

Why Attachment?



Understanding Attachment Fosters Compassion

- By understanding *what* a person perceives as dangerous and safe, *how* they view the world, and *why* they behave the way they do.

Compassion for all

- “any society that loves its children, must love its parents” John Bowlby
- “it takes a village to raise a child...” Nigerian Proverb
- “One knee does not bring up a child” Tazanian Proverb
- “One hand does not nurse a child” Swahili Proverb

Attachment: the building blocks of relationships

Attachment is a strategy for survival

Attachment creates patterns of behaviours .

Attachment affects information processing

What is attachment?

- Please think of :
 - one word that comes to mind when you think of attachment



Attachment is about survival

Children's survival depends on their relationship with caregivers



Attachment is a Strategy for Survival

- For children it's a matter of life & death!
- For adults it becomes deep-rooted and unconscious. Affecting the way in which we view and interact with the world



For Children it is a Matter of
Survival

*“There is no such thing as a
baby; there is a baby and
someone”*

W.D Winnicott

Strategies for Survival



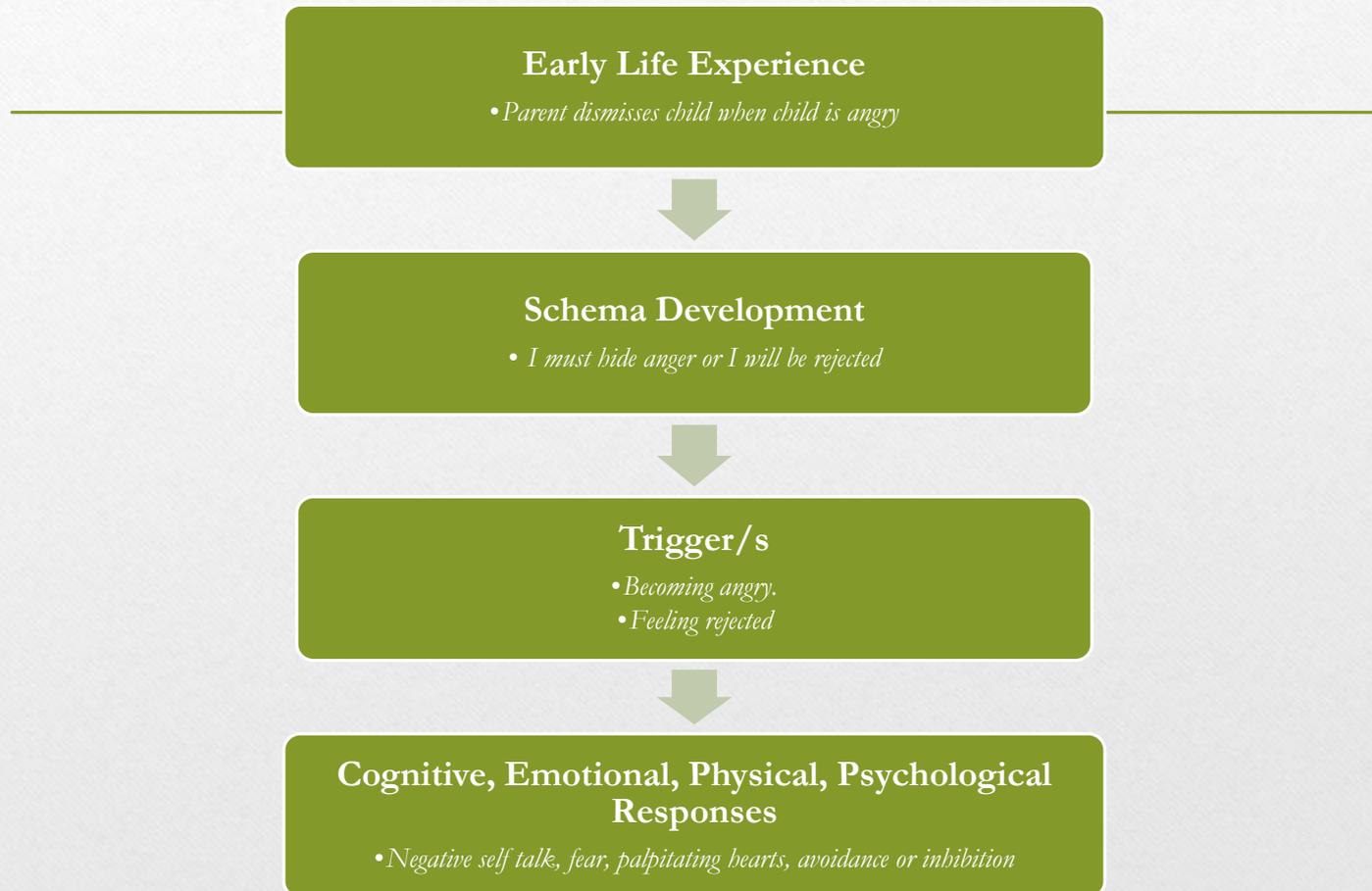
Children Need Us to Survive

- Infants and children need to be able to read adult cues, as much if not more than caregivers need to read the babies cues.
- To survive children must be able to recognize what is dangerous and what is safe
 - Need to predict danger: that is what may increase likelihood of harm and/or reduce likelihood of getting needs met
 - Need to increase safety: that is finding responses that will increase likelihood of getting the needs met
- Danger is more pertinent for survival and therefore a bigger predictor

Culture and place determine what is safe and what is dangerous

- Culture plays a central role in what parents perceive as safe and dangerous, how we teach this to our children, and what we do to protect our children
 - Metis and Italian (
- Place also plays a part in determining what we perceive as important to survival and what we must teach our children
 - Jasper vs Winnipeg
 - Bears vs Swimming
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O3NXXai40OY>

For Adults and Adolescents it Affects our Interactions and Responses



Trust vs Mistrust

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VTbbYLvhDSM>



Attachment is Patterns of Behavior



Attachment strategies



SECURE & BALANCED ATTACHMENT

- parent and child are in natural rhythm
- child can express need for comfort and protection freely and directly
- parent allows the child to be on his/her own when content, and responds when child is distressed



INSECURE ATTACHMENT (OVER-THINKERS)

- parent and child are out of rhythm
- children ignore their feelings and parents are less emotionally involved
- child may have learned to limit feelings & emotions
- parent will interact when child is content and withdraw when negative feelings are expressed



INSECURE ATTACHMENT (OVER-FEELERS)

- parent and child are out of rhythm
- children don't think about their actions and parents are unpredictable
- child may have learned to exaggerate feelings & emotions
- parent tend to respond most when the child is very distressed, child sees that the more intensely that they express their feelings the more likely they are to get attention

SECURE ATTACHMENT



Caregiver consistently responds to infant's distress sensitively, quickly, and effectively.

Insecure attachment



**Caregiver consistently responds to child's distress in rejecting ways OR
Caregiver responds to child's distress in unpredictable and inconsistent
ways**



Balanced Attachment

- Parents of type B
 - *meet all needs and negotiate the wants*
- Children using a B strategy
 - Are able to express a wide range of emotions
 - Do not use miscues regularly
 - Are able to repair disruptions will trust in repair
 - Are able to approach problem solving, interpersonal relationships, and emotional issues with persistence, confidence, trust, and empathy.
 - They tends to have faith in the world around them and increased resiliency when issues arise



Turn the Volume Down Strategies

Children
may
exhibit
patterns
of:

- Inhibition
- Caregiving
- Compliance
- Performance
- Compulsive self
reliance
- Compulsive
Promiscuity

Normative

Concerning

Clinical

Turn the Volume Down



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Turn the volume down

- Individuals using a Type A strategy turn the volume down on negative affect-
 - They inhibit negative affects
 - They tend to have had caregiver who *consistently* respond to negative affect in ignoring, rejecting, punishing ways
 - They have learned that they will get less from the caregivers (increase danger or reduce safety) when they show negative affect
 - They tend to rely too heavily on cognition, as situations have been more predictable than feelings

Parents of Type A

- Fail to respond to infant distress
- Respond with anger or irritation
- Respond with false-positive cheerfulness

Crittenden (2008). *Raising Parents: Attachment, parenting, and child safety*

Turn the Volume Down Strategies

- The most important thing is to do the right thing from the perspective of others.
- What is DANGEROUS:
 - Doing what you want
 - Expressing negative feelings
 - Having your own thoughts
- What is SAFE:
 - Doing what powerful people want you to do
 - Attending to powerful people
 - NOT doing the wrong thing



Normative A Strategies

- Dismisses feelings mildly
- Little real danger
- Has learned to be facile and/or to ‘keep a stiff upper lip’
- are predictable, responsible people who are just cool, contained, and businesslike.

Strategies Of Concern; moving from normative to clinical

- There is danger at home; neglect, abuse, substance use, or parental withdrawal
- Focuses pleasing others and inhibiting own feelings (false positive affect)
 - complying with a parent who behaves angrily or demanding
 - Tries to care give a parent who appears depressed, in need of care, or withdrawn
 - Preforms to try to 'win' love

False Positive Affect

- Incomplete package
- Burst of affect
- Strained sounds
- Jerky, sudden movements
- Delays in positive affect
- Stiffness
- Limb stillness

Crittenden (2000). *Preschool Aged Assessment of Attachment: Coding Manual*.

Higher A Strategies

- Moves through trying to please into promiscuity, or compliance to self-reliance
- Prone to chronic ‘psychological’ depression
- Gets more organized and the deception better – at inhibition and show that everything’s all right
- Decisions based on contingency and avoidance of negative affect
- Do – er vs a feeler
- Most at risk for suicide, and also the most overlooked in classrooms, in child welfare, in society...because they are well-behaved, compliant, overbright, and make us feel good

Turn the Volume Up



Turn the Volume up

- Individuals using a turn the volume up strategy have learned to turn the volume up on their negative affect, by exaggerating it to demand caregivers attention
 - They tend to have had care givers who were intermittently, and inconstantly responsive to negative affect- who respond with comfort some of the time the child was in distress. When the caregiver is *preoccupied* with issues outside of the child's knowledge they are not responsive.
 - Caregivers tend to respond when child is most escalated
 - By being available some of the time, but not all of the time, the child becomes confused and learns to escalate affect to get attachment figure to respond
 - Children rely too much on affect and dismiss cognition, as situations have not help predict safety and danger

Parents of Type C

- Respond unpredictably
- Comfort some of the time
- Use false cognition/ deception
- Unspoken problems outside of child's knowledge

Turn the Volume Up

- Let their feelings guide them, even if they put them in conflict with everyone else.
- What is DANGEROUS:
 - NOT putting relationships first
 - NOT letting important people attend to you
 - Believing that others will do as they say
 - Compromising
 - Delaying gratification
 - Feeling comfortable (exploring and reflecting)

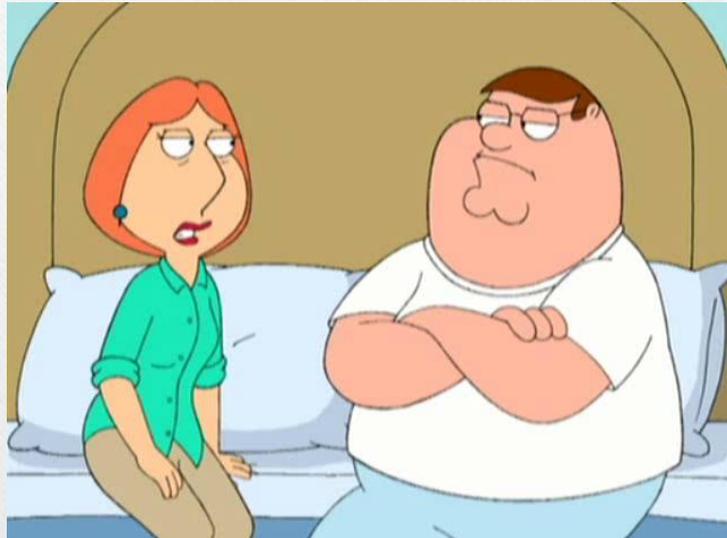
Over Feelers

What is SAFE:

- Using erratic and confusing displays of emotion
- Insisting on being right: no negotiating, compromise or delays
- Using deceptive attacks



Family Guy



Turn the Volume Up Strategies

Children
may
exhibit
patterns
of:

- Threat
- disarming
- Aggression
- Feigned Helplessness
- Punitive
- Seductive

Normative

Concerning

Clinical

“reaches for me with one and pushes me away with the other”

- Children (and adults) who use a ‘C’ strategy are worried about losing the inconsistent caregiver
- feel an unconscious drive (survival) to keep the parent focused on them
- To keep the struggle going they often vacillate between invulnerable (angry) and vulnerable (needy) presentation...using one presentation and then switching if that irritates the parent too much.
- They switch not to ‘manipulate’, but out of fear of losing the parent
- C’s are often ‘recognized’ as having troublesome or disruptive behaviour, but are rarely treated compassionately as the behaviour is frustrating and people feel ‘manipulated’

"Weeds are flowers, too, once you get to know them."



Normative C Strategies

- Present as emotional and reactive, they can be dramatic, sensitive, and feel strongly
- The angry or vulnerable presentations are not persistent or unresolvable. Very little threat
- Often fun loving and relational people

Of Concern Strategies; moving from normative to clinical

- These strategies emphasize their anger in order to demand caregivers' compliance or feign helplessness give signals of incompetence and submission.
 - The angry presentation elicits compliance and guilt in others, whereas vulnerability elicits rescue.
- Such behaviour affects relationships, learning, and self-esteem

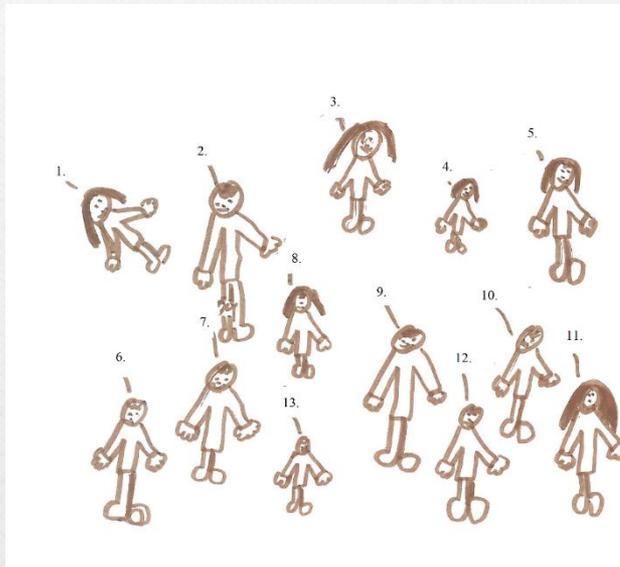
Higher C

- Disarming becomes feigned helpless, and then moves to seductive
- Threatening becomes Aggressive then to punitive
- Gets more organised and deceptive - better at setting up rescue and revenge.
- Can hold feelings in (less externally reactive), but will hold grudge- moving towards revenge
- Decisions based on feelings vs facts- often has trouble seeing their role in situations (lacks insight into own behaviour)

Wants vs Need

- Parents using an A strategy tend to treat all needs as wants (child ‘wants’ comfort vs ‘needs’ comfort)
- Parents using a C strategy tend to treat all wants as needs (“I need you to behave” or child “needs” the candy)
- Parents using a balanced strategy ***respond to all need and negotiate the wants*** (paper airplane boy)

Attachment affects information processing



Two Sources of Information

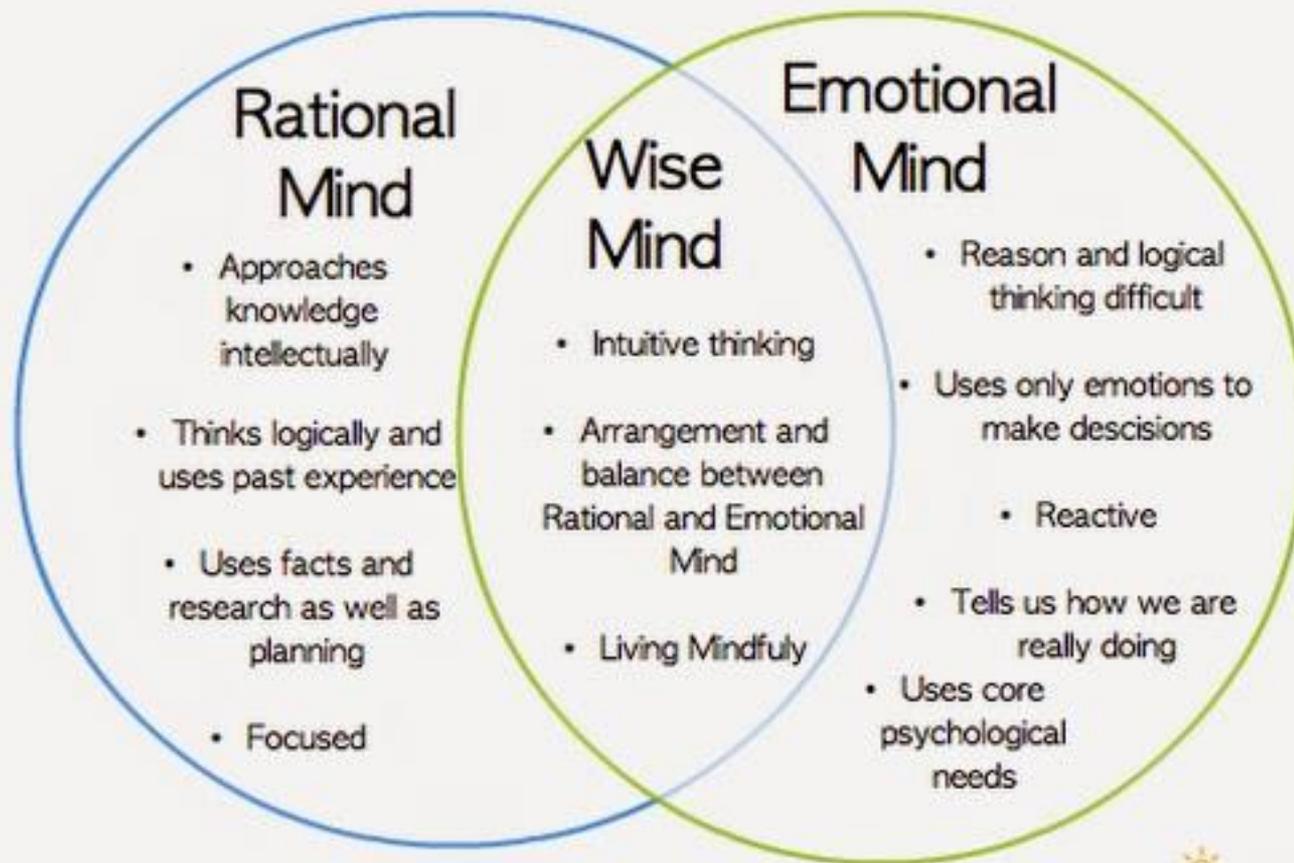
- What better predicts a child will get their needs met?
 - If the parent responds when the child is content, but withdraws or rejects when the child feels distress
 - The child will learn that the way they *feel* is not helpful in predicting how to get their needs met, so they focus on cognitions, situations, and sequence of events (when/then-when I behave this way, then I get...)
 - If the parent responds inconsistently depending on their mood or when the child escalates their behaviour, the child may learn the louder and stronger they feel
 - The child may learn that *thoughts or situations* are not helpful in predicting how to get needs met, so they will focus on their feelings and use the strength of their feelings as a guide.

“The Neurons that fire together,
wire together”



Dan Segal





Attachment Strategies and Information Processing

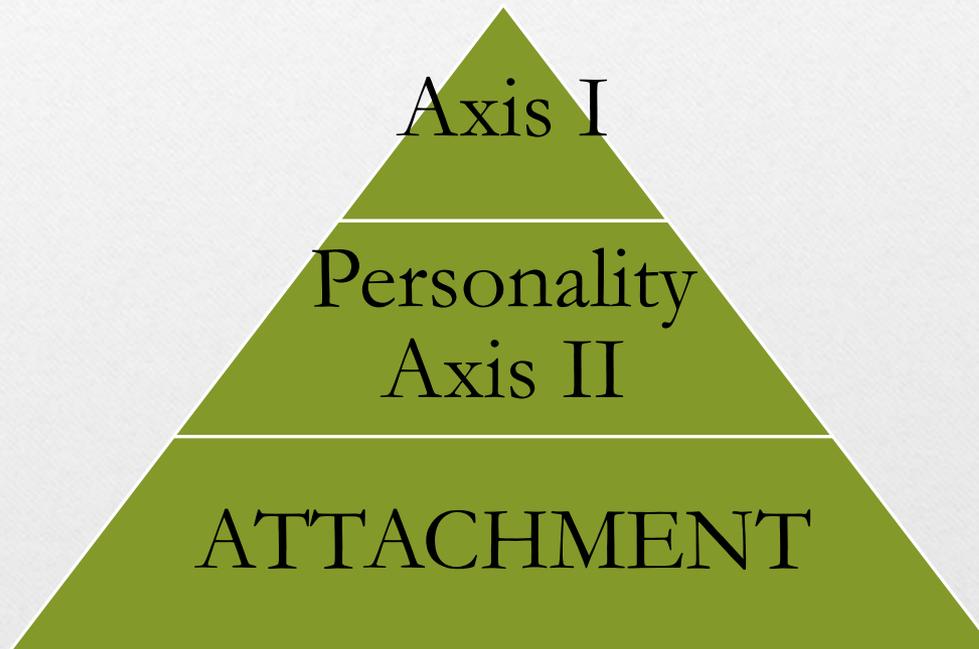
- Turn the Volume up
 - Overly rely on cognitive information
 - Minimize or ignore sensory or affective information
 - Doer vs feeler
- Turn the Volume Up
 - Overly rely on affective/ sensory information
 - Minimize cognitive information
 - I feel it therefore it is

Attachment: The building blocks of relationship

- Our early experiences affect our adult relationships



ATTACHMENT: The Building Blocks of Relationships



Questions

