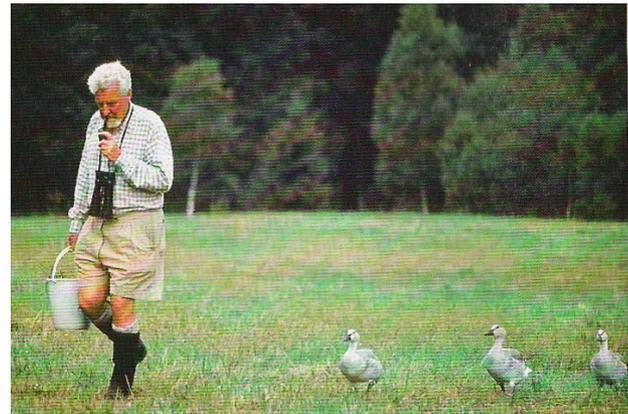


Erikson's stages of personality development

Stage	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Oral	Basic trust vs. mistrust							
Anal		Autonomy vs. shame, doubt						
Phallic			Initiative vs. guilt					
Latency				Industry vs. inferiority				
Genital					Identity vs. role confusion			
Young adulthood						Intimacy vs. isolation		
Adulthood							Generativity vs. stagnation	
Maturity								Ego integrity vs. despair

# Konrad Lorenz

Ethologist, known for his research on imprinting. Lorenz concluded that the process of “imprinting” was a natural instinct and would cause the goslings to imprint on the first large moving object that they saw. He concluded this was due to the fact that they needed food and protection. He related this to natural selection by stating that if they did not learn this behaviour through evolution that they would die out leaving only the few that did. This is known as “Natural Selection”.

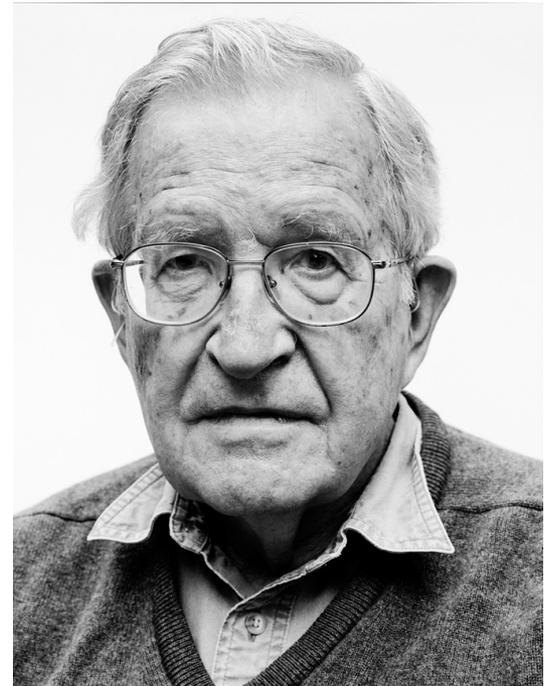


# Noam Chomsky 1928 -

Children are born in possession of an innate ability to comprehend language structures and states that every child has a ‘language acquisition device’ which encodes the major principles of a language and its grammatical structures into the child’s brain.

## Key Words

LAD, Innate Programming; ‘Motherese’ (a form of baby talk that influences a child's acquisition of grammar rules); universal grammar



<p><b>0 -2 months</b></p>	<p><b>Reflective crying, vegetative sounds which reflect their physical state</b></p>
<p>2 -5 months</p>	<p>Cooing and laughter, early consonants, sounds from back of throat, laughs and giggles</p>
<p>4 – 6 months</p>	<p>Vocal play, babbling, more adult like in range and pitch and raspberries (bilabial trills)</p>
<p>6 – 12 months</p>	<p>Replicated babbling, more pitch control, ability to sound out consonants and vowels</p>

# Arnold Gesell - 1880-1961

Development genetically determined by universal “maturation patterns” which occur in a predictable sequence.

## Key words

Biological maturation; milestones; normative development; cephalo-caudal; proximo-distal; nativist (nature) language development; biological/genetic determinism.



## More on Gesell

Gesell's classic study involved twin girls, both given training for motor skills but one given training for longer than the other. There was no measurable difference in the age at which either child acquired the skills, suggesting that development had happened in a genetically programmed way, irrespective of the training given.

A child learns to whether or not an adult teaches him/her, suggesting physical development at least is largely pre-programmed.

By studying thousands of children over many years, Gesell came up with "milestones of development" - stages by which 'normal children' can accomplish different tasks.

# Milestones

**By 3 months:** Visual, touch, sensing, hearing, exploring symmetrical movements with hands and legs - early attachment relationship develops thru' attunement, smiling

**By 6 months:** Muscle tone/strength, grasping, pushing, kicking, body awareness, sense of self as 'other', memory, sounds, stranger anxiety

**By 9 months:** Rolling, crawling, reaching, interaction, focus, babbling, peek-a-boo, laughing

**By 12 months:** Crawling up stairs, sits and stands alone, walks with help, feeds self, exploring impact of self on the world

## Milestones continued

**By 15 months:** Kneels, falling and recovering, walks alone, develops resilience, likes dolls, understands words

**By 18 months:** Scribbles, building bricks, undresses self, can walk up and down stairs with help, points and names, sings

**By 2 years:** Toilet training, copies caregiver around house, looks at books, ownership, doesn't share, throws ball, interactive in games with adult

**By 2 1/2 years:** Kicks and throws ball, tantrums, climbing and jumping

## Jean Piaget - 1896-1980



Development takes place in distinct stages of cognitive development. Adults influence but the child is building their own thinking systems.

### Key words

Cognitive learning theory; assimilate; symbolism; accommodate; egocentric; decentre; conservatism; active learners; schemata; sensory-motor; stages; pre-operational; animism; moral realism; concrete operations; formal operations

## More on Piaget

Jean Piaget is known for his research in developmental psychology. He studied under C. G. Jung and Eugene Bleuler. He was involved in the administration of intelligence tests to children and became interested in the types of mistakes children of various ages were likely to make.

Piaget began to study the reasoning processes of children at various ages. Piaget theorized that cognitive development proceeds in four genetically determined stages that always follow the same sequential order.

# Piaget's Cognitive Development Stages

- Sensori-motor - Ages birth till 2: the infant uses his senses and motor abilities to understand the world
- Pre-operation - Ages 2 till 7: the child uses mental representations of objects and is able to use symbolic thought and language
- Concrete operation - Ages 7 till 11: the child uses logical operations or principles when solving problems
- Formal operations Ages 12 upwards: the use of logical operations in a systematic fashion and with the ability to use abstractions

# Urie Bronfenbrenner

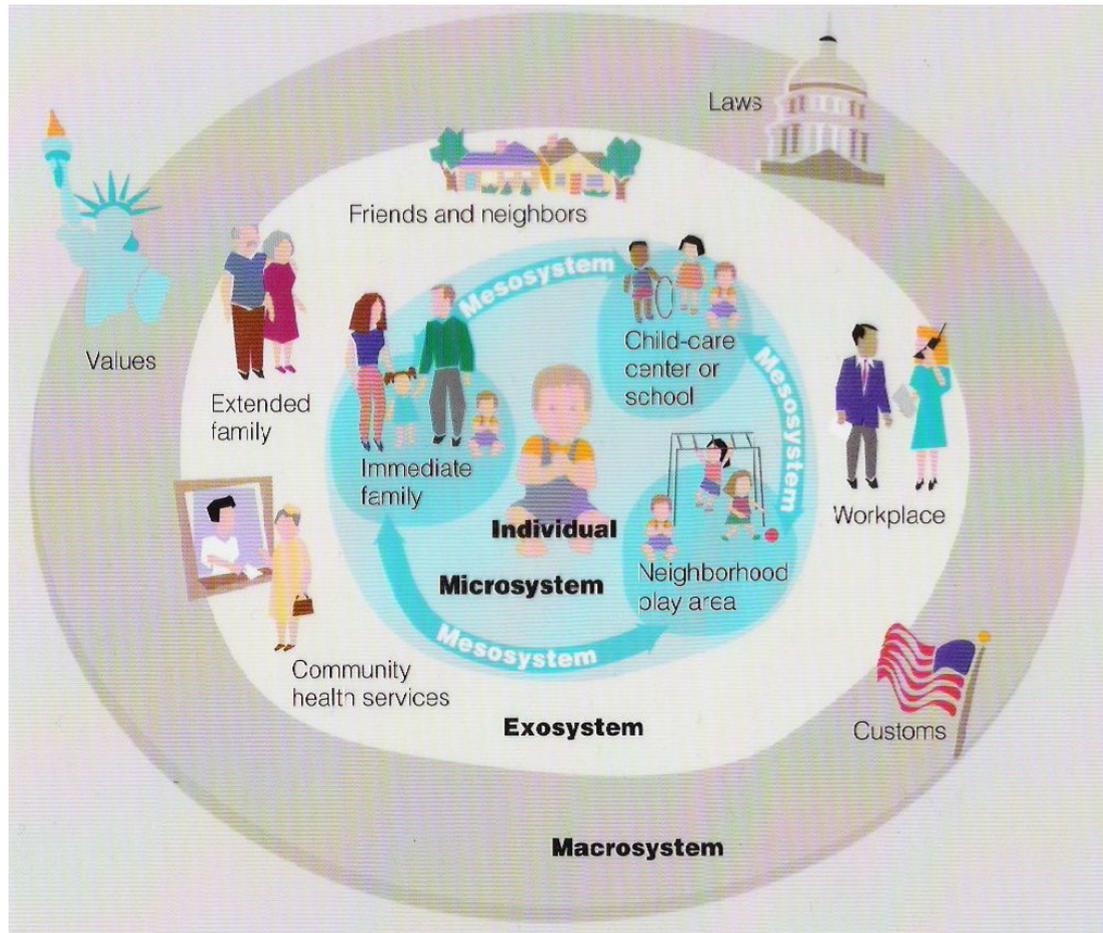
## 1917 - 2005

### Ecological Systems Theory

- The varied systems of the environment and the interrelationships among the systems shape a child's development
- Both the environment and biology influence the child's development
- The environment affects the child and the child influences the environment.



# Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Model



# Burrhus Skinner - 1904-1990

Reinforcement and punishment moulds behaviour and therefore children are conditioned by their experiences

## Key words

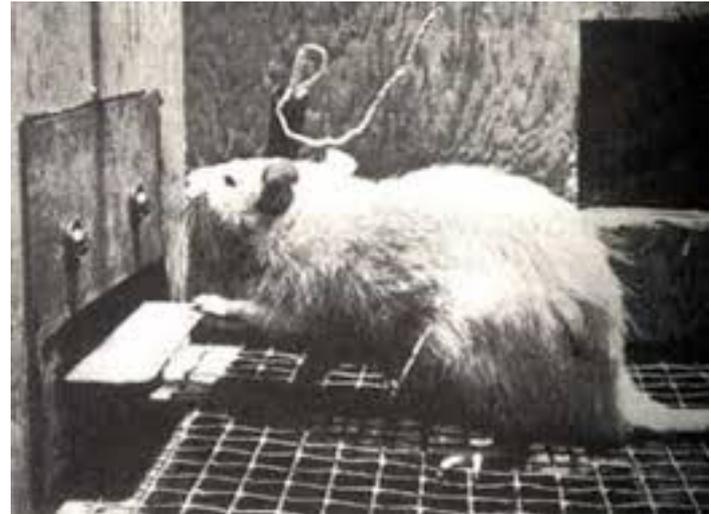
Operant conditioning; positive/negative reinforcement; consequence; reward; punishment; respondents; operant; social learning theory; behavioural learning theory



## More on Skinner

Skinner maintained that learning occurred as a result of the organism responding to, or operating on, its environment, and coined the term operant conditioning to describe this phenomenon.

He did extensive research with animals, notably rats and pigeons, and invented the famous Skinner box, in which a rat learns to press a lever in order to obtain food.



## Alfred Bandura 1925 -

Learning takes place by imitation. This differs from Skinner's "conditioning" because there is more emphasis on inner motivational factors.

### Key words

Imitation; copying; modelling; role models; reinforcement; social learning theory; observational theory (social cognitive theory); Bobo doll experiment.



## More on Bandura

Bandura's theory known as "Social Learning Theory" has been renamed "Social Cognitive Theory" to accommodate later developments of the theory.

Bandura is seen by many as a cognitive psychologist because of his focus on motivational factors and self-regulatory mechanisms that contribute to a person's behaviour, rather than just environmental factors. This focus on cognition is what differentiates social cognitive theory from Skinner's purely behaviouristic viewpoint.

# Lev Vygotsky-1896-1934

Development is primarily driven by language, social context and adult guidance.

## Key words

Zone of proximal development; zone of actual development; social constructivist; social constructivism; social interaction; language; internalisation; play; social context; cognition; constructivism



## More on Vygotsky

Lev Vygotsky was a Russian psychologist. His most productive years were at the Institute of Psychology in Moscow (1924–34), where he developed ideas on cognitive development, particularly the relationship between language and thinking.

His writings emphasised the roles of historical, cultural, and social factors in cognition and argued that language was the most important symbolic tool provided by society. He famously said ‘What a child can do today with assistance, she will be able to do by herself tomorrow.’

## Melanie Klein 1882–1960

She used observation of children at play with selected toys (her 'play technique') as a substitute for the adult free association.

The child's inner world has exaggerated, idealized and persecutory objects, not simple representations of experiences with parents. The very young infant's inner world is primarily defensive, protecting the self from the discomfort of pain and frustration.

As the child grows, it realizes that good and bad experiences come from the same person, as well as differences between internal and external objects





“Over the past decade it has...become abundantly clear that...the dyadic relations between child and caregivers within the first years of life can have direct and enduring effects on the child’s brain development and behavior.”

“The enduring impact of early maternal care and the role of epigenetic modifications of the genome during critical periods in early brain development in health and disease is likely to be *one of the most important discoveries in all of science that have major implications for our field.*”

Brain development not just genetically encoded; needs epigenetic social experiences. Not one or other but gene-environment interactions, mother nature *and* mother nurture combine to shape human nature.

“We suggest that in line with Bowlby’s fundamental goal of the integration of psychological and biological models of human development, the current clinical and experimental focus on how affective bodily-based processes are nonconsciously interactively regulated...has shifted attachment theory to a regulation theory.”

Schore (*Science of the Art of Psychotherapy*, 2012):

“Attachment theory, first created by...John Bowlby over 50 years ago, is now revitalized, particularly by its deep connections with neuroscience. At this point in time, we have in attachment theory a coherent theory of development that is grounded in both psychological science and neuroscience, and thereby is on a much firmer ground than it used to be.”

Schore (1994-2014): interpersonal neurobiological model of attachment mechanism; relational, social-emotional attachment experiences shape developing “social,” emotional” right brain and thereby emotional well-being in later stages of life.



“It is perhaps no longer necessary to argue the case for the importance of the early years. Advances in both neuroscience and social science have repeatedly confirmed that it is at this time that genetic potential interacts in infinitely complex ways with early experience to construct the neural pathways and connections that quickly become both the foundations and the scaffolding for all later development.”

“It is therefore at this time that the child’s wellbeing, health and development are most in need of society’s concern and protection.”

# What is trauma?

Trauma is the emotional, psychological and physiological residue left over from heightened stress that accompanies experience of threat, violence and life changing events

Source: Australian Childhood Foundation, Making Space for Learning: Trauma Informed Practice in Schools, 2010,  
[www.childhood.org.au](http://www.childhood.org.au)

A more overwhelming event than a person would ordinarily be expected to encounter

Source: American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry, <[www.aacap.org](http://www.aacap.org)>

# How do children react following trauma?

- Every child reacts to trauma differently
- Reaction will depend on:
  - Developmental level
  - Previous life experiences
  - Level of exposure to the trauma
  - Parental reactions
  - Subsequent changes in living situation
- The majority of children are resilient

# Types of trauma



- Complex trauma
- Family violence
- Medical trauma
- Natural disasters
- Community and school violence
- Neglect
- Physical abuse
- Sexual abuse
- Traumatic grief
- Refugee and war zone trauma

Source: [www.nctsn.org](http://www.nctsn.org)

# The effect of trauma on children



Children who experience horrible external events may experience emotional harm or psychic trauma. Left untreated, all but the mildest of childhood trauma can have an impact on the child

It is important to remember that abuse, neglect and other trauma have different impacts on different children – and that while we have to take seriously the negative impacts of trauma we cannot underestimate the strength of human resilience

# The effect of trauma during key developmental stages



- Confusion
- Sadness
- Anger
- Withdrawn
- Listlessness
- Sleeplessness
- Difficult relationship to food
- Chaotic behaviour
- Day-dreaming

- Make sure the abuse or other trauma has stopped
- Begin to build a relationship, by being honest, reliable and doing what you say you will do
- Understand trauma
- Help them feel safe through nurture, structure and support
- Use boundaries and logical consequences
- Stay calm and well-regulated – even as you set limits on aggression – to avoid power battles

- Understand your own traumas, so you can reflect on your own feelings and reactions
- Co-regulate with the child: use your calm to soothe and help them calm
- Don't take their behaviour personally
- Use discipline without shaming
- Engage with family members and carers

Adapted from: Child Safety Commissioner, 2009, *From isolation to connection: a guide to understanding and working with traumatised children and young people*, [www.kids.vic.gov](http://www.kids.vic.gov).

# Understanding the Impact of Trauma on the Developing Child

The first three years are when the brain is making the majority of its “primary” associations and the core neural networks organize as a reflection of early experience. Early developmental trauma and neglect have a disproportionate influence on brain organization and later brain functioning.



## Some Key Points

Traumatized children spend most of their lives in a state of low-level fear – even though outwardly they may look calm and relaxed.

While in this state, it takes very little to move them up the arousal continuum.

They will respond by using either a dissociative or hyperarousal adaptation. Their functioning on every level (emotional, behavioral, cognitive) will reflect this state.

# How the Brain Responds to a Traumatic Event

With a prolonged alarm reaction, the child will experience an altered neural state.

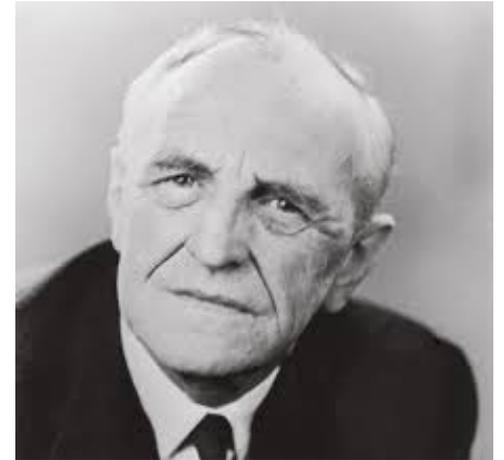
The longer the child remains in a persistent states of fear, the more likely it is that the child's brain will change to reflect these experiences.

# Donald Winnicott 1896-1971

Although accepting Kleinian theory, he viewed the key aspect of healthy development as rooted in relationships and micro-interactions with other people. He studied the importance of the mother – baby relationship and felt that the mother must be a "good-enough mother" who relates to the child with "primary maternal preoccupation."

## Key Words

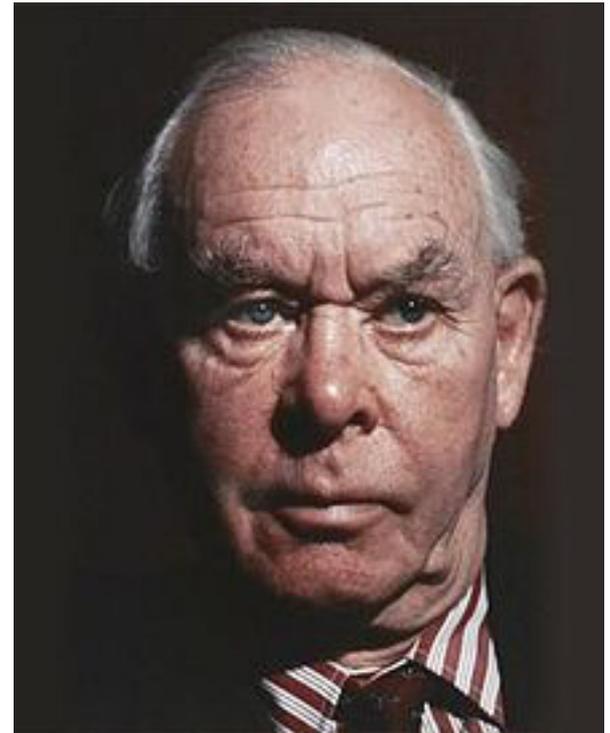
Object Relation Theory; Good enough mother; True Self/False Self; Play and Transitional Objects



## John Bowlby 1907 - 1990

He believed that mental health and behavioural problems could be attributed to early childhood suggesting that children come into the world biologically pre-programmed to form attachments with others, because this will help them to survive. Bowlby hypothesised that both infants and mothers have evolved a biological need to stay in contact with each other.

Key Words: Attachment, Attunement, Security, Relationships, Bonding



# The Contribution of Bowlby

Bowlby - British child psychiatrist, part of the psychoanalytic community, training when object-relations (Kleinian) theories were dominant

Supervised and analyzed by Melanie Klein, but differences began emerging between him and others in the psychodynamic community

Bowlby's view led his to be ignored by the psychoanalytic community & only considered relevant in recent years (i.e. Fonagy, Holmes)

Bowlby developed an ethological theory, which suggested that:-

“the infant attachment bond is an instinctually guided behavioural system that has functioned throughout human evolution to protect the infant from danger”

With this evolutionary based theory, fear of strangers and other threats to survival is innate

# So Attachment is about....

the ability of individuals to use attachment figures as a secure base from which to explore and

...a safe haven in times of fear, distress or danger

...the extent to which caregiver responses are:

Reciprocal

Sensitive (accurate interpretation of signal)

Consistent

Offer comfort, calm & enable feelings of safety

# A Child Needs Healthy Attachments

## **To develop:**

- Physically
- Emotionally
- Socially
- Psychologically
- Morally
- Cognitively

## **To cope with:**

- change and stress
- separation and loss
- trauma
- To develop:
  - future relationships
- To achieve:
  - Self worth and self-esteem
  - Independence

# The new messages for the child

Adults take care of children and meet their needs, not the other way around

Every child is important

We can ask for what we need and get our needs met in ways that leave us feeling OK about ourselves

No one here uses force, bribery, tricks to get their own way

Everyone's feelings are important to listen to

# Mary Ainsworth

Mary Ainsworth continued Bowlby's research

- Proposed that infants' attachment to a caregiver differs in the degree of security in the attachment
- Differences in security of attachment influence personality and social relationships in infancy and beyond



Infants need a “secure base” (i.e. are able to *trust*) their primary caregiver

A Secure Attachment leads to subsequent healthy development

An Insecure Attachment leads to unhealthy development

Attachment style affects relationships throughout life

**Secure base:** A responsive caregiver provides security to explore the environment

If the caregiver's responses to the child's needs are appropriate, then the child will feel confident to explore a strange environment, occasionally returning to the caregiver for confirmation

If the caregiver's responses to the child are inappropriate, the child becomes insecure and are less likely to use the caregiver as a base for exploring a strange environment

Caregiver

Typically the infant's mother

May include others who respond to an infant's needs

# Methodology

Strange Situation: Experimental task for infants

Infant, parent, and experimenter go into a laboratory room

Eight episodes of about three minutes apiece are used to determine the security of the infant's attachment to the parent

Secure Attachment: Explore environment with parent, distressed when parent leaves, delighted when parent returns

Insecure Attachment

Resistant: Clings to parent, cries when the parent leaves, angry when returns

Avoidant: Not care if mother leaves and ignores the parent upon return



# Strange Situation

	Event	Attachment Issue
1	Parent and baby enter playroom.	
2	Parent sits quietly while baby plays.	Parent as secure base for exploration
3	Stranger enters and talks with parent.	Baby's response to new adult
4	Parent leaves the room. Baby is alone with the stranger.	Baby's response to separation
5	Parent returns. Stranger leaves.	Baby's response to reunion
6	Parent leaves. Baby alone in the room.	Baby's response to separation
7	Stranger enters and offers comfort.	Baby's ability to accept comfort from a stranger
8	Parent returns and offers comfort if needed and tries to get the baby to play.	Baby's response to reunion

# Attachment Styles

Securely Attached: Belief that the caregiver will protect and provide for them

- Explores the environment with the parent

- Might protest separation from parent but smiles more often when the parent is present

- Shows pleasure at reunion with parent

Insecure-Avoidant: Belief that the caregiver will not protect or provide. The caregiver is not a safe haven in stressful circumstances

- Does not protest at parent's departure

- Responds the same to the stranger and the parent, or more positively to the stranger

- Avoid parent upon return

# Attachment Styles

Insecure-Resistant: Uncertainty about whether the parent will protect or provide safety in stressful circumstances

Remain close to parent. Refuse to explore the new environment

Distressed at separation of parent

Mixture of approach and avoidance when reunited

Disorganized or Disoriented: No consistent way of dealing with the stress

Exhibits contradictory behavior at the strange situation

Typical attachment style when the infant is abused or neglected

## Secure Attachment

Children have confidence that their attached figure will meet their needs consistently and reliably. Their attached figure represents their secure base at times of distress, and when they seek comfort it is available.

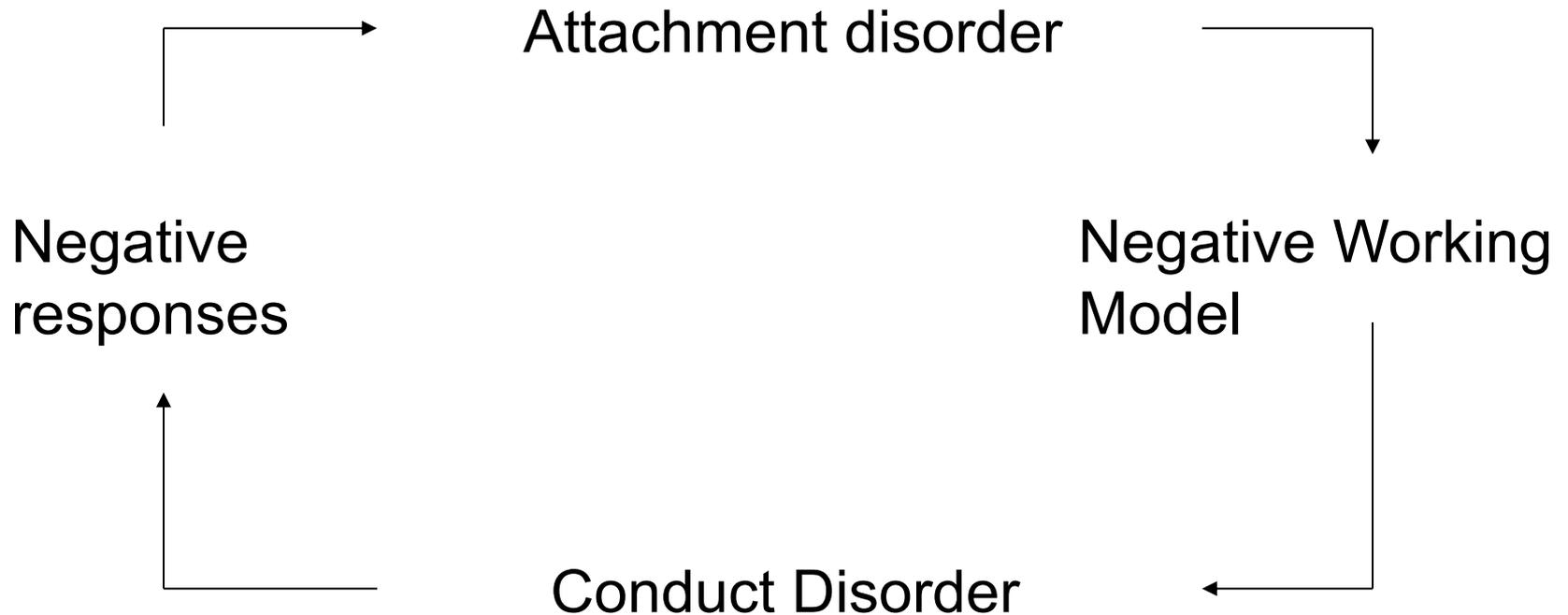
## **Insecure Avoidant**

Children do not seek out their attached figure, and as such do not maintain a dependence on them. When the child becomes distressed by their experience, the child does not seek comfort, has no expectation of safety and does not seek or accept nurture.

## **Insecure Ambivalent / Resistant**

Although children demonstrate behaviours, which are similar to secure attachment, they rarely accept such comfort from attached figures.

## Cycle of the Acting-Out (“Bad”) Child



“Children with grossly neglectful parents...will think of all kinds of excuses for the neglect in order to protect themselves from concluding that their parents do not care about them. They may tell themselves that they deserve the neglect, or that they prefer things the way they are”.

**Beckett C (2002)**

## What Can We Do?

- Take the time and trouble to learn about the child's history and experiences.
- Consider the child's losses that will be triggered when they move on
- Accept the child with all the feelings, thoughts and behaviours that go with grieving.
- Be aware of the losses and bereavements in your own life.

## Summary of the Day

**Attachment**

**Separation &  
Loss**

**Culture**

**Attachment  
disorder**

**Bonding**

**Cycle of  
attachment**

**Attunement**

**Theories /  
theorists**

**Loss for  
children in  
care**

**The effects on  
the brain**