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Making the Journey Towards Healthy Attachment

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Today's Presenters



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Today's Objectives

- 1. Describe how attachment is formed and what a healthy attachment includes
- 2. Identify how to promote healthy attachment and restore it if needed
- 3. Reflect on how this may differ across cultures, family types, and situations

Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health

IECMH refers to healthy social and emotional development from birth to age 5

IECMH may influence children's abilities to:

- Form close and secure interpersonal relationships
- Recognize, express and regulate emotions
- Explore and learn from the environment

Attachment relationships are very important for children's IECMH!



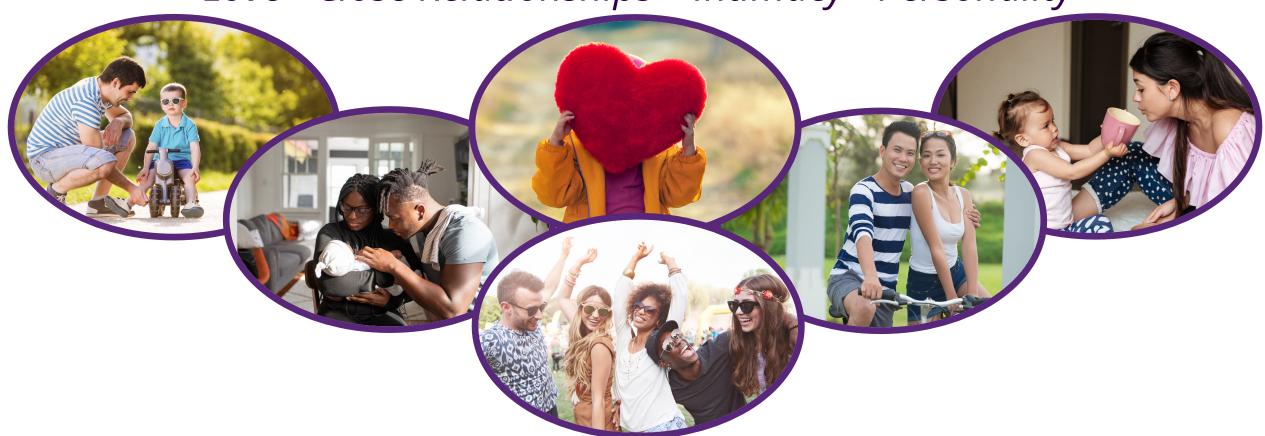
Reflect & Chat

What do you think attachment refers to?

How important do you think attachment is for development?

Attachment theory is a theory of...

Love - Close Relationships - Intimacy - Personality



John Bowlby & the Development of Attachment Theory

He drew upon theory and research in the fields of...

psychology, biology, ethology, cognitive development, and control systems theory

Attachment serves...

the biological function of protection in that it maintains contact between the caregiver and the infant

From a developmental perspective, maintenance of proximity ultimately... aids in the survival of the child and provides the building blocks of the relationship

The Emergence of Attachment Theory

Attachment theory emerged from the joint work of **John Bowlby** and **Mary**

Ainsworth

- Bowlby = theory
- Ainsworth = methodology

Bowlby and Attachment Theory

- Bowlby did volunteer work at a school for children with maladjustment
- His experiences with two children at the school set his professional life course

Definition of Attachment

- An enduring emotional tie to a special person
- Tendency to seek and maintain closeness, especially during times of stress or need
- Attachment is about a **RELATIONSHIP** that develops over time

Importance of Early Attachment Relationships

- Sets the stage for other close relationships
- Shapes child's notions of self and other
- Contributes to shaping the child's biological response to stress and self-regulation

Attachment: Three Components

Attachment Behaviors

- Examples: Crying, smiling, approaching
- Serves to maintain proximity to the caregiver

Attachment Behavioral System

- The system goal is to maintain proximity to the caregiver, and the attached individual's goal is felt security.
- Like a "thermostat"
- One of multiple behavioral systems

Attachment Relationship

- The tie that the infant has to their caregiver
- This exists over time and does not solely depend on the presence of attachment behaviors.

Important Concept: Secure Base

Presence of attachment figure promotes the child's **exploration** of the world.

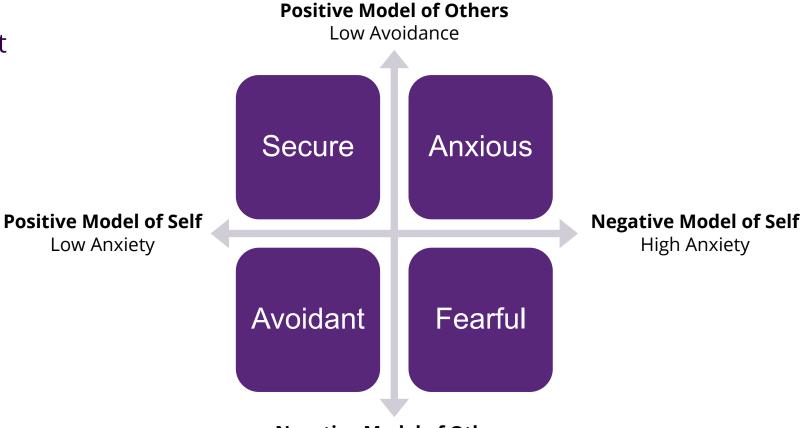
Secure children view themselves as competent and the **caregiver as available if needed** (e.g., when distressed, tired, sad)



Types of Attachment

Types of Attachment in Childhood

Secure Attachment
Insecure Anxious/Resistant
Insecure Avoidant
Insecure Disorganized



Attachment Styles

Secure Anxious Avoidant organised

Negative Model of Others High Avoidance

Insecure Attachment Classification	Behaviors over Infancy	Behaviors in 5-year-old
Ambivalent/Resistant	High distress; not soothed by caregiver	Show more fear and less confidence
	Does not actively explore/attend to environment	"Clingy" behavior in everyday situations
	Expresses more anger toward caregiver mixed with bids for contact	May show hyperactivating emotion patterns because fear of rejection
	Emotionally "upregulate" to get caregiver attention	Emotion-event mismatch (may laugh when a person gets hurt because they are anxious)
		Low social competence with peers
Avoidant	Emotionally "down regulate" around caregiver when distressed	Difficulty sharing feelings/low emotion knowledge
	Avoid/indifferent toward caregiver upon reunions/does not seek proximity or contact	Withdraws from closeness; may seem overly independent
	May interact with/attend to stranger more or show no preference for caregiver	Difficulty maintaining friendships and asking for help/support
Disorganized	Seems dazed around caregiver	Difficulty showing empathy
	Shows a mixture of resistant/avoidant behavior	Inability to self-regulate negative emotions
	May show stereotyped/repetitive behaviors during reunions with caregivers	Views closeness as a threat
	May show "freezing" behavior	Shows aggressive or erratic behavior towards others
	Prone to stress	Low self-esteem

To view this video, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=m_6rQk7jlrc and watch the clip from 1:05 to 2:23

Strange Situation: Attachment & Research



Video Activity with Attachment Examples

To view this video, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjOowWxOXCg and watch the clip from 1:14 to 1:46

Smith Family



To view this video, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjOowWxOXCg and watch the clip from 2:12 to 2:46

Ann: What attachment style is this?



Poll

Which attachment style do you think the video displayed?

- a) Secure Attachment
- b) Insecure Ambivalent/Resistant
- c) Insecure Avoidant
- d) Insecure Disorganized

To view this video, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjOowWxOXCg and watch the clip from 3:28 to 4:04

Amy: What attachment style is this?



Poll

Which attachment style do you think the video displayed?

- a) Secure Attachment
- b) Insecure Ambivalent/Resistant
- c) Insecure Avoidant
- d) Insecure Disorganized

To view this video, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjOowWxOXCg and watch the clip from 1:47 to 2:01

Luka: What attachment style is this?



Poll

Which attachment style do you think the video displayed?

- a) Secure Attachment
- b) Insecure Ambivalent/Resistant
- c) Insecure Avoidant
- d) Insecure Disorganized

To view this video, go to https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WjOowWxOXCg and watch the clip from 2:50 to 3:24

Joe: What attachment style is this?



Poll

Which attachment style do you think the video displayed?

- a) Secure Attachment
- b) Insecure Ambivalent/Resistant
- c) Insecure Avoidant
- d) Insecure Disorganized

Attachment Qualities & Differences

Differences in Socialization Strategies

Parenting beliefs and socialization goals can influence attachment

Multiple Caregiving Arrangements

- Changes in family structure
- Deployment Cycle

Definition and Outlook of Attachment

Expression of care and love is different in various cultures

Children with Disabilities and Attachment

Children with disabilities can form healthy secure attachments. However, they may have an increased risk of forming an insecure attachment.

The increased risk is created by a range of factors including:

- the emotional impact of the diagnosis on the family
- the increased stress families may experience
- the increased likelihood of living in poverty
- the child's ability to express their needs and feelings

Any Questions?

Promoting Healthy Attachment: As an Educator

As an educator, you can support children's healthy attachment relationships by helping caregivers:

- Recognize they are the most important person to their child
- Learn to distinguish children's attachment behaviors from exploratory behaviors
- Become more aware of and pay attention to subtle child signals and cues and how to respond appropriately
- Understand that responding to their children's distress on a regular basis will help their emotional and cognitive growth

And by highlighting sensitive responses that involve:

- The child's signal
- The sensitive response and child's reaction to response
- Resolution and sharing of emotion

Promoting Healthy Attachment: As Early Childhood Professionals

Children develop multiple attachment relationships that impact development.

Secure attachments with childcare professionals are important!

Childcare providers can serve as a secure base and be responsive to child distress and proximity seeking behaviors.

Having a secure attachment with one caregiver can offset the negative effects of an insecure attachment with another adult caregiver

Promoting a Healthy Attachments: Strategies



Observe to better understand a child's unique preferences



Show parents how they can connect with their baby through everyday activities



Ask parents about their experiences



Support for all caregivers and early childhood professionals!

Attachment Disorders and Rebuilding Attachment

Attachment Disorders

- All attachment classifications can be seen across normative development.
- In cases of neglect or abuse, the attachment relationship is seriously affected as the attachment figure is a source of distress rather than a haven of safety/protection.
- Severe attachment disorders can develop because of chronic difficulties in early relationships.
 - Reactive Attachment Disorder
 - Disinhibited Social Engagement Disorder

Rebuilding Attachment & Assisting Families

- Repairing parent-child attachment relationships may begin with repairing the amygdala and emotion dysregulation.
 - During this process, it is important to consider how a parent may also have emotion dysregulation.
- You can also help repair by helping the child feel loved.
 - Help the child identify emotions and express their needs
 - Identify actions that feel good to the child
 - Listen, talk, and play with the child

Rebuilding Attachment & Assisting Families

- Some researchers highlight the use of interventions and therapies.
 - This might include building alliances, facilitating conversations, and promoting autonomy in the child or adolescent.



Key Take Aways

Early attachment relationships set the stage for the parentchild and other close relationships.

Childcare professionals and educators have an important role in promoting a secure attachment and relationship.

Any Questions?

Contact Us

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Upcoming Event



Managing Bumps in the IECMH Road

Thursday, Sept. 21, 2023

Family stress can have significant impacts on infant early childhood mental health (IECMH). This can be especially true for military families who experience unique stressors (e.g., deployment, frequent moves, the disruption of routines and relationships, and long periods of separation). In this webinar, presenters discuss effective strategies for addressing family stress, the impact of cultural differences on stress management, and what to do if you suspect maltreatment.

Continuing education credit will be available for this session!

Continuing Education



This webinar has been approved for the following continuing education (CE) credits:



Thank you for participating in this evaluation.

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(CFLE) for this webinar, please click on this link to access your certificate: 12 (1993) A CONTROL OF THE OWNER OWNER OF THE OWNER OWNER

Education professionals: If you would like to receive a Certificate of Completion for general use and/or 1.5 State Continuing Education Clock Hours (SCECHs) for providers

in Michigan, please click on this link to take the post-test: haddancog 11.4 billoucog of the ming in his link to take the post-test: haddancog 11.4 billoucog of the ming in his link to take the post-test: haddancog 11.4 billoucog of the ming in his link to take the post-test: haddancog 11.4 billoucog of the ming in his link to take the post-test: haddancog 11.4 billoucog of the ming in his link to take the post-test: haddancog 11.4 billoucog of the ming in his link to take the post-test: haddancog 11.4 billoucog of the ming in his link to take the post-test: haddancog 11.4 billoucog of the ming in his link to take the post-test: haddancog 11.4 billoucog of the ming in his link to take the post-test in his link

Social Workers, Licensed Professional Counselors, and Licensed Marriage and Family Therapists: If you would like to receive 1.5 CE credits for Social Work, LPCs, and

LMFTs from the University of Texas at Austin, Steve Hicks School of Social Work, please click on this link to take the post-

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Evaluation Link

Go to the event page for the evaluation and post-test link.



Questions?

Email Robyn DiPietro-Wells: OneOpEarlyIntervention@gmail.com

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