

**SUPPORTING A YOUNG CARER:
APPLYING BOWLBY'S ATTACHMENT
THEORY TO JENNY'S DEVELOPMENT
AND WELLBEING**

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Introduction

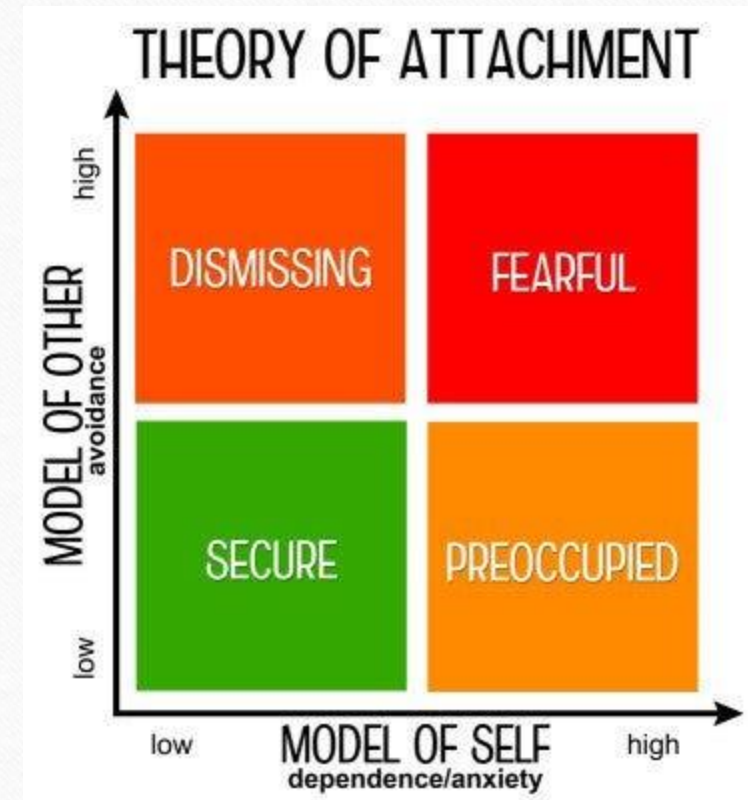
Jenny is a 16-year-old youthful carer who has been caring of her mother since the death of her father five years ago.

She balances caring responsibilities with her education, which makes it difficult to manage both which set emotional and social problems.

This presentation discusses her growth using the theory formulated by Bowlby and provides feasible support provisions.

Overview of Bowlby's Attachment Theory

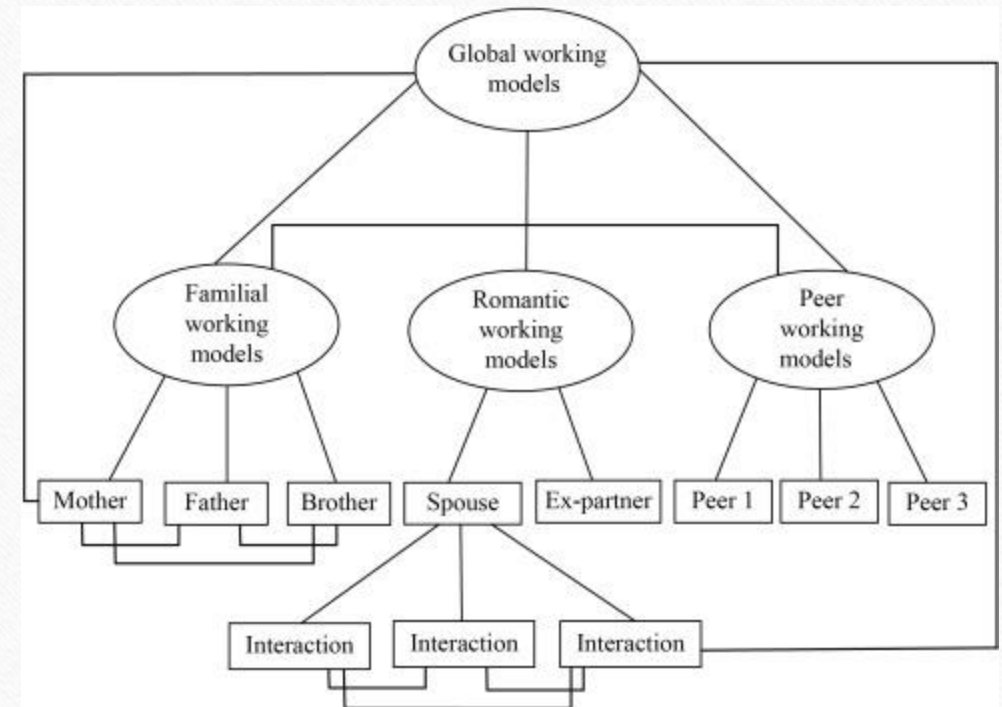
- The theory provided by Bowlby emphasizes the importance of forming an emotional bond with those who care for us during early childhood.
- Emotions, social and psychological development are anchored on the aspect of secure base by attachment (Somers, 2025).
- Secure bonding helps develop confidence, while insecure attachment can lead to anxiety.



<https://aristhought.medium.com/attachment-theory-the-secure-base-and-its-implications-on-our-adult-selves-part-1-6f8f7dc48808>

Key Concepts of Attachment Theory

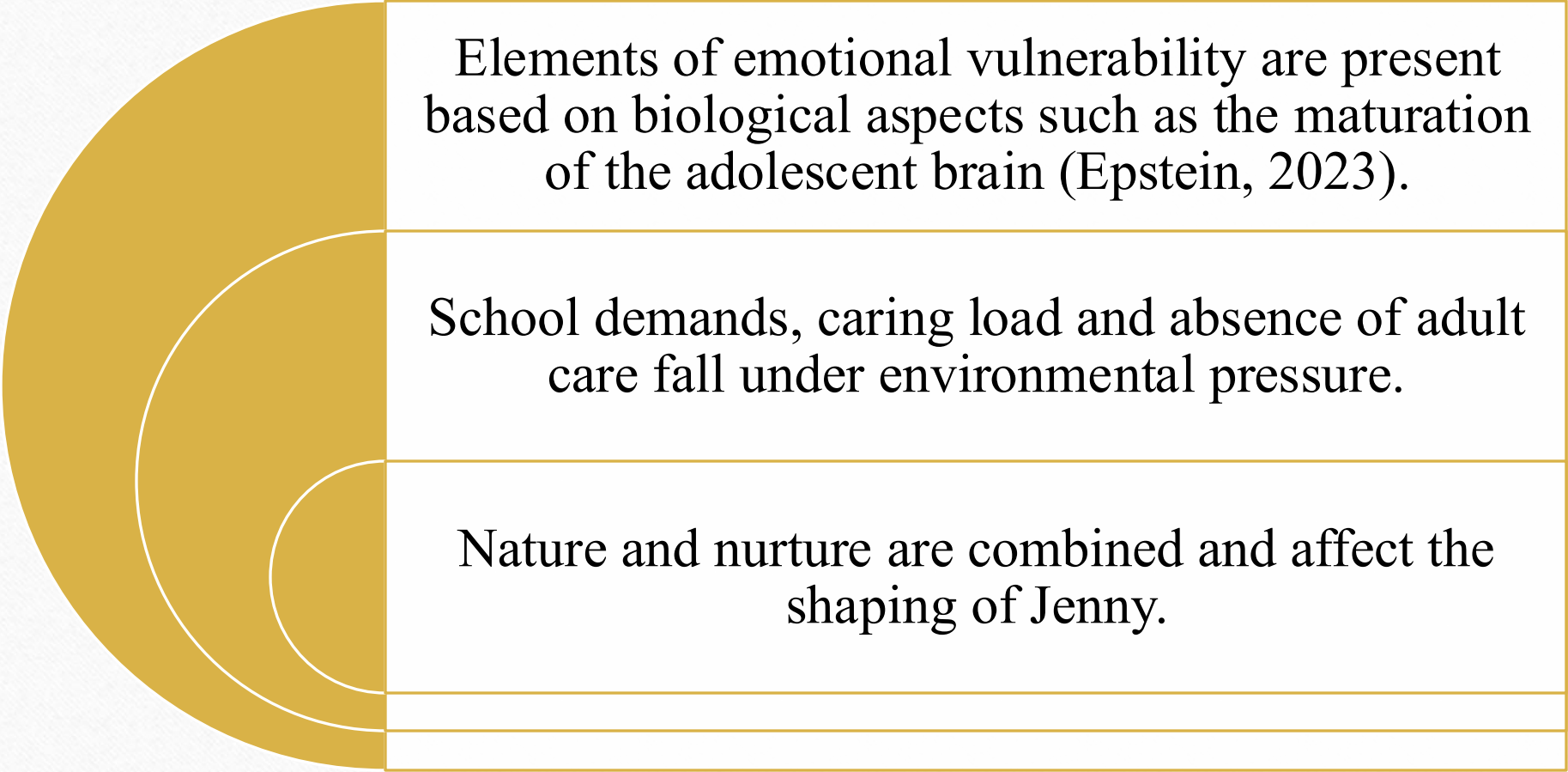
- The attachment theory ascertains secure and insecure attachment styles, including anxious, avoidant and disorganised (Howe and Betts, 2023).
- The Internal Working Model explains the manner in which early relationships actually influence the development of emotions in adulthood (Mesman *et al.*, 2016).
- The emotional stability is pegged on positive relationships with the primary caregivers during the critical periods.



Applying the Theory to Jenny's Experiences

- Jenny's normal development changed because she lost a safe attachment figure and gained more adult responsibilities.
- Less time to spend with friends, including teenage practices, caused emotional pressure and anxiety to accompany loneliness (Lally and Valentine-French, 2022).
- The theory that could be applied to explain the effect of such experiences on her emotional condition is Bowlby's theory by Bowlby.

Nature and Nurture Influences



Elements of emotional vulnerability are present based on biological aspects such as the maturation of the adolescent brain (Epstein, 2023).

School demands, caring load and absence of adult care fall under environmental pressure.

Nature and nurture are combined and affect the shaping of Jenny.

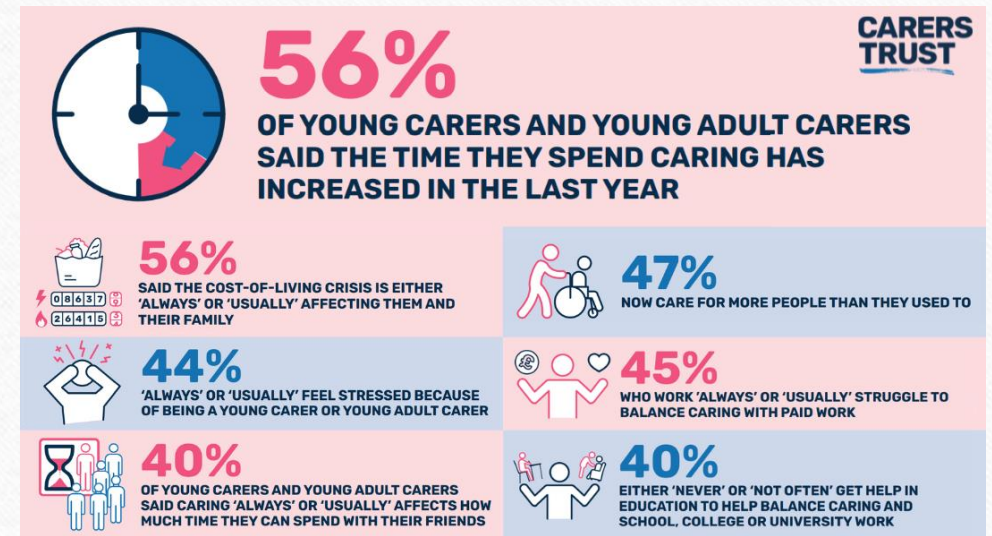
Current Needs and Challenges

- Jenny has been emotionally burdened and has some practical responsibilities when she has to reconcile between school and home.
- Her personal time is extremely limited, which exposes her to anxiety, depression and social isolation.
- These problems give rise to academic difficulties and lead to the need for systemic help (Bergin and Bergin, 2009).



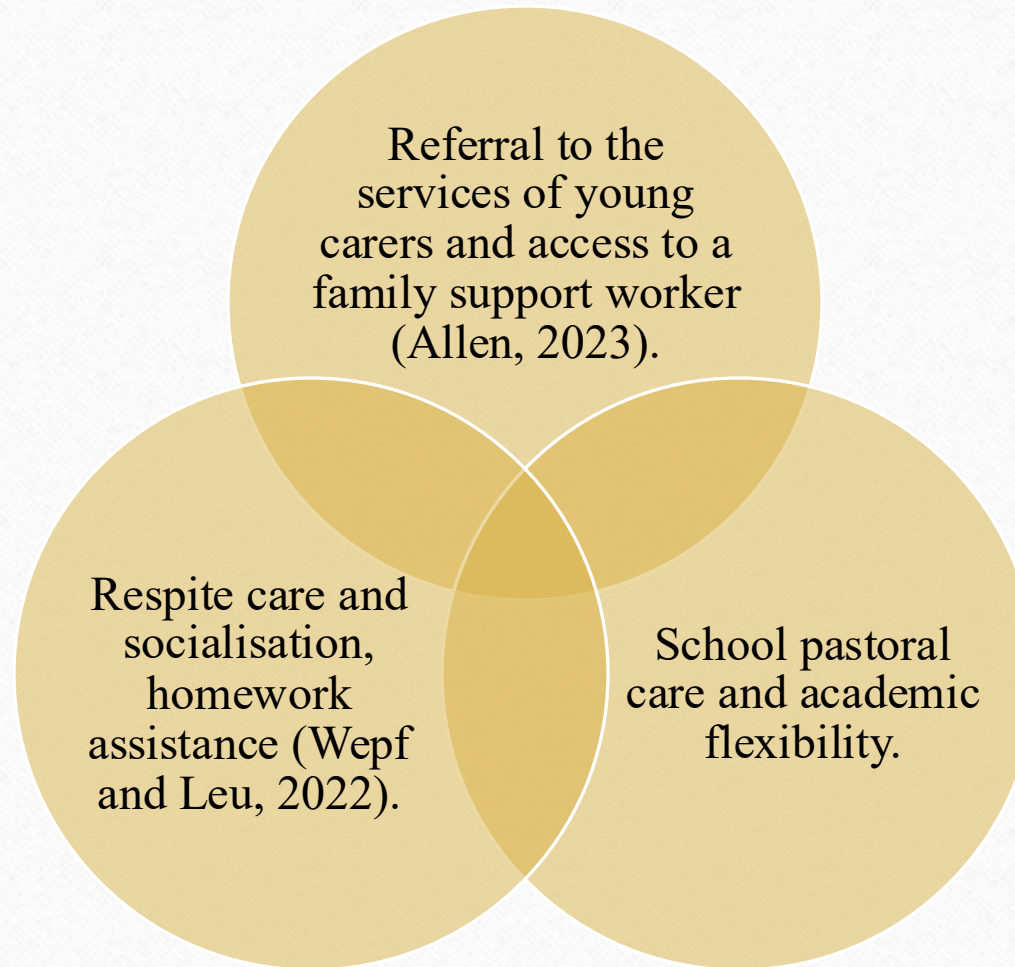
Support Plan Based on Bowlby's Theory

- An attachment-based approach in which an attachment worker functions as a secure base regularly (Lacey *et al.*, 2022).
- Provide counselling, emotional mentoring and support groups for young carers.
- Build a trusting relationship and positive habits to improve emotional security.



<https://carers.org/young-carers-action-day-2023/being-a-young-carer-is-not-a-choice>

Practical Interventions for Jenny



Critical Evaluation of Bowlby's Theory

- Bowlby's theory is applicable to describe the impact of loss and the importance of positive relationships (Robison *et al.*, 2020).
- It provides an efficient planning tool to help and provide care to the young carers.
- It is limited because it focuses on adolescents and it lacks a range of perspective.

Conclusion

- The emotional problems that Jenny went through due to loss and disrupted attachment are explained by the theory created by Bowlby.
- The majority of her maternal and environmental pressures reflect the relationship between nature and nurture.
- Attachment-based support and practical assistance can help to establish resilience and a positive future.

Reference

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THANK YOU