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Y Drindod Dewi Sant
University of Wales
Trinity Saint David

MODULE CODE: ECCY7007

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT:

Presentation

STUDENT NAME:

Rachel-Elizabeth Paynter

STUDENT NUMBER:

2007219

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AI Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT (https://chatgpt.com/) on 23rd January 2026 to proofread my work. Using the prompt:

1. Please proofread this work, focussing on spelling and grammar accuracy as well as clarity.

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

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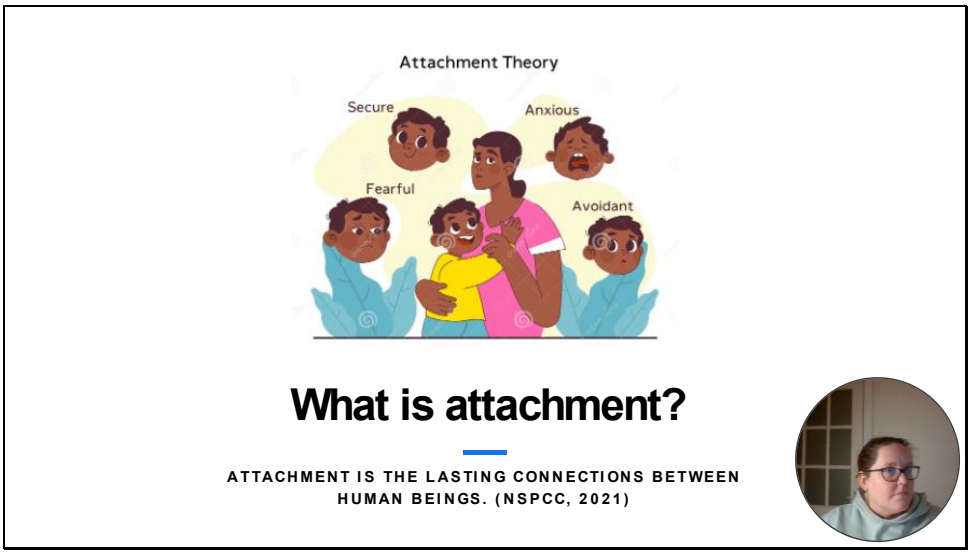

Introduction.

Looking at attachment.

Age 3-5 years old, key age, starting school etc.

Risks of unsecure attachments.

What intervention can be put in place to support.

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Presentation Aims

- critically examine **Bowlby's attachment theory** as a framework for understanding development in children aged 3–7
- Analyse the **developmental implications of poor attachment**
- Evaluate **evidence- based strategies** to support attachment in early childhood

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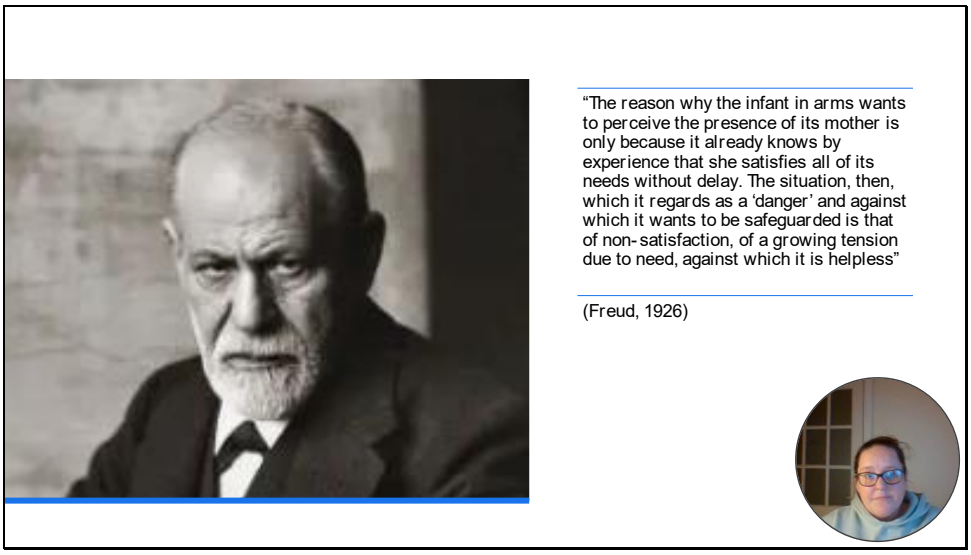

Read Quote

What does this mean?

Freud, in this quote is suggesting that:
Attachment is born out of need.
Mother meets the child's need therefor attachment is formed.
Separation from mother means the needs are not met.
It is learnt behaviour, not innate.

Attachment is about survival and built trust on meeting the child's needs.

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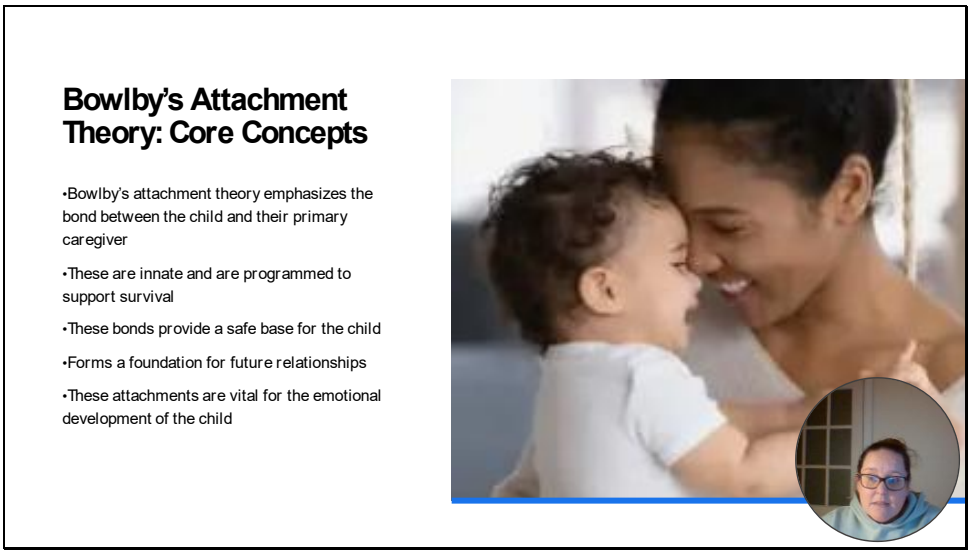

Bowlby's theory of suggests attachment is important for survival.

Safe base – allows child to go explore the world and there is a safe point to return to

(Mikulincer, Shaver, Berant,2013)

Challenge – cultural bias (Patel, Gunion, Watt, & Booth, 2023) fixed attachment at 2 (Smith, Cameron, & Reimer (2017) To much focus on the mother – Wider community (Harlow, 2021)

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Pre-attachment – Infants show no particular attachment
and respond similarly to all caregivers.

Attachment in the making – Infants begin to show a preference for familiar caregivers.

Clear cut attachment –
Infants actively seek comfort from their primary caregiver and show distress when separ ated.

Formation of reciprocal relationships – Children will acquire language skills and better understand the pattern of carers leaving and returning.

(Harcourt, 2021).

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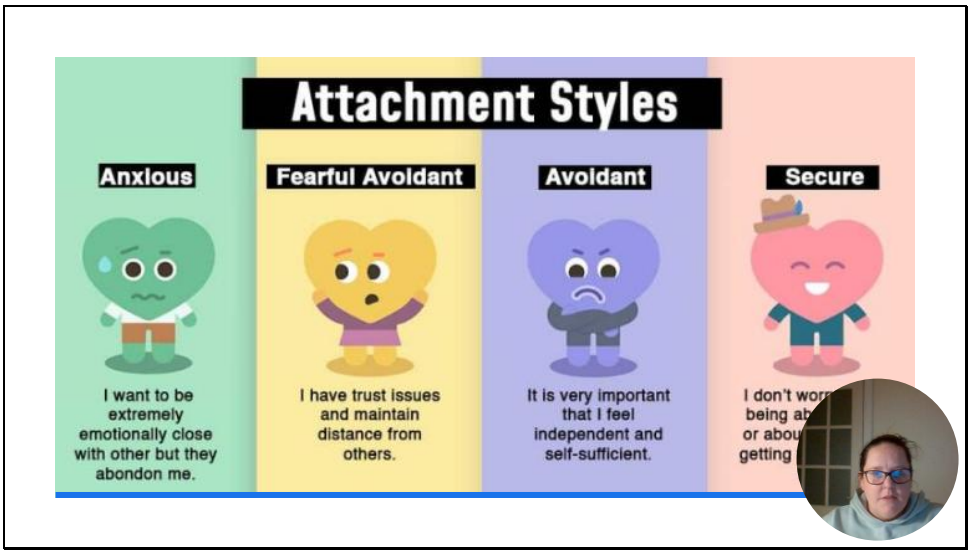

May be anxious with strangers, be upset when primary caregiver leaves. Ainsworth et al. (1978) resisted interactions with their mother when they were reunited, aggression toward the mother for abandoning them.

Conflicted Behaviours: Seeking comfort but also refusing it and pushing them away

Emotionally unavailable caregivers - Ainsworth et al. (1978) found these children were not distressed when separated from their mothers and engaged with the stranger similarly to their mother.

Most desired, upset when a parent leaves but then is comforted upon return. Best outcomes later in life for attachment

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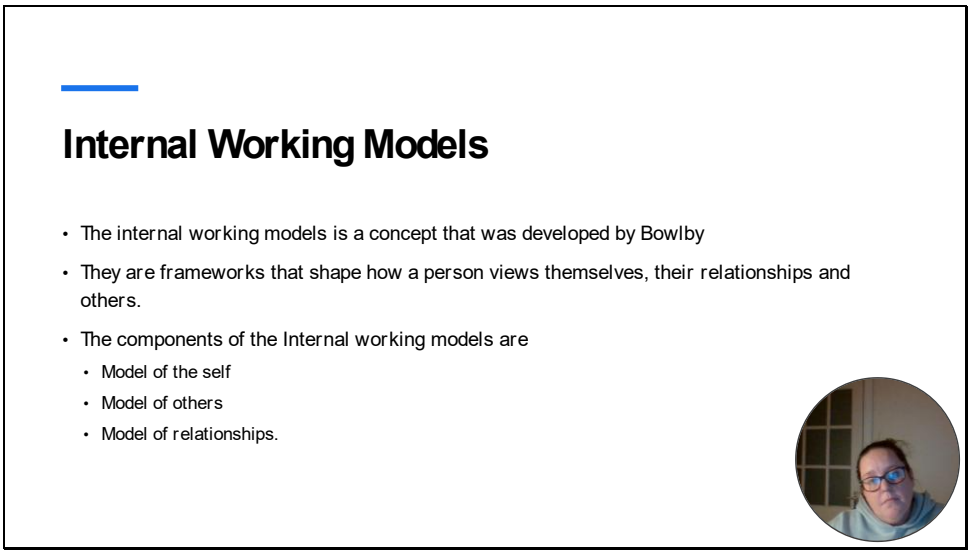

Model of self: how individuals perceive their own worthiness of love and care.
Positive model leads to feelings of security and confidence in relationships.

Model of others:
expectations about how others will respond to one's needs. It shapes beliefs about the r eliability and availability of attachment figures.

Model of relationships: expectations on how relationships function, impacts how the person may approach a new relationship and impacts conflict management.

Stability of IWM is a critical aspect of understanding how early attachments can affect the individual in later life. Influenced by the care that is given to them and the interactions with them. Positive interactions can reinforce attachment styles and positive IWM's while negative or traumatic experiences can lead to the development of insecure attachment styles or negative IWMs.

(Holmes, 2024)

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Teacher as secondary attachment figure
Behavioural manifestations: Emotional dysregulation, Hyper-independence or dependency, Controlling or withdrawn behaviours.

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Neglect and Abuse – develop insecure attachment. Physical abuse linked to avoidant attachment while neglect is linked to anxious attachment,

Inconsistent caregiving – This is when the parent is their place of safety but also induces fear which created confusion in their relationships with attachment figures possibly in cases of abuse

Separation – Trauma leading to responses such as stress, difficulty forming new relationships and emotional and psychological difficulties.

Mental health difficulties may lead to inconsistent care of the child leading to insecure attachments.

(Naish, Oakley, O'Brien, Penna, & Thrower, 2023)

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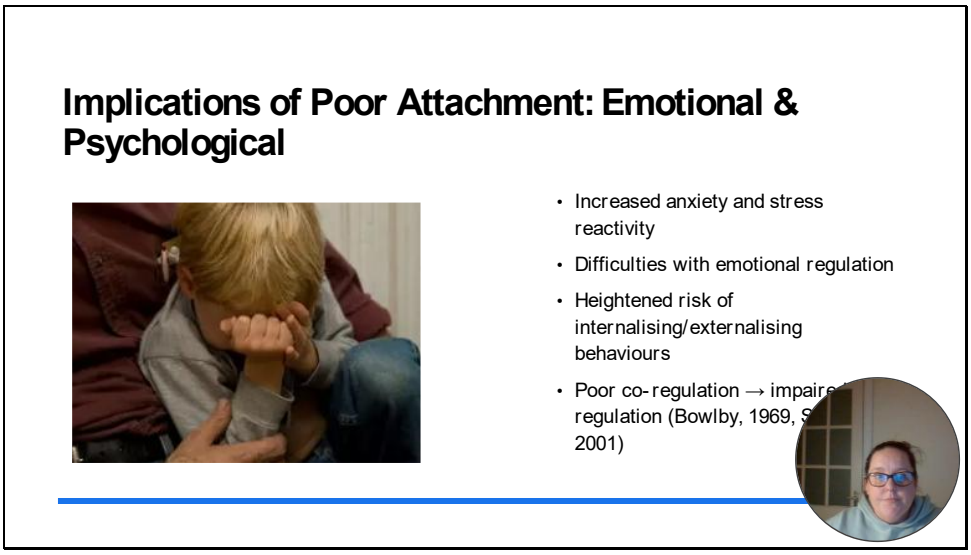

Poor attachment can lead to significant anxiety and stress. Can manifest as clinginess, low self-esteem, and sensitivity. These stem from a fear of abandonment or rejection. (Bradford, Burningham, Sandberg, & Johnson, 2017)

If secure attachment is linked to positive emotional regulation, can be implied that insecure attachment is linked with emotional dysregulation.

Poor attachment leads to higher risk of internalised and externalised behaviours. Internalised – Stress, anxiety, depression, social isolation – externalised – boisterousness and aggression. Both can lead to difficulties with social and emotional development and interactions with their peers.

Bowlby – early experiences influence how a child is able to regulate their emotions and form attachments. Coregulation is the signals of emotional safety and regulation. For children with poor attachments struggle self-regulating then I can affect emotional wellbeing

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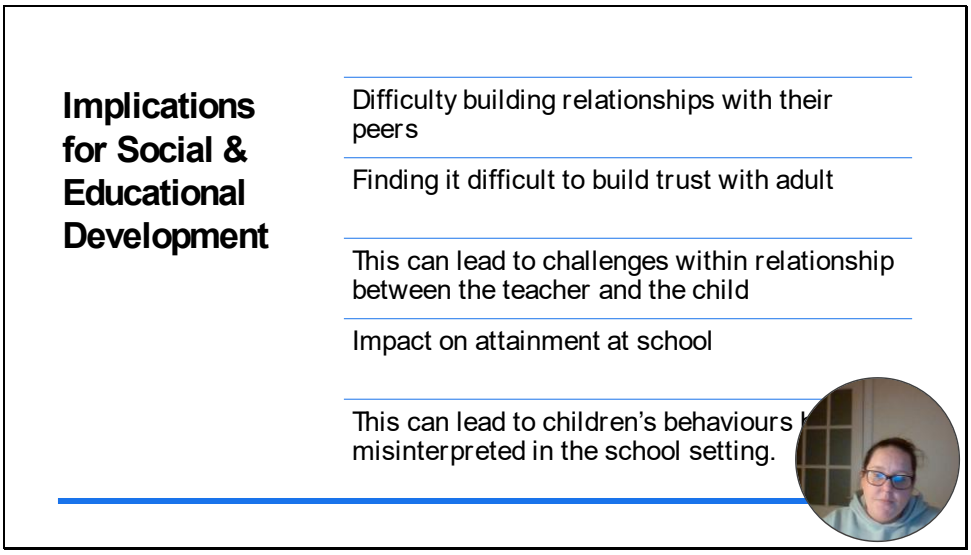

Peers – Children who have secure attachments engage positively with their peers and build healthy friendships, however, those with insecure attachments may have difficulties in forming these friendships.

Trust – If they have not bult secure attachments with their primary caregiver then they may struggle with forming these relationships with other adults in their life, e.g., teachers. This could then lead to negative teacher – child relationships in school as the child has not built the foundation of attachment.

School readiness and attainment – Insecure attachments can significantly impact the child's readiness to learn. Secure attachments are also linked to higher grades, test scores, and willingness to take on challenges.

The challenges faced with children with poor attachment – school may see the behaviours of poor attachment as behavioural difficulties, has the potential for children to be misinterpreted when the full picture is not seen.

(Walters, 2025)

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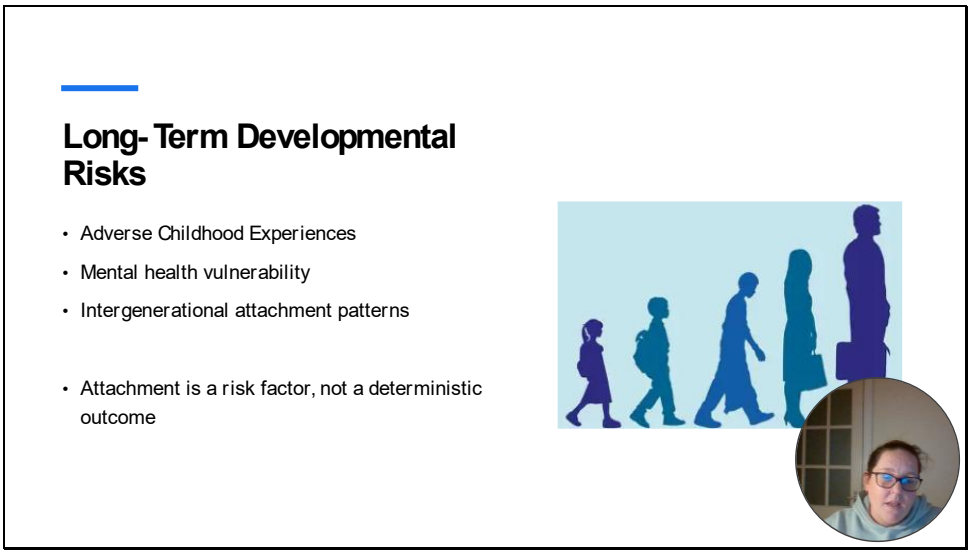

ACE's – The long-term effects of poor attachment are linked to ACE's – e.g. a child who experienced abuse would have both ACE'' and poor attachment (Crandall et al, 2019)

Poor attachment in childhood and the effect that this can have on the child in later life can significantly impact the child's mental health. (Pote, Picciotto, & Norris, 2024)

Intergenerational – you behave how you know so for a child with poor attachment they could treat their own children how they were treated if interventions are not put in place to support. Also thought that these can be influenced by factors such as gender differences and environmental factors. (Zelekha, & Yaakobi, 2020)

Note – poor attachment is a risk factor however with appropriate interventions then these can be reduced (Howe, 2011)

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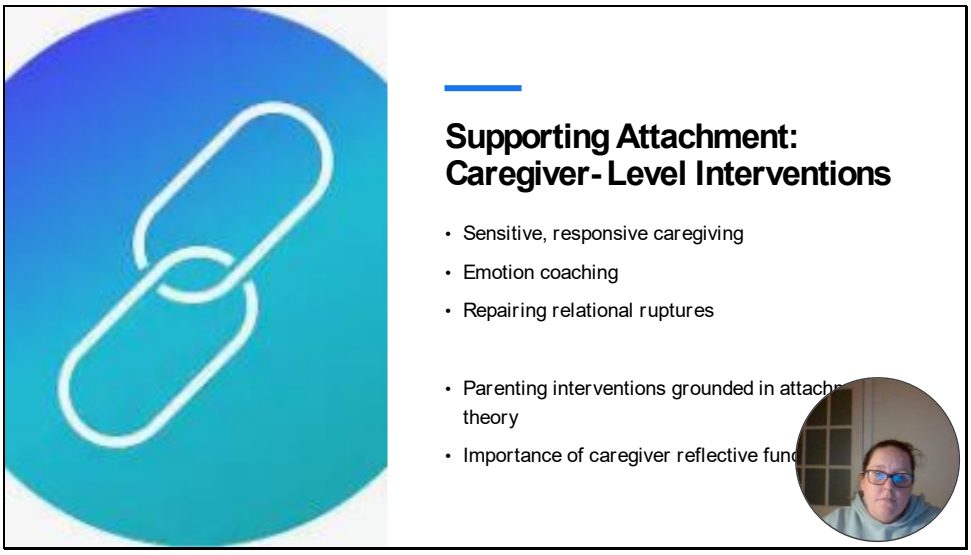

Emotional coaching – Approach focusses on nurturing and emotionally supportive relationships. Helps children to become aware of their emotions. Involves validating children's emotions, setting limits where needed and supporting the child in problem solving.

Repairing relational ruptures – Acknowledge the rupture, address the cause, repair the relationship, practice reliability. (Steindl, Matos, & Dimaggio, 2023)

Dyadic Development Psychotherapy – aims to support the emotional bond between the child and the caregiver.

Circle of security – Safe environment for the child to express themselves and enhance caregivers' ability to provide comfort in times of destress. (Smith-Nielsen, 2025)

Attachment and Biobehavioural catch up – enhancing caregiver sensitivity and responsiveness helping to support attachment healing and improve a child emotional regulation.

Caregiving reflection on themselves

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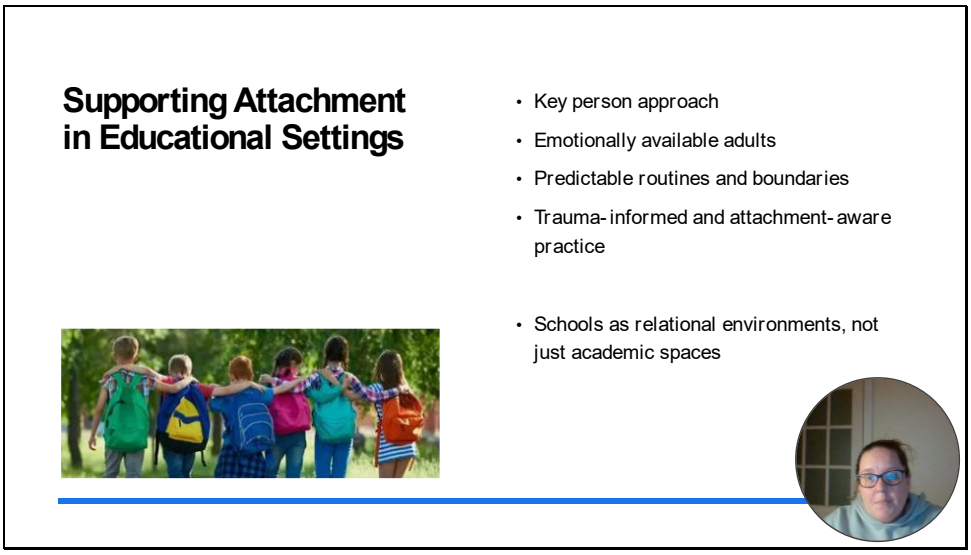

Key person – Approach to build trust and attachment bonds between the child and their key worker, supports attachment for the child – both if they do not have a secure attachment and in the transition into school. (O'Connor, 2017)

Emotionally Available Adult – Safe space for the child to express feelings, build trust, comfort, and safety.

Predictable routines and boundaries – Develop predictable patterns of behaviour, child knows what is expected of them and how to respond, sense of safety. Boundaries help to manage behaviour and emotions.

Trauma informed – Providing a safe space for the student, fosters positive relationships, develop resilience. (Naish, Oakley, O'Brien, Penna, S & Thrower, 2023)

Schools are more than just education now but are relational environments – fostering social, emotional, and behavioural development. Supportive school climate can significantly impact student wellbeing and academic performance. Creating environments that are not only for learning but also built trust, stability, and sense of belonging which can contribute to better educational outcomes.

(Geddes, 2006)

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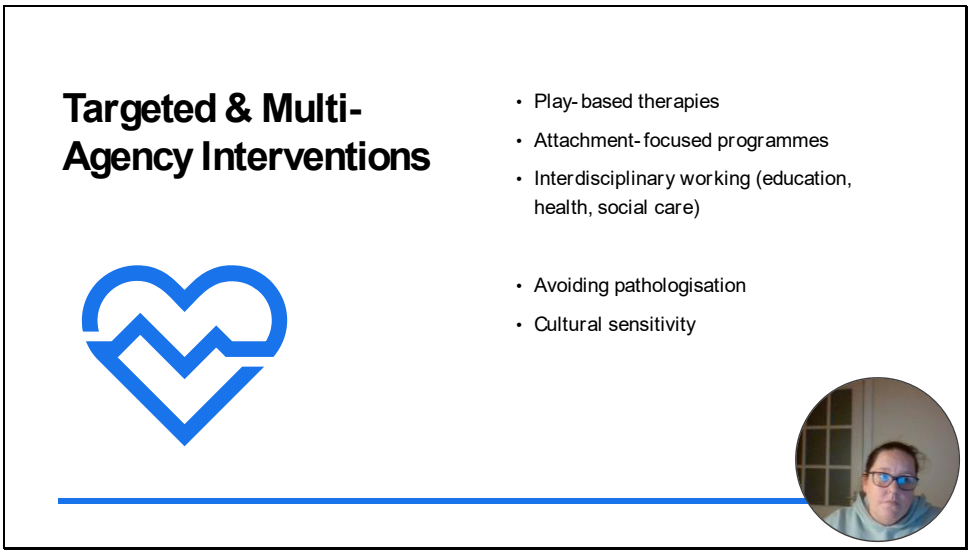

Using play therapy to support the child to explore their emotions and experience. Play also allows the child to build trust. Where the caregivers participate in the sessions it allows for them to understand the needs of the child through play.

AFP aim to strengthen the emotional bond between the child and their caregiver. It supports healthy emotional, social, and cognitive development.

Benefits of interdisciplinary working

(May, Mowthorpe, & Griffiths, 2014).

Pathologisation – Unfairly or wrongly considering something is the issue.
Cultural sensitivity – some cultures view their attachment with children differently, important to take the cultural differences into consideration.

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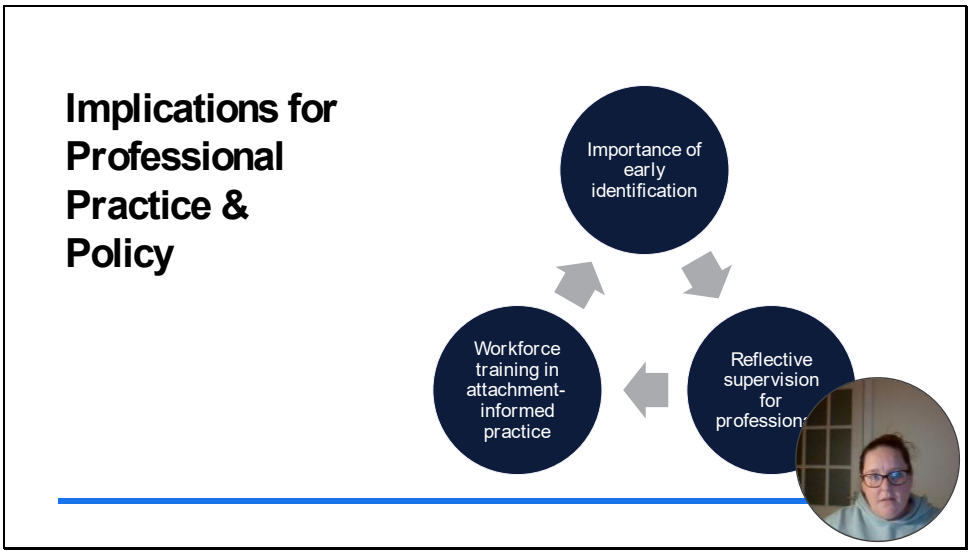

Early identification – better outcomes

Reflection – avoid burnout, better support for family.

Training

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Conclusion

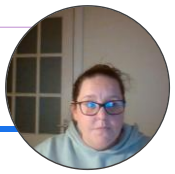
Bowlby's theory remains a foundational framework however there are studies that suggest that parts of his theories need updating

Poor attachment significantly impacts development in ages 3–7 in all areas of development

Attachment is **dynamic, relational, and reparable**

Practice must move beyond behaviour management to relational understanding

Nature vs Nurture



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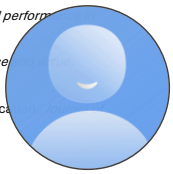

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