



Attachment Theory and Self Awareness in the Counsellor

Place2Be Volunteer Counsellor Training

Participant Reading 3 – The Four Attachment Styles

	(A) AVOIDANT	(B) SECURE	(C) ANXIOUS-AMBIVALENT	(D) DISORGANISED
OBSERVATION OF PRIMARY CAREGIVER	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Often emotionally unavailable or rejecting - Dislikes “neediness” & may applaud independence - Ignores, misinterprets &/or doesn't respond promptly to babies cry - Misreads babies attachment behaviour as something else - Poor eye-contact with child - Doesn't enjoy physical contact & not a lot of joy in interactions - Almost invariably good parenting 'techniques' with feeding, bathing & changing, but low emotional expression - Reliance on order & an inflexibility around this - Idealises own childhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Responds quickly & sensitively - Lots of physical contact with child - Encourages 'floor freedom' - Looks at child more & picks up more quickly if necessary - Overall is warm, sensitively attuned & consistent - Readily available & positive recollections about own childhood 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Often unpredictable or chaotic - Attentive but out of sync with baby; observed as inconsistent - Most tuned into baby's fear - When responsive to signals, tends to misinterpret them and becomes intrusive/impinging - Unresponsive to children when they get wrapped up in their own needs - Often describes a push-pull relationship with child - Talks about negative feelings towards them - May use threats of leaving - Can engage in role reversal (i.e. child becomes 'parentified') 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Oscillates between positive & negative feelings towards child - Irrational & confused presentation - Inconsistent caregiving of the child - May be traumatised by own childhood &/or difficult relationships - Often stuck in crisis/grieving & can't be autonomous - Primary strategy will be one of secure, avoidant or ambivalent but ongoing grief (or lack of resolution of grief) prevents a clean display of whatever strategy it is



<p>BEHAVIOUR AS INFANT</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unresponsive to being held but often upset when put down - By end of the first year: baby seeks little physical contact with mother - Is randomly angry with her - Vocalisation may be less up to 21/2 - 3 years of age 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Readily explores using mother as a secure base - Cries the least of the four groups - Is the most compliant with mother - Most easily put down after being held 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cries a lot and is clingy & demanding - Often upset by small separations - Chronically anxious in relation to mother - Limited in exploration - Exhibits much attachment behaviour - Looks a lot less competent and a more 'helpless' baby 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children have often been maltreated or parent is frightening to their child
<p>THE STRANGE SITUATION (~ 12 months)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Avoids mother on return - "Neutral" behaviour - Not attention-seeking - More interaction with stranger - Downward gaze on reunion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Orientated towards mother - Will take toys/etc to show her - Distressed in second separation - Won't touch stranger but some interaction - Greets mother after separation & wants physical contact with her 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Less exploration of the room - Controlling & clingy with mother - Fragile affect - Most afraid of stranger - Large amount of distress from first separation onwards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seems normal but slightly 'odd', especially when shown frame by frame on video - 'Odd' attachment behaviour towards mother (i.e. walks up backwards or with eyes averted) - Also freezing or stilling when anxious
<p>AT PRESCHOOL</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Often angry, aggressive & defiant - May be isolated & disliked by peers - Withdraw when in pain - Teachers may become controlling & angry - May use language as a barrier 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Easily makes friends, is popular & spends more time with peers - Flexible & resilient under stress - Good self-esteem - Teachers treat in warm, matter-of-fact & age-appropriate ways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fretful & easily overwhelmed by anxiety - Immature in presentation - Teacher-orientated - May be victimised by bullies - Teachers indulge, excuse & infantilise 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Display very poor boundaries - Try to be controlling - Can be precocious in the amount of responsibility they try to take - Often large behaviour problems - Sudden outbursts & sudden changes of behaviour.



<p style="text-align: center;">IN MIDDLE CHILDHOOD</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Children back off from conflict or problems - Have abrupt, neutral & unenthusiastic exchanges - No close friends, or friendships marked by exclusivity & jealousy - Often outside the group - Poor recall & poor self-awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Warm & enthusiastic - Able to be open & engage in meaningful exchanges - Comfortable with physical contact - Concentrated play - Socially resilient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Mix intimacy with hostility - Affectedly present as cute or ingratiating - May be worried about mother when apart - Helpless & unable to resolve conflict - Trouble functioning in peer groups & difficulty sustaining friendships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Perceive the world as violent & tragic and in which no-one can serve as a protector -
<p style="text-align: center;">1:1 CHILD WORK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Sees therapist as useless - Distrustful & narcissistic - No people in play which can be grandiose and antisocial - Responses are often "all thinking & no feeling" - <i>Adult feels rejected</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Confident & age-appropriate - Predictable response to difficult events (i.e. confused/'shattered') - Expects Adult to be helpful - <i>Adult feels competent & is allowed to be by child</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Hard to please; often unsure & passive - Negative view of self - 'Parentified' but also dependent & helpless - Responses are often "all feeling & no thinking" - <i>Adult feels idealized by child but also unable to 'get it right'</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fearful of therapist - Switches between attachment strategies - Bizarre behaviours - <i>Adult feels confused & not useful</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">STRATEGY OF ATTACHMENT BEHAVIOUR</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The attachment system is inhibited to manage the pain of anticipated rejection - Children become skilled at controlling their emotional state - They learn to inhibit both behaviour AND affect & may focus on exploration instead - <u>Aim of behaviour</u>: 'be neutral, don't call attention to relationship' 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The attachment system is activated when the child feels threatened or unsure - <u>Aim of behaviour</u>: to get emotional needs met by caregiver who has proven consistent and sensitive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The attachment system is kept hyper-activated as a strategy to manage the unpredictability of the primary caregiver - There are two types of Insecure-Anxious/Ambivalent behaviour: (C1) Angry, and (C2) Sad/Passive - <u>Aim of behaviour</u>: keep the primary caregiver close and engaged in any way possible 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - When the attachment system is activated the child is disorientated & disorganised as to what strategy to use - They cannot decide whether to use avoidance or ambivalence - In essence, the child is frightened by situations that elicit attachment-seeking behaviour - <u>Aim of behaviour</u>: there is no aim



INTERNAL WORKING MODEL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Other people are unavailable and rejecting - I have to protect myself - If I show my needs I will be rejected - If I do what is expected of me, I will not be rejected - If I take care of others and deny my own needs I will be loved 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - I can trust and rely on others - I am loveable, capable, significant & worthwhile - My world is safe 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Others are unpredictable; sometimes loving and protective, sometimes hostile and rejecting - I don't know what to expect; I am anxious and angry - I cannot explore; I may miss an opportunity for love and affection - If I can read others and get them to respond, I will get my needs met 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - My caregiver, at times seems overwhelmed by me, and at other times seems very angry with me - Others are abusive (neglectfully, physically, emotionally &/or sexually) - I am unable to get my needs met - I don't know how to protect myself
AAI	Usually classified as Dismissive	Usually classified as Secure	Usually classified as Preoccupied/Entangled Adult	Usually classified as Unresolved/Disorganised
NOTES				

