





Welcome!
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PSYCHALIVE
 Psychology for Everyday Life
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The Importance of Making Sense of Your Life

- ▷ Introduction to Attachment Theory
- ▷ Writing a Coherent Narrative
- ▷ Trauma & Triggers
- ▷ Developing More Secure Attachments

Attachment Theory



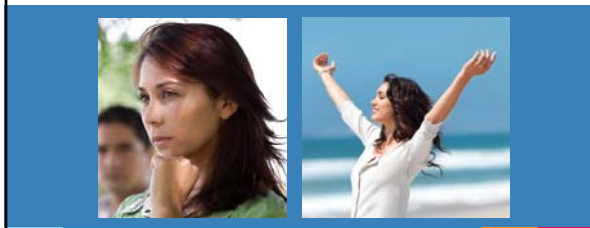
Created by John Bowlby, a British psychoanalyst, based partly on primate ethology, to explain why "maternal deprivation" leads to anxiety, anger, delinquency, and depression

From 1969-1988, he published five books about the theory, including one on psychotherapy.



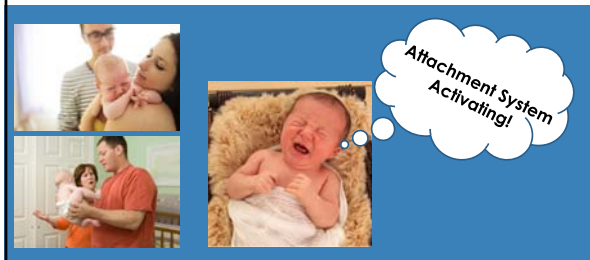
Understanding Attachment

- ▷ Attachment patterns are formed in infancy, during the first two years of life.
- ▷ Once established, it is a pattern that affects us throughout our lives, particularly in how we relate in intimate relationships and with our children.



Attachment Theory

- ▷ Our attachment system is activated when we are distressed.
- ▷ The way our parents interact with us (particularly during times of distress) forms the basis of our attachment style.



We have different attachments to different people...



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How do I get these people to take care of me?

What is Attachment Theory?

Human beings are born wired for connection. At the very beginning of our lives, we form attachments to our primary caretakers as a survival mechanism.

Our attachment pattern forms as a result of the adaptations we made in infancy to get our needs met. Children make the best adaptations they can to their family.

The 3 S's of Secure Attachment

Humans rely on attachment figures for:

- ▷ Protection (**safe**)
- ▷ Support (**seen**)
- ▷ Emotion regulation (**soothed**)



Attachment Theory

- ▷ Humans, especially young children, rely on attachment figures for protection, support, and emotion regulation
- ▷ The attachment behavioral system is an evolved, innate regulator of proximity (hence of safety and safe exploration)



Source: MIKULINER, M., & SHAVER, P. R. (2012). An attachment perspective on psychopathology. *World Psychiatry*, 11(1), 11–15.

Attachment Theory

- ▷ When threats abate, behavioral systems other than attachment (e.g., exploration, caregiving) can be activated, allowing a person to become more competent/autonomous
- ▷ Attachment orientations, or "styles," develop in relationships, resulting in systematic individual differences in attachment orientation: secure, anxious, avoidant. . .
- ▷ The theory applies from "the cradle to the grave" (Bowlby)

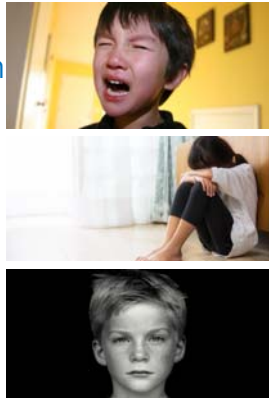


Source: Cassidy, J., & Shaver, P. R. (Eds.). (2016). *Handbook of Attachment, Third Edition: Theory, Research, and Clinical Applications*. Edition(3rd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Publications.

Attachment Theory & Research

Bowlby contended that internal working models of attachment help to explain:

- ▷ Emotional distress
- ▷ Personality disturbance
- ▷ Emotional detachment



Attachment Theory & Research

Attachment underlies later capacity to make effectual bonds as well as a whole range of adult dysfunctions, particularly with marital bonds and trouble parenting.



Why is it important to make sense of your life?



- ▷ Our early experiences shape who we are profoundly.
- ▷ These experiences become a lens through which we see the world.
- ▷ Without an understanding of how our past shades our world, we often move through our lives unconsciously recreating, repeating or reacting to our early environment.

Reasons Why it's Important to Know about Attachment Style

- You assess the patient's attachment style, because it influences the process of psychotherapy, the quality of the alliance and the ultimate outcome of treatment.
- Provides clues as to how the patient is likely to respond in treatment and to the therapist.



From "Attachment Style"
<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.1002/jcop.20756/abstract?sessionid=120C6113EB8A64EAB21F6477ADF8D51041027?deniedAccessCustomisedMessage=&userIsAuthenticated=false>

Psychotherapy Relationship as Attachment

Psychotherapy relationship with an adult client exhibits all the essential elements of attachment bonds:

- They regard their therapist as stronger and wiser.
- They seek proximity through emotional connection and regular meetings.
- They reply upon the therapist as a safe haven when they feel threatened.
- They derive a sense of felt security from their therapist who serves as a secure base for psychological exploration.
- They experience separation anxiety when anticipating loss of their therapist.

From "The Psychotherapy Relationship as Attachment"
http://www.researchgate.net/publication/2259555_Attachment_patterns_in_the Psychotherapy_relationship_Development_of_the_Client_Attachment_to_Therapist_Scale/figure/fig1/attachment?tp=ip14.pdf

The making and breaking of affectional bonds. II. Some principals of psychotherapy. The Fiftieth Maudsley Lecture

~ John Bowlby, BJPsych, 1977



"...a psychotherapist is seen to have a number of inter-related tasks: (a) to provide the patient with a secure base from which he, the patient, can explore himself and his relationships; (b) and (c) to examine with the patient the ways in which he tends to construe current interpersonal relationships, including that with the therapist, and the resulting predictions he makes and actions he takes, and the extent to which some may be inappropriate; (d) to help him consider whether his tendencies to misconstrue, and as a results to act misguidedly, can be understood by reference to the experiences he had with the attachment figured during his childhood..."

Measuring Attachment

The Strange Situation The Adult Attachment Interview



Patterns of Attachment in Children

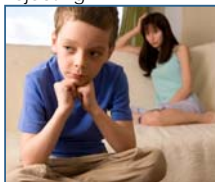
Attachment Style

- ▷ Secure
- ▷ Insecure – avoidant



Parental Interactive Pattern

- ▷ Emotionally available, perceptive, responsive
- ▷ Emotionally unavailable, imperceptive, unresponsive and rejecting



Source: Benoit, D. (2004). Infant-parent attachment: Definition, types, antecedents, measurement and outcome. *Paediatrics & Child Health*, 9(8), 541-545.

Patterns of Attachment in Children

Attachment Style

- ▷ Insecure – anxious/ambivalent
- ▷ Insecure – disorganized



Parental Interactive Pattern

- ▷ Inconsistently available, perceptive and responsive and intrusive
- ▷ Frightening, frightened, disorienting, alarming

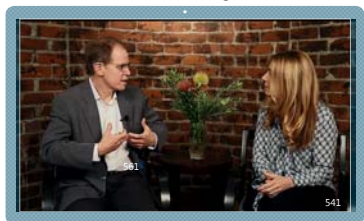


Source: Benoit, D. (2004). Infant-parent attachment: Definition, types, antecedents, measurement and outcome. *Paediatrics & Child Health*, 9(8), 541-545.



Video

Secure, Insecure, and Disorganized Attachment



Attachment Figures

Low Risk Non-Clinical Populations

- Secure 55-65%
- Ambivalent 5-15%
- Avoidant 20-30%
- Disorganized 20-40%
(Given a Best Fit Alternative)

High Risk, Parentally maltreated
Disorganized 80%

Source: J. Bakermans-Kranenburg, Marian & van IJzendoorn, Marinus, (2009). The first 10,000 Adult Attachment Interviews: Distributions of adult attachment representations in clinical and non-clinical groups. Attachment & human development, 11, 223-43. 10.1080/146375009034762

Secure Attachment in Childhood



Secure Attachment Promotes

- ▷ Flexible self-regulation
- ▷ Prosocial behavior
- ▷ Empathy
- ▷ Positive sense of emotional well-being and self-esteem
- ▷ Coherent life-story



What causes insecure attachment?

Unresolved trauma/loss in the life of the parents statistically predict attachment style far more than:

- ▷ Maternal Sensitivity
- ▷ Child Temperament
- ▷ Social Status
- ▷ Culture



Source: Siegel, D. J. (2015). *The developing mind: how relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Implicit Versus Explicit Memory

Implicit
Memory



Explicit
Memory

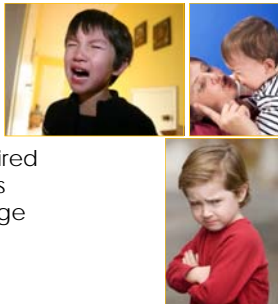


Source: Siegel, D. J. (2015). *The developing mind: how relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

How does disorganized attachment pass from generation to generation?

Implicit memory of terrifying experiences may create:

- ▷ Impulsive behaviors
- ▷ Distorted perceptions
- ▷ Rigid thoughts and impaired decision-making patterns
- ▷ Difficulty tolerating a range of emotions

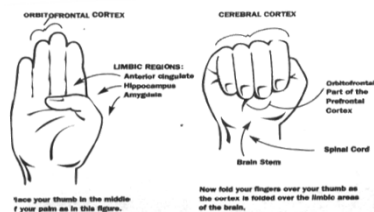


Source: Siegel, D. J. (2015). *The developing mind: how relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

The Brain in the Palm of Your Hand



Daniel Siegel, M.D. – Interpersonal Neurobiology



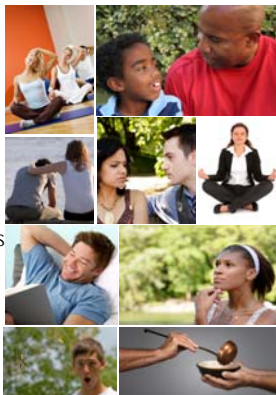
Place your thumb in the middle of your palm as in this figure.

Now fold your fingers over your thumb as the cortex is folded over the limbic areas of the brain.

Source: Siegel, D. J. (2015). *The developing mind: how relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

9 Important Functions of the Pre-Frontal Cortex

1. Body Regulation
2. Attunement
3. Emotional Balance
4. Response Flexibility
5. Empathy
6. Self-Knowing Awareness (Insight)
7. Fear Modulation
8. Intuition
9. Morality



Source: Siegel, D. J. (2015). *The developing mind: how relationships and the brain interact to shape who we are* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Guilford Press.

Avoidant Attachment in Childhood




Video

Avoidant Attachment




Ambivalent/Anxious Attachment in Childhood



 Video

Ambivalent/ Anxious Attachment



Disorganized Attachment in Childhood

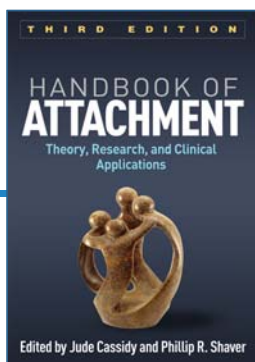


 Video

Disorganized Attachment



A 1000-page
summary of basic
and applied
attachment theory
and research



Our Approach



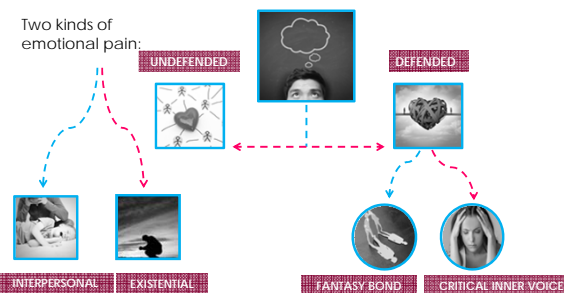


Separation Theory

Robert W. Firestone, Ph.D.

Integrates psychoanalytic and existential systems of thought

Two kinds of
emotional pain:



Division of the Mind

Parental Ambivalence

Parents both love and hate themselves and extend both reactions to their productions, i.e., their children.

Parental Nurturance Parental Rejection, Neglect Hostility



Self-System: Parental Nurturance



Unique make-up of the individual (genetic predisposition and temperament); harmonious identification and incorporation of parent's positive attitudes and traits and parents positive behaviors: attunement, affection, control, nurturance; and the effect of other nurturing experience and education on the maturing self-system resulting in a sense of self and a greater degree of differentiation from parents and early caretakers.

Personal Attitudes/ Goals/Conscience

Realistic, Positive Attitudes Towards Self

Realistic evaluation of talents, abilities, etc...with generally positive/compassionate attitude towards self and others.

Goals

Needs, wants, search for meaning in life

Moral Principles

Behavior

Ethical behavior towards self and others

Goal-directed Behavior

Acting with Integrity



Anti-Self System

Unique vulnerability: genetic predisposition and temperament

Destructive parental behavior: misattunement, lack of affection, rejection, neglect, hostility, over permissiveness

Other Factors: accidents, illnesses, traumatic separation, death anxiety



The Fantasy Bond (core defense) is a self-parenting process made up of two elements: the helpless, needy child, and the self-punishing, self-nurturing parent. Either aspect may be extended to relationships. The degree of defense is proportional to the amount of damage sustained while growing up.

Interpersonal Reconstruction Therapy



Lorna Smith Benjamin investigated the mechanisms responsible for the repetition of defensive behavior patterns from childhood in a new adult relationship.

Problem patterns are linked to learning with important early loved ones via one or more of three copy processes: (1) Be like him or her; (2) Act as if he or she is still there and in control; and (3) Treat yourself as he or she treated you. (vii)

Source: Benjamin, L. S. (2007). *Interpersonal reconstructive therapy: an integrative, personality-based treatment for complex cases*. New York: Guilford.

Anti-Self System Self-Punishing Voice Process

Voice Process

1. Critical thoughts toward self



2. Micro-suicidal injunctions



3. Suicidal injunctions - suicidal ideation



Behaviors

Verbal self-attacks - a generally negative attitude toward self and others predisposing alienation

Addictive patterns. Self-punitive thoughts after indulging





Actions that jeopardize, such as carelessness with one's body, physical attacks on the self, and actual suicide

Source

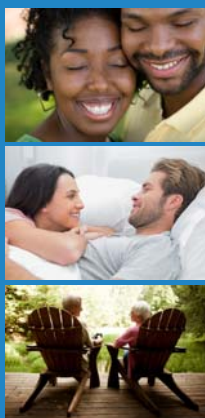
Critical parental attitudes, projections, and unreasonable expectations.

Identification with parents' defenses

Parents' covert and overt aggression (identification with the aggressor)

Anti-Self System Self-Soothing Voice Process		
Voice Process	Behaviors	Source
 1a) Aggrandizing thoughts toward self	Verbal build up toward self	Parental build up
 1b) Suspicious paranoid thoughts towards others	Alienation from others, destructive behavior towards others	Parental attitudes, child abuse, experienced victimization.
 2) Micro-suicidal Injunctions	Addictive patterns. Thoughts luring the person into indulging	Imitation of parents' defenses.
 3) Overtly Violent thoughts	Aggressive actions, actual violence	Parental neglect, parents' overt aggression (identification with the aggressor).

Adult Attachment

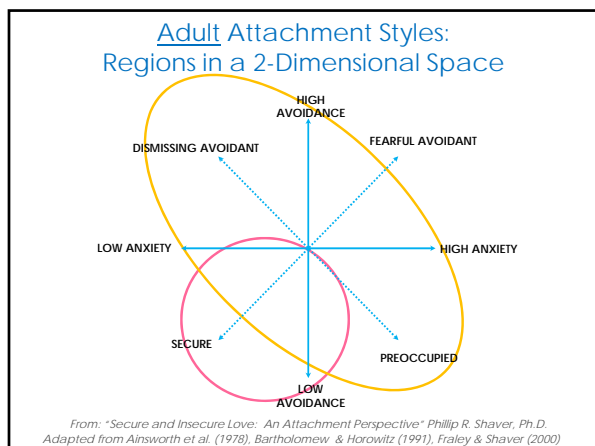


Maternal caregiving at 18 months predicts self-reported anxiety and avoidance at age 22

(Zayas, Mischel, Shoda, & Aber, SPPS, 2010)

- Attachment anxiety at age 22 correlated -.75 with maternal sensitivity measured 20 years earlier, and .70 with maternal controlling. Avoidance at age 22 correlated -.73 with maternal sensitivity and .52 with maternal controlling.
- These correlations were much higher than similar correlations with self-reported attachment to mother at age 22.





Self-Report Attachment Measure

(Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998)


Avoidance (18 items, $\alpha > .90$)

1. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.
2. I try to avoid getting too close to my partner.
3. I feel comfortable depending on relationship partners. (reverse-scored)
4. I turn to a relationship partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance. (reverse-scored)

Anxiety (18 items, $\alpha > .90$)

1. I don't often worry about being rejected or abandoned. (reverse-scored)
2. I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by a partner.
3. I get frustrated if a relationship partner is not available when needed.
4. I resent it when a partner spends time away from me.

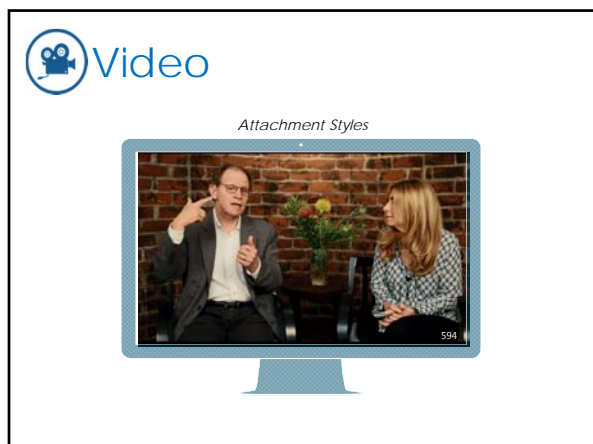
From: "Secure and Insecure Love: An Attachment Perspective" Phillip R. Shaver, Ph.D.

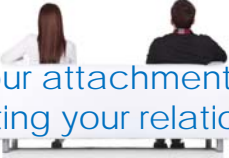


Is your attachment style affecting your relationship?

Secure Attachment: Securely-attached adults tend to be more satisfied in their relationships.

Anxious-Preoccupied Attachment: People with an anxious attachment tend to be desperate to form a fantasy bond. Instead of feeling real love or trust toward their partner, they often feel emotional hunger.






Is your attachment style affecting your relationship?

Dismissive-Avoidant Attachment: People with a dismissive-avoidant attachment have the tendency to emotionally distance themselves from their partner. They're often the other half of a Fantasy Bond.


Fearful-Avoidant Attachment: People with a fearful-avoidant attachment live in an ambivalent state, in which they are afraid of being both too close to or too distant from others.



Thanks!

Session 2: March 20, 2018
11am-12:30pm Pacific

Time



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