



# **Introduction to Working with Children and Young People**

## **Day 2**

### **Sue Lambert Trust**

# So Far .....



- Differences between working with adults & children
  - Safeguarding
  - Social / emotional development
  - Ways of communicating
  - Not knowing and being ok with that
  - Trusting the child's process
  - The 'work' looks different

# So Far .....



- Play and its importance
- Helping children tell their stories
- Getting back to basics – less is more!
- Exploring different play materials
- Skills practice

# Today's Aims



- Think about contracting and setting boundaries with a young person and how this may differ from contracting with an adult.
- Gain an understanding of Attachment Theory and the key concepts
- Consider the differences between secure and insecure attachment relationships
- Gain insight into their own experience of attachment relationships and those of the children they are working with
- Explore the importance of self-awareness in the counsellor-child relationship

# Physical Boundaries



- Not hurting self or each other
- Not deliberately breaking equipment or furniture
- Not taking equipment out of the room
- Leave the room as you found it by tidying everything away

# Time Boundaries



- Day of the week that you will meet
- Time of day, the start and finish time of the session
- How long each session will be
- How many weeks you will be working together
- Acknowledge breaks

# Confidentiality



- What stays in the room?
- Who do you share information with?
- If you are concerned that the child or someone they know is being hurt or in danger then you will talk to the designated safeguarding officer.

# Boundaries



- Create a frame
- Contain and hold
- Offer safety
- Offer choices
- Imperative part of building the relationship and trust
- Will be tested and checked out
- Offer the young person a different experience of a relationship





*“Attachment is an affectual tie that one person forms to another specific person – binding them together and enduring over time”*

Ainsworth, 1973



John Bowlby  
1907-1990



# John Bowlby



- 1930's - Disagrees with Kleinian view that inner world is all important, instead believing that the child's external world, experiences and relationships are hugely important
- 1940's - made a series of films about children's experience of being separated from parents in hospital. These influence hospital practice.

# John Bowlby



- 1950's - developed the basics of Attachment Theory. Initially greeted with scepticism from the Psychoanalytic Society, Mary Ainsworth becomes one of Bowlby's research assistants.
- 1960's-1980's Bowlby continues to develop his Attachment Theory. He publishes his trilogy about Attachment, Separation and Loss.
- 1980 – Bowlby dies age 83



Mary Ainsworth

1913-1999



# The Strange Situation



Observation of the responses of the child when:

- Carer and child together
- Separation from carer (ignores, high distress etc) – how the child responds to the stranger
- Reunited with carer (inconsolable, unaffected etc) – how the child recommences play



## Key concepts of modern Attachment Theory

- Attachment behaviours are genetically programmed to keep humans alive
- The quality of early attachment relationships is a predictor
- Children need a secure base
- Attachment is relationship-specific
- Attachment is developmentally specific



## Key concepts of modern Attachment Theory

- Children have a attachment system that turns on and off at times of stress
- Children develop strategies for coping when the system is on
- Strategies are based on children's Internal Working Models (IWMs)
- IWMs can be modified and 'disconfirmed'
- Attachment continues throughout the life cycle





# Attachment Styles

- Secure
- Insecure: Anxious-Ambivalent
- Insecure: Avoidant
- Disorganised

# Types of attachment



I am safe and lovable. I know where to go for help if I need it. The world is a mostly safe place



**Secure**

I am not sure what is going to happen next and I'm worried. I might tell you to go away but be very clingy.



**Anxious  
ambivalent**

Go away! Leave me alone. I don't need you and I don't care about anything or anybody. If you come too close or if I'm in danger I might lash out.



**Anxious avoidant**

# Internal Working Model



I am safe and lovable. I know where to go for help if I need it. The world is a mostly safe place

I am not sure what is going to happen next and I'm worried. I might tell you to go away but be very clingy.

Go away! Leave me alone. I don't need you and I don't care about anything or anybody. If you come too close or if I'm in danger I might lash out.

Relationships are great.

Relationships can be great but they can be horrible as well. You just never know.

Relationships are way too unreliable and are sometimes downright dangerous.



# Self Awareness

- How do I behave/respond in relation to this child?
- What do I feel in relation to this child?
- What do I think when I work with this child?
- What goes on inside for me?
- What is the nature of my empathy with this child?
- Are there any blocks to my empathy or responses with this child?
- Am I experiencing any boundary problems with this child?



# What the counsellor holds in mind

- How does the child relate to the counsellor?  
Are we controlled; ignored; looked after; attacked?
- How do they use the materials? Are some avoided? Is there contact and absorption, or no connection?
- How do they play – freely, without inhibition? Fearfully? Carefully? With violence? Organised or disorganised?
- What are the themes that arise?
- How do they enter and leave the room?
- How do they hear what the therapist says?

# Supervision reflection



- What does this mean for them?
- What does this mean for me?
- How does this impact the therapeutic relationship?
- How do I continue to work with this?

# Endings



- Acknowledging & talking about the ending with children in advance
- Think ahead with the child about how they might deal with the ending
- Acknowledge the child's feelings around endings
- Ritualise endings by making cards, stories, celebrations
- Celebrate achievements & the relationship



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