



Attachment and EDT

Robert J Neborsky, Chair

Avril Overton

Sharon Lewis

Risha Henry

Anne Nesbit

Kara Veigas

IEDTA Conference Boston

September 26, 2019



Why Attachment Based/ISTDP? ©

Robert J Neborsky, MD

Clinical Professor of Psychiatry

UCSD School of Medicine

UCLA (Honorary)

IEDTA Conference Boston

September 26, 2019

© Please do not duplicate or copy these slides
without the written permission of Dr. Neborsky

ISTDP

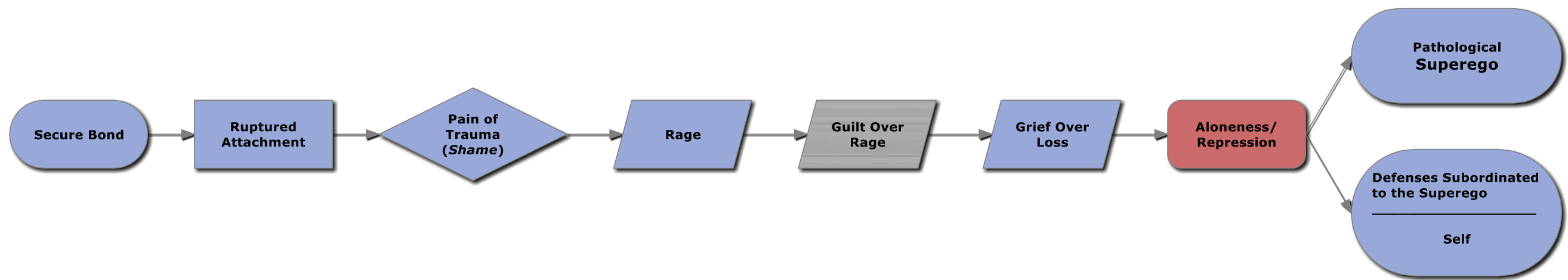
Qualitative Basis

- 1960-2000's: Case Series with Follow-up. Davanloo's Large Case Series and qualitative videotaped research
- "I believe that dynamic psychotherapy can be not merely effective but uniquely effective, that therapeutic effects are produced by specific factors rather than nonspecific factors, and that the essential factor is the patient's actual experience of their true feelings about the present and the past".(Unlocking the Unconscious, 1990)



Davanloo's Hypothesis

PATHOGENESIS OF PSYCHONEUROSIS



Attachment Bonds and Mental Health

- Provides an understanding of personality development, emotional regulation, and psychopathology
- “The psychology and psychopathology of emotion is...the psychology and psychopathology of affectional bonds. (Bowlby, 1979, p.130)

What is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment.

John Bowlby (1951), Report to WHO

Bowlby Video 1

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS

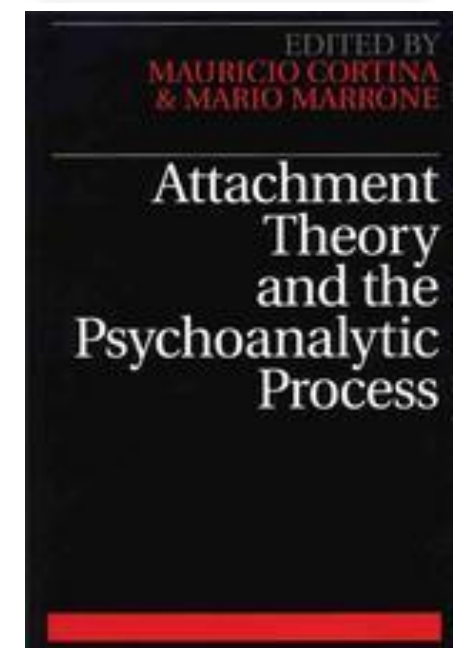
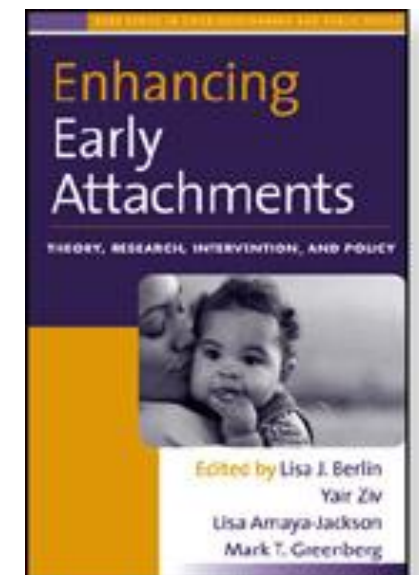
- ☐ 30 years of attachment research
- ☐ Validity and reliability of assessment tools
- ☐ Theoretical refinements and extensions
- ☐ Clinical applications (AB/ISTDP)
- ☐ Paradigmatic shift towards theory of personality organization and relationship development

Research Trends

- Ainsworth Strange Situation Paradigm
- Main Adult Attachment Interview
- Cross-sectional → longitudinal
- Increasing variety of assessment tools
 - Interview, self-report, projective
 - Video Assessment Project CSPP (C. Bundy)

Many Therapies Use Attachment Theory for Support of Their Approach

- Increasing professional interest
 - Over 7 special journal issues dedicated to attachment and clinical issues
 - Proliferation of books
 - Rising number of conferences

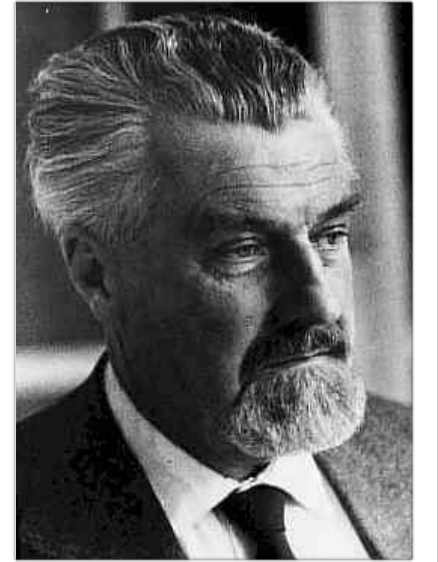


Problems With Attachment Theory Based Therapies

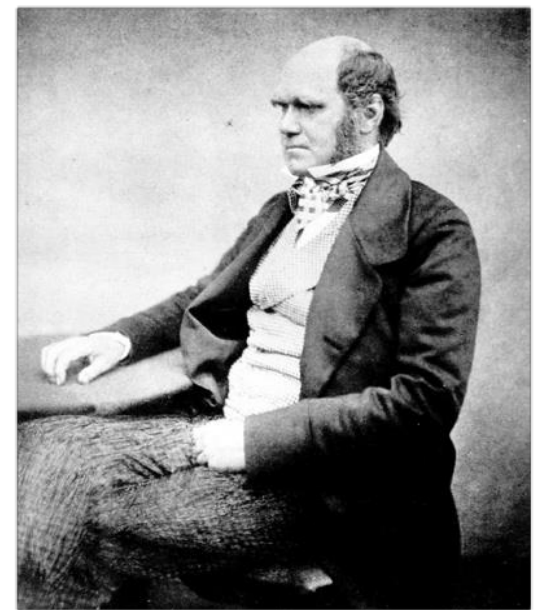
- ☐ Provides an empirical base for measuring change from therapeutic relationships but cannot elucidate change causes
- ☐ Enables study of client-therapist fit, supervisory relationship, but can encourage a naïve theory of therapeutic change
- ☐ Ignores the Issue of Technique and Highlights the Non Specific Factors of All Verbal Psychotherapies

Origins of Attachment Theory

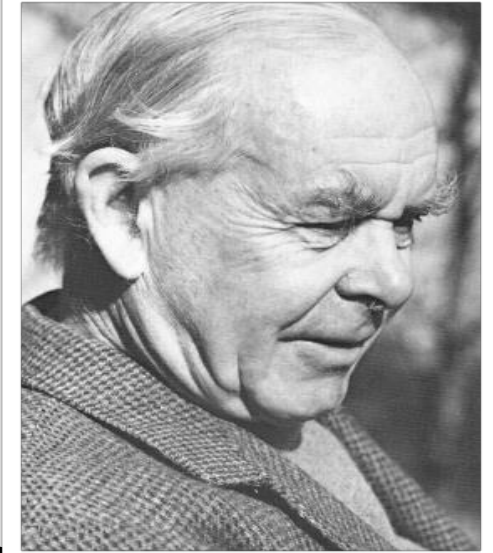
INFLUENCES ON BOWLBY



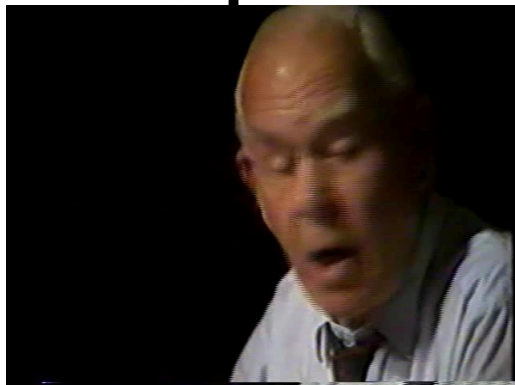
- ☐ Konrad Lorenz, the ethologist
- ☐ Charles Darwin: evolutionary biology
- ☐ Animal adaptation to environmental conditions and niches
- ☐ Cognitive psychology



JOHN BOWLBY



- Psychoanalyst
- Studied plight of homeless children
- Influenced by Robertson's work with children separated from mother
- Theory based on observations of mother-child interaction
- Prospective research



ATTACHMENT SYSTEM

- ☐ Attachment
 - An enduring emotional tie that develops over time with a specific caregiver(s)
- ☐ An innate motivational system that is distinct from feeding and sex
- ☐ Genetic program evolved to maintain survival through access to parental protection, care and nurture in place by 7 months
- ☐ Shaped by parental behavior

UNIVERSALS

OUR INHERITANCE

- ☐ Human infants have inherited the same fear-related and attachment-related brain structures as were used in the environment of evolutionary adaptedness (EEA)
- ☐ Protection from predation has served as the biological or adaptive function leading to the incorporation of attachment behavior into species-wide repertoire

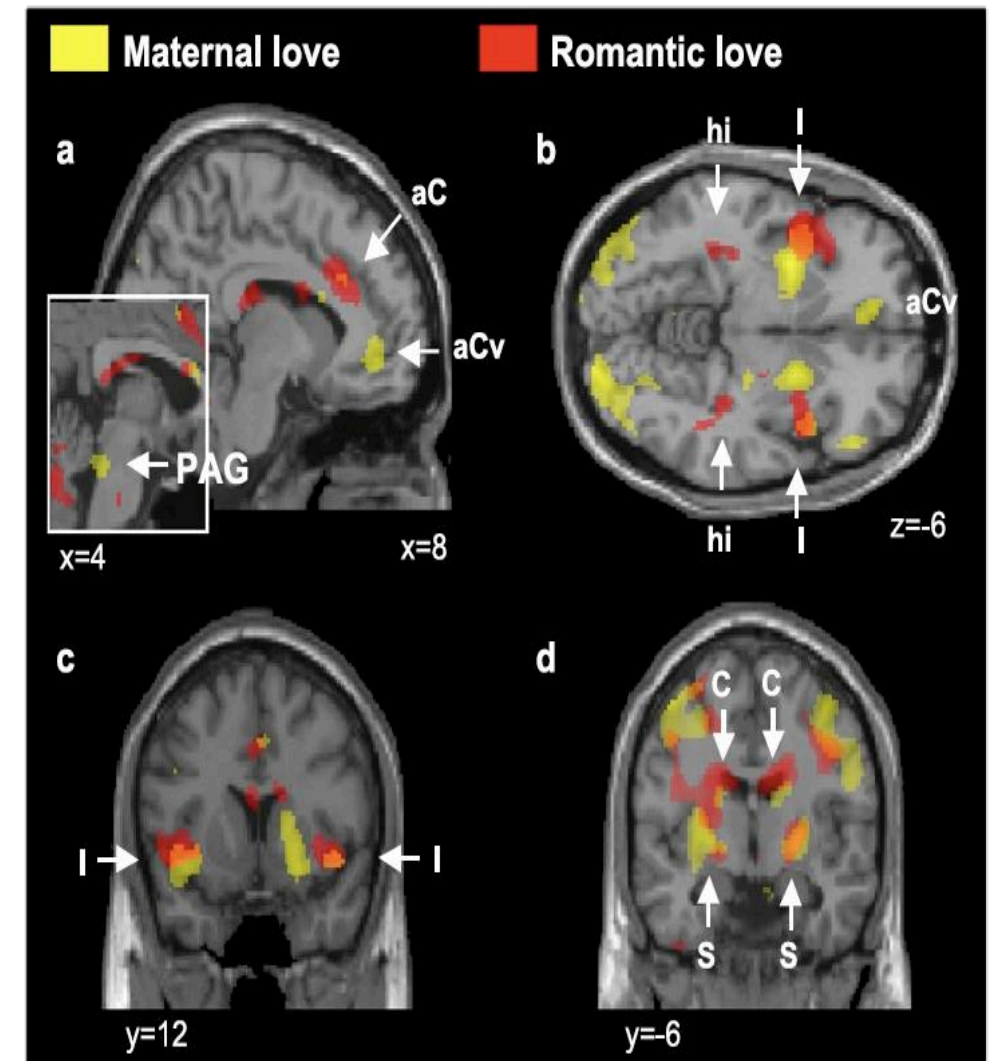
EVOLUTIONARY DEVELOPMENT

- ☐ Different solutions to fear across mammalian species
- ☐ Baby primate will die in an hour
- ☐ Rabbits and foxes run to den
- ☐ Nomadic ground living primates flee to attachment figure
- ☐ Use attachment figure as secure base for exploration and play

NEUROBIOLOGY IN HUMANS

Bartels & Zeki (2004)

- MRI studies show that similar brain regions are activated when mothers look at pictures of their babies and partners look at pictures of their partners
- The pattern is similar to study of new mothers listening to infant cries
- Also similar to activation during cocaine-induced euphoria



MARY AINSWORTH



- ☐ Home observations in Uganda then Baltimore
- ☐ Strange Situation: Series of episodes in which infant and parent are separated (danger) and reunited twice
- ☐ Three basic “organizations” of infant-mother attachment
- ☐ Related to mother’s responses

CROSS-CULTURAL STUDIES

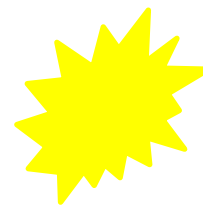
□ Ainsworth (1967) in Uganda



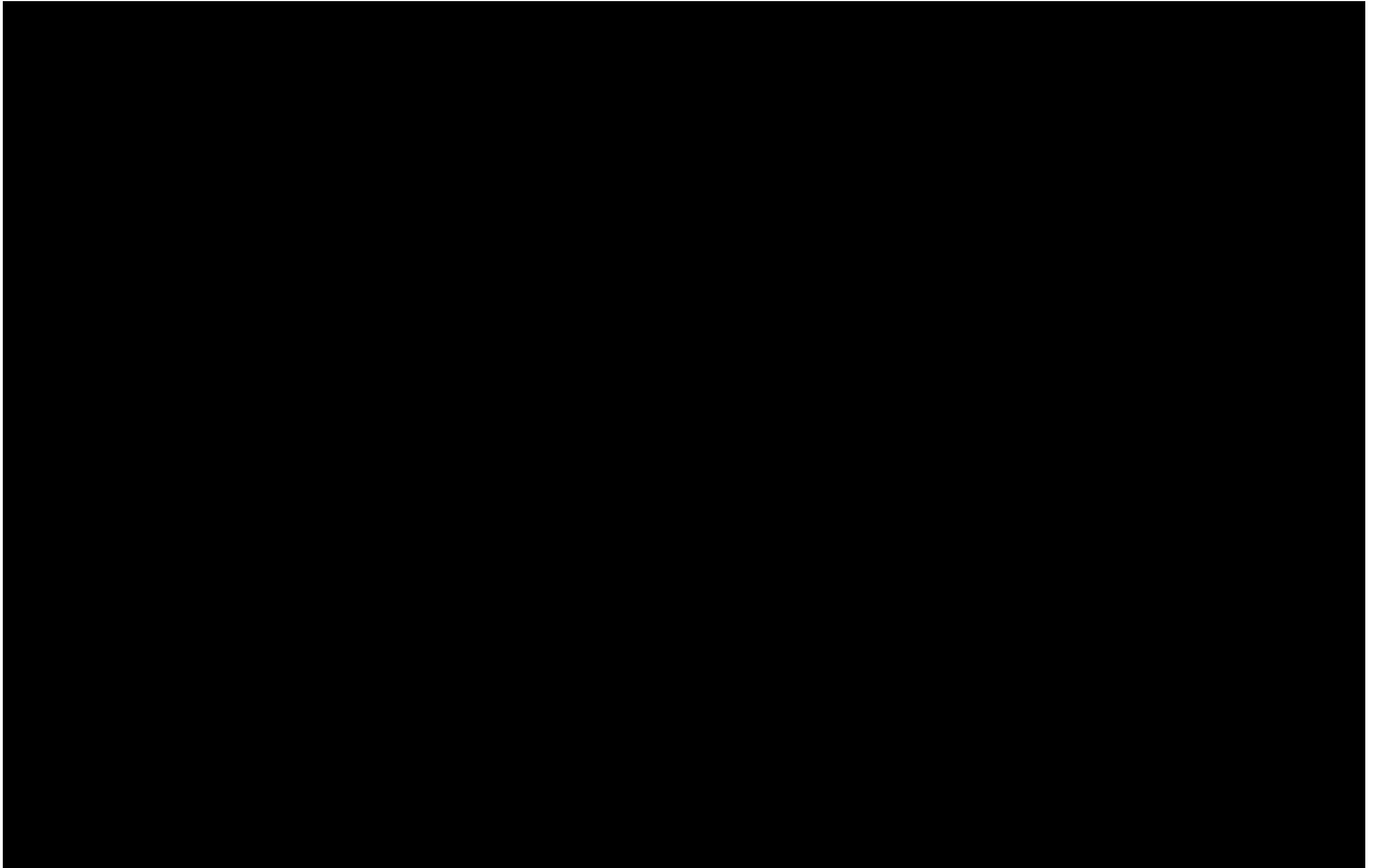
Infant Assessment

Mary Ainsworth Strange Situation

- Based on behavior of organism in natural environment
- Assesses the organization of attachment behaviors and child's ability to recover from separations, regulate affect and explore the world
- Assesses flexibility of attention



VIDEO: STRANGE SITUATION



Role of Father

(Grossman, Grossman & Kindler, 2005)

- ☐ Facilitation and support during first 3 years
- ☐ Early paternal sensitive and challenging support of exploratory play
- ☐ Rejection and insensitivity during play related to later preoccupied attachment

SECURE ATTACHMENT

- ☐ Protest→Able to settle with stranger→Happy Reunion→Play
- ☐ Behavior is consistent and comprehensible as adaptive strategy
- ☐ Mother's behavior is predictable sensitive to infant's signals and communications-flexible attention
- ☐ Are confident that attachment figures will be sufficiently reliable and effective at times of threat.

INSECURE: ANXIOUS-AVOIDANT

- ☐ Avoidant-dismissing and detached
- ☐ Rejection of attachment behavior by mother, bullies, rejected by others
- ☐ Infant stays involved with toys, moves away from mother
- ☐ Avoidance maintains organization and proximity

INSECURE: ANXIOUS-AMBIVALENT

- ☐ Resistance/ambivalence
 - ☐ overly anxious preoccupation with mother maintains organization
- ☐ Maternal insensitivity
 - ☐ unpredictable responsiveness-inept in holding-discourage autonomy
- ☐ Distress
 - ☐ stays upset upon M's return-can't settle into play

Secure/Insecure Disorganized

- Collapse under stress of separation, disorganized behaviors, apprehension, disorientation, confusion
- Found in 13% of normal sample
- Typically found in neurologically impaired and maltreated samples (48%-80%)
- At 6 behavior is controlling-punitive or overly solicitous/dysfluent reunions

HOW ATTACHMENT MODELS DEVELOP

- ☐ Complex repeated interactions involving touch, smell, emotional expressions, nonverbal gestures and speech
- ☐ Organized around regulation of arousal, emotional intensity, behavioral activity
- ☐ Regulation of somatic states-food, clothing, sleep, health

Internal Working Models

- ☐ Composed of memories, thoughts (e.g., expectations), feelings, attachment-related goals/needs, action-tendencies
- ☐ Carried forward into all subsequent relationships-our modus operandi

Adapted from Collins, Guichard, Ford, & Feeney (2004)

Internal Working Models

- ☐ We do unto ourselves and others that which was done to or with us
- ☐ Repeated interactions that are encoded in memory as prototype of relationship
- ☐ We apply to ourselves and enact w/ others quality and kind of relationships we experienced

Internal Working Models

- ☐ Optimal development/secure attachment results in model that allows for novel responses to new interpersonal situations
- ☐ Enables emotional and behavioral regulation
- ☐ Stable identity and ability to move out into world flexibly

EQUIVALENT TERMS

- ☐ State of mind
- ☐ Internal working models
- ☐ Schemas
- ☐ Mental representations
- ☐ Object-relations
- ☐ Self-objects

ADULT ATTACHMENT INTERVIEW

Main, Goldwyn, Hesse, 2003

- Our state of mind regarding attachment is manifested through the coherence of language as we describe our relationship history



Adult Attachment Interview

- ☐ Behavioral to representational level
- ☐ Requires affect regulation
- ☐ 1 hour structured interview/transcribed/coded

Concordance = .70, $\kappa = .49$ (van IJzendoorn, 1995)

MOTHER'S AAI

INFANT'S PATTERN

Secure



Secure

Preoccupied



Anxious-Ambivalent

Dismissing



Anxious-Avoidant

AAI INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

- ☐ Five adjectives and evidence for
- ☐ Which parent closest to?
- ☐ When you were upset, emotionally, physically what did you do?
- ☐ Ever feel rejected or threatened?

AAI Questions

- ☐ Separations from family
- ☐ Loss
- ☐ How have your early experiences affected your adult personality
- ☐ What do you wish for your child?

ATTACHMENT-INFORMED ASSESSMENT

Internal Working Models

- ☐ How do we react when distressed?
- ☐ How do we seek help?
- ☐ What is the quality of regulation when our model is evoked?

Secure State of Mind

- Central task is to produce and reflect upon memories related to attachment while simultaneously maintaining a coherent, consistent, and collaborative conversation
- Form a logical whole suitable and adapted to context
 - Truthful with evidence, succinct, relevant, clear, orderly

NARRATIVE STYLE: SECURE-AUTONOMOUS

- ☐ Tells story well , in a fresh voice
- ☐ Steady, developing flow of ideas
- ☐ Clear and factual
- ☐ Relevant and succinct
- ☐ Personal and direct communication
- ☐ Realistic about attachment needs
- ☐ Balanced expectations of others
- ☐ Objective and engaged
- ☐ Uses judgment

METACOGNITIVE MONITORING

REFLECTIVE FUNCTIONING

- ☐ Ability to reflect, and report on processes of thinking and recall as interview progresses
- ☐ Picking up on logical inconsistencies, personal biases, fallibility of memory

DISMISSING NARRATIVE

- ☐ Idealization
- ☐ Insistence on lack of memory
- ☐ Derogating dismissal of attachment
- ☐ Factual contradiction and “don’t know” answers

Main, Goldwyn, & Hesse (2003); Hardy et al. (2005)

DISMISSING AS ADULTS

- ☐ Minimize/deny subjective distress
- ☐ Keep happy face
- ☐ Don't reach out to significant others but may reach out to strangers
- ☐ Turn to activity, alcohol
- ☐ Affect remains suppressed

PREOCCUPIED NARRATIVE

- ☐ Rambling anger
- ☐ Passivity /vagueness in discourse
- ☐ Feel victimized
- ☐ Not logical or coherent in time and space
- ☐ Long and often incomplete
- ☐ Elicit agreement “you know”
- ☐ Demanding
- ☐ Blaming and angry of others
- ☐ Involves others with excessive emotion
- ☐ Exaggerated wariness

PREOCCUPIED AS ADULTS

- ☐ Affect remains dysregulated
- ☐ Relationships disrupted/chaotic
- ☐ Use actions to regulate self

DISORGANIZED

Unresolved Trauma or Loss

- When discussing abuse- language becomes disorganized, vague, loss of memory
- When discussing loss -talk as though person still alive, odd statements about after life,
- “Dead- Undead”
- Disoriented to time

Disorganized Attachment

- Dissociative
- Alternate between help seeking and mistrust-push and pull caregivers
- Collapse under stress
- Disjointed/vague narrative

AAI RESEARCH FINDINGS

- ☐ Representational processes are the likely mediator of differences in parental caregiving behavior
- ☐ Predicts caregiving of infants and children
 - ☐ (10 samples)
- ☐ Predicts infants SS response to parent (21 samples)

Longitudinal Studies

- Adaptation is always the joint product of developmental history and current circumstances...early experience frames but also is transformed by later experiences. (Sroufe et al,

1999 p.1)

Longitudinal Studies of Normals

- Study of three generations: 75% concordance (*Benoit & Parker, 1994*)
- Berkeley sample: stable in low risk samples (*Main, Hesse, & Kaplan, 2005*)
- Minnesota sample: Can change with positive or negative life events (*Weinfield, Sroufe, & Egeland, 2000*)
- German sample: Mixed findings (*Grossman, Grossman, & Kindler, 2005*)

Childhood Maltreatment

- Childhood maltreatment appears to be the single strongest predictor of attachment insecurity and psychological maladjustment in later life (Riggs et al, 2007)(ten Have-de Labije 2009 in press)

Attachment and Trauma

- Secure attachment serves as protective factor
- Insecure attachment serves as risk factor
- Study of 1991 Gulf War (Mikulincer, Florian & Weller, 1993)
 - Anxious---intrusion and avoidance
 - Avoidant---avoidant

Attachment and Trauma

- 2003 US-Iraq War -chronically insecure suffered more severe PTSD (Mikulincer et al, 2006)
- Women w/ child abuse histories: Path analysis confirmed insecure attachment associated with impairment through poor emotion regulation and diminished expectations of support (Cloitre et al, 2008)

Attachment Theory *is* a Theory Without A Therapy

- Dr Davanloo never interacted with Bowlby but he also concluded that psychoneurosis was caused by rupture of the secure attachment bond between parent and child
- He theorized that the child felt loss (sad) and a retaliatory rage and guilt over the rage that then developed a structure called the punitive superego.
- He believed this structure could develop as early as six – nine months of age– not post Oedipal like Freud theorized.
- For complex reasons Davanloo's theory is rejected by many attachment theorists who I believe DENY the darker side of the human psyche.

Attachment Theory *was* a Theory Without A Therapy

- It is my most heartfelt hypothesis that ISTDP and AB-ISTDP are the singularly most rapid, efficient and effective therapy at changing the working model of attachment
- In this conference the faculty will show you both the theoretical evidence for this hypothesis and videos of striking clinical examples..