

The background of the slide is an abstract composition of numerous thin, overlapping lines in shades of orange, yellow, green, and blue. These lines are arranged in a way that creates a sense of depth and movement, resembling a complex, three-dimensional grid or a series of concentric, wavy bands. A bright, circular light source is positioned in the upper center, casting a soft glow and creating a lens flare effect that illuminates the surrounding lines.

Understanding Amira: Applying Bowlby's Attachment Theory in Early Years

OLIVINE PANDA

LCHS4010

Scenario Overview

- Amira is 3 years old and recently joined the nursery.
- She becomes anxious when separated from her carers.
- Her verbal communication is limited for her age.
- She struggles to engage in group play and prefers adult proximity.

These behaviours suggest early emotional insecurity. Attachment theory helps explain her needs and guides appropriate support.

Why I Chose Bowlby's Attachment Theory

- It explains emotional and social development in early childhood.
- It directly relates to separation anxiety and clinginess.
- It helps interpret limited communication and withdrawal as signs of insecurity.
- It is widely used in early years settings to guide support for children.

Key Concepts of Bowlby's Attachment Theory

- Secure Base: Children feel safe to explore when a trusted adult is available.
- Proximity Seeking: Young children stay close and show distress when separated.
- Internal Working Model: Early relationships shape expectations about trust and safety.
- Critical Period: Early years are essential for forming stable attachments.
- Continuity Hypothesis: Early attachment influences later emotional and social development.

Applying Bowlby's Attachment Theory to Amira

- Her separation anxiety suggests an insecure or developing attachment.
- Limited verbal communication may reflect emotional distress or shyness linked to insecurity.
- Difficulty with group play shows she may not yet feel safe enough to explore or interact independently.
- A strong, reliable key-person relationship can help her develop a secure base within the nursery.

Biological (Nature) Factors Influencing Development

- Temperament: Some children are naturally more anxious or cautious.
- Brain development at age 3: Emotional regulation is still developing.
- Possible genetic sensitivity to stress or anxiety.
- Developmental stage: Young children rely heavily on adults for safety and stability.

Environmental (Nurture) Factors Influencing Amira

- Starting a new nursery can cause uncertainty and anxiety.
- Changes in routine or caregiving can disrupt emotional security.
- Home environment and communication style shape her confidence.
- Previous attachment experiences influence how she reacts to separation.
- Social experiences affect how easily she joins group play.

Strategies to Support Amira's Development

- Key Person Approach: Build a consistent, trusting relationship to provide a secure base.
- Gradual Separation: Short, predictable drop-offs to reduce anxiety over time.
- Consistent Routines: Clear daily structure to help her feel safe and confident.
- Emotion Coaching: Use simple language to name feelings and support communication.
- Supported Group Play: Practitioner joins activities to help her engage with peers safely.
- Comfort Items: Allow familiar objects during transitions to reduce distress.

Limitations of Bowlby's Attachment Theory

- Focuses mainly on the mother–child relationship and may overlook wider family support.
- Does not fully explain language delays or communication difficulties.
- Attachment patterns can vary across cultures and caregiving practices.
- Children can form secure attachments with multiple caregivers, not just one.
- Anxiety in nursery may come from sensory, developmental, or environmental factors, not only attachment.

Conclusion

- Bowlby's Attachment Theory helps explain Amira's separation anxiety and social withdrawal.
- Her behaviour reflects a need for emotional security and consistent relationships.
- Using the key person approach, routine, and supported play can strengthen her confidence.
- A combination of biological and environmental factors shapes her development.
- With the right support, Amira can build secure attachments and thrive in the nursery setting.

Slide 11 – References

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