

Lecture 1: Social and Emotional Development (Attachment).

Lecture Overview

- * **The nature of attachment**
- * **Development of attachment**
- * **Theories of attachment**
- * **Individual differences in attachment**
- * **Disrupted attachments**
- * **Long-term correlates of attachment security**

What is Attachment?

- * In developmental psychology, the term *attachment* refers to the emotional ties between children and their closest associates.
- * According to Ainsworth and Bell (1970), an attachment is “*an affectional tie that one person or animal forms between himself and another specific one - a tie that binds them together in space and endures over time*” (p.50).
- * It is a bi-directional relationship

What is an Attachment Behaviour?

An attachment behaviour is

“any form of behaviour that results in a person attaining or maintaining proximity to some other clearly identified individual who is conceived as better able to cope with the world. It is most obvious whenever the person is frightened, fatigued, or sick, and is assuaged by comfort and caregiving” (Bowlby, 1985 p.27).

Very early bonding: the work of Klaus and Kennell (1976)

- * 28 economically disadvantaged mothers who had just delivered full-term healthy infants were studied during their 3 day stay in hospital.
- * 14 were allocated to a “routine” condition; the other 14 were allocated to an “extended contact” condition

Klaus and Kennell's findings

- * Follow up was conducted at 1 month and at 1 year.
- * There appeared to be some differences favouring the “extended contact” group (e.g. they displayed more soothing and nurturing behaviour).

Early contact: Is it necessary for optimal development?

- * Existence of a “sensitive period” is now thought to be very questionable (Goldberg, 1983; Myers, 1984; Rutter, 1981).

Development of the caregiver's attachment to the infant

Why does it occur?

- Bowlby (1958,1969) argued that infants are endowed with basic reflexes (e.g. smiling, babbling, interactional synchrony) which enable them to communicate their needs and which ensure the proximity of caregivers.
- He also argued that infants have physical characteristics that adults are predisposed to find attractive (the kewpie doll effect).



Disruptions in the development of the caregiver's attachment to the infant

- * **Infant characteristics (e.g. irritability, lack of alertness, lack of attention to social stimuli);**
- * **Negative caregiver emotions**
- * **Unfavourable environmental circumstances**

Development of the infant's attachment of the caregiver

How soon does it occur?

1. The phase of indiscriminate sociability (0-8 weeks)
2. The phase of indiscriminate attachments (8 weeks – 6/7 months)
3. The phase of specific attachments (from approx. 7 months)
 - Stranger anxiety
 - Separation anxiety
4. The phase of multiple attachments (from approx. 18 months)

The phase of indiscriminate sociability (or asocial phase)

- * The infant responds in an equally favourable way to many kinds of social and non-social stimuli**

The phase of indiscriminate attachments

- * The infant prefers social to non-social stimuli and is likely to protest whenever any adult puts them down or leaves them alone. Tends to be rather indiscriminate.

The phase of specific attachments

- * The phase when the infant is attached to one close companion (usually the mother). Both stranger anxiety and separation anxiety appear during this phase.



Stranger Anxiety

- * Exhibited by many infants between 6 and 9 months of age and often continues throughout the first year.
- * Affected by the infant's temperament, the availability of familiar companions, the familiarity of the setting, the stranger's behaviour, the caregiver's reaction, and how accustomed the infant is to meeting strangers (Dickstein and Parke, 1988; Mangelsdorf et al. ,1995).

Separation Anxiety

- * Generally exhibited between 9 and 12 months
- * Involves displays of fear, clinging, crying etc.
- * Affected by the infant's knowledge about where the mother is, and the infant's familiarity with where the mother goes.

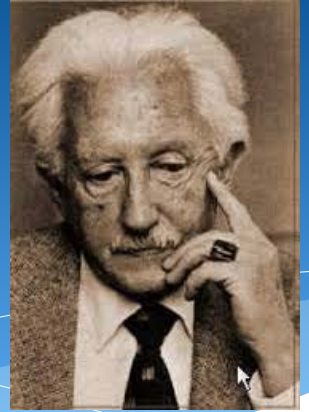
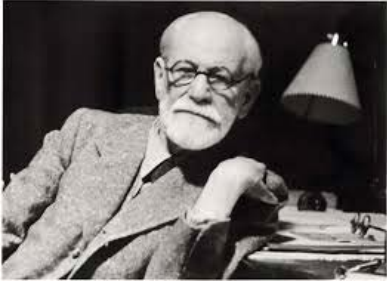
The phase of multiple attachments

- * The phase when infants form attachments to several other people (e.g. fathers, siblings, grandparents etc.).

Theories of Attachment

- * **Psychoanalytic theory**
- * **Learning theory**
- * **Cognitive/Developmental theory**
- * **Ethological theory**

Psychoanalytic Theory



- * **Attachments develop from oral activities. According to Freud, young infants are centred on oral experiences; the natural provider of these activities is the mother.**
- * **According to Erikson, the first year is concerned with establishing basic trust, and again the mother is attributed a key role in this achievement**

Learning Theory

- * Feeding is thought to be important for 2 reasons (Sears,1963): (1) it should elicit positive responses from a contented infant which in turn are likely to increase the mother's affection for the infant; (2) feeding is often an occasion when mothers can provide infants with many comforts.**
- * Over time, the mother becomes associated with pleasant or pleasurable sensations such that she soon becomes a valuable commodity.**

Just how important is feeding?



- * Harlow and Zimmerman's (1959) study compared the importance of feeding and tactile stimulation for the development of attachment in infant monkeys.
- * The findings implied that contact comfort is a more powerful contributor to attachment in monkeys than feeding.

Cognitive/Developmental Theory

- * The ability to form attachments depends, in part, on the infant's level of intellectual development.
- * Attachment depends on the development of object permanence (Lester et al. 1974).

Ethological Theory

Origins of the ethological viewpoint

- * Ethological theory of attachment prompted by research with animals (Lorenz, 1937).

Attachment in humans

- * Attachment is an innate response that increases the infant's chance of survival

Attachment Theory

- * Developed by a number of theorists (most notably Bowlby), to explain the nature of parent-infant bonding.
- * Objects of attachment – termed transitional objects (Winnicott, 1953)
- * A core concept is that of ‘internal working model’ (IWM)
- * The IWM of a person includes a representation of self, other, and of the relation between the two
- * IWMs (which continue onwards into childhood and beyond) serve to organize behaviour towards others

- * *“No variables, it is held, have more far-reaching effects on personality development than have a child’s experiences within his family: for, starting during his first months in his relations with his mother figure, and extending through the years of childhood and adolescence in his relations with both parents, he builds up working models of how attachment figures are likely to behave towards him in any of a variety of situations; and on those models are based all his expectations, and therefore all his plans, for the rest of his life” (Bowlby, 1973, p.369)*

‘Good-enough mother’

- * A term coined by Winnicott to describe a mother who allows a sufficient amount of delay in meeting an infant’s needs (thus encouraging tolerance and confidence)
- * Winnicott (1965) believed that this leads to a healthy development of independence and sense of self
- * He did not believe that it was the best way to alleviate an infant’s distress/discomfort/frustration etc. immediately

The work of the Robertsons

- * This brought to the fore the distress that children experienced when their parents left them in hospital or parents were themselves hospitalized (Robertson & Robertson, 1989)

- * 'separation anxiety'



Attachment Classification

- * The most widely used procedure for measuring the quality of attachment that 1-2 year olds have established with their mothers or other caregivers is Mary Ainsworth's Strange Situation procedure (Ainsworth et al. 1978).

The Nature and Emergence of Emotion

According to Darwin (1872);

- **There is a direct association between certain inner emotional states and their facial expressions;**
- **These associations are unlearned and found even in babies;**
- **Human emotional expressions are based on a limited number set of basic emotions that are mostly innate to the species and therefore, universal.**

Episodes in Ainsworth's Strange Situation Procedure

1. **Experimenter introduces parent and infant to playroom and leaves.**
2. **Parent sits while infant plays.**
3. **Stranger enters, sits, talks to parent, and tries to interact with the child.**
4. **Parent leaves, stranger offers comfort if the infant is upset.**
5. **Parent returns, greets infant and offers comfort if baby is upset. Stranger leaves.**
6. **Parent leaves room**
7. **Stranger enters and offers comfort**
8. **Parent returns, greets infant, offers comfort if necessary, and tries to interest baby in toys.**

Ainsworth's 4 attachment categories

- * **Secure attachment (Type B)**
- * **Insecure/Resistant attachment (Type A)**
- * **Insecure/Avoidant attachment (Type C)**
- * **Disorganized/disoriented attachment (Type D)**

The effects of disrupted attachments

Early studies of institutionalized children

e.g. Bowlby (1944,1953)

Goldfarb (1943, 1947)

Spitz (1945,1946,1949)

Harlow's studies of socially deprived monkeys

- * Infant rhesus monkeys were separated from their mothers and raised in isolation.
- * the isolated monkeys were well fed and healthy, but had no contact with other monkeys.

Harlow's studies of socially deprived monkeys

Findings

- * when the infant monkeys were placed with other monkeys 6 months later, they showed complete social maladjustment.
- * As adults, these monkeys were unable to mate satisfactorily

Modern studies of long-term correlates of secure and insecure attachments

- * Infants who establish secure primary attachments are likely to display more favourable developmental outcomes.**

e.g. Elicker, Egeland and Sroufe (1992)

Frankel and Bates (1990)

Jacobson and Wille (1986)

Lyons-Ruth, Easterbrooks and Cibelli (1994)

Waters (1978)

Why do such long-term effects occur?

- * Erikson argued that securely attached infants establish a sense of basic trust
- * From the ethological perspective, Bowlby argued that early attachment relationships influence the development of internal working models

Explanation of the effects

The effects on institutionalized children have been explained by :

- 1. The maternal deprivation hypothesis;**
- 2. The social stimulation hypothesis**

Lecture Overview

- * The effects of disrupted attachments appear to be associated with greater incidences of social, cognitive and linguistic problems.
- * Evidence points to the need for secure attachment in infancy in order to pave the way for healthy, psychological development.

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