

Slide 1 – Title Page

Title: Applying Bowlby's Attachment Theory
to Isaac's Development

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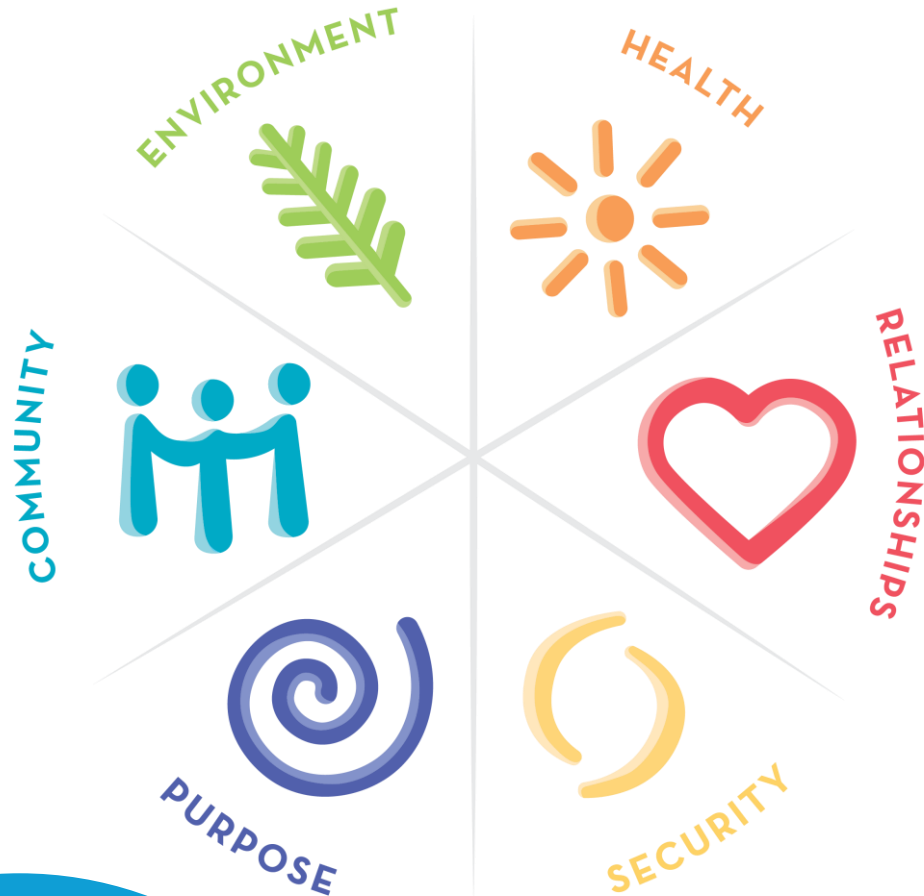
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Module Name: Lifespan Development in
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Assessment: Component 1 – Presentation

WELLBEING



- **Slide 2 – Introduction**
- Hello, my name is **Humera Ibrar**.
- This presentation will examine the case study of **Isaac**, a four-year-old child experiencing emotional, social and language development difficulties. The presentation will apply **Bowlby's Attachment Theory** to explain how Isaac's early experiences may have influenced his development and wellbeing.
- Isaac lives with his single mother, who is experiencing post-natal depression and has limited social support. He has experienced disrupted childcare arrangements and struggles with separation, social interaction, language development and independent play.
- The presentation will also suggest practical support strategies and evaluate the usefulness of Bowlby's theory in health and social care.
- **In-text citation:** (Bowlby, 1969)

Slide 3 – Overview of Bowlby's Attachment Theory

- Bowlby believed that children are biologically programmed to form strong emotional attachments with their primary caregiver because these relationships are essential for survival and healthy development.
- Key concepts include:
- **Attachment:** A strong emotional bond between child and caregiver.
- **Secure attachment:** Develops when caregivers respond consistently and sensitively.
- **Insecure attachment:** May occur when care is inconsistent or disrupted.
- **Internal working model:** Early relationships shape future expectations of trust and relationships.
- **Monotropy:** Bowlby suggested children usually form one main attachment figure.
- **Critical period:** The first few years of life are especially important for forming healthy attachments.
- Secure attachments support emotional security, confidence and positive social development.
- **In-text citation:** (Bowlby, 1969)



Slide 4 – Applying the Theory to Isaac

- Isaac's experiences can be understood using Bowlby's theory.
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- His mother's post-natal depression may have reduced her ability to provide consistent emotional responsiveness, affecting attachment security.
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- Frequent changes in childcare arrangements may have disrupted stable relationships, making Isaac anxious and clingy.
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- His distress when separated from his mother suggests separation anxiety and possible insecure attachment.
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- His withdrawn behaviour and difficulty joining group activities may reflect reduced confidence in unfamiliar environments.
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- Language delays and limited independent play may also be linked to reduced opportunities for secure interactions and social learning.
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- **In-text citations:** (Bowlby, 1969; Ainsworth et al., 1978)

Slide 5 – Practical Strategies and Multi-Agency Support

- Early years staff should:
- Build a warm, predictable relationship with Isaac.
- Use consistent routines to reduce anxiety.
- Encourage play-based learning and gentle social interaction.
- Create a language-rich environment through stories, songs and conversation.
- Use emotional regulation activities and positive reassurance.
- Support for Isaac's mother should include:
- Parenting support programmes.
- Mental health services for post-natal depression.
- Opportunities to build confidence and social support.
- Professionals involved may include:
- Early Years Support Workers.
- Speech and Language Therapists.
- Health Visitors.
- Educational Psychologists.
- Family Support Workers.
- General Practitioners (GPs).
- Mental Health Services.
- Working together can improve Isaac's emotional wellbeing and development.
- **In-text citation:** (Department for Education, 2024)



Slide 6 – Nature versus Nurture

Nature influences:

- Isaac's temperament.
- Genetic factors affecting development.
- Early brain development.
- **Nurture influences:**
- His mother's mental health.
- Disrupted childcare experiences.
- Limited social interaction.
- Changes in routine and environment.
- Quality of caregiving and emotional support.
- In Isaac's case, environmental influences appear particularly important because Bowlby argued that early relationships strongly shape later emotional and social development.
- **In-text citations:** (Bowlby, 1969; Bronfenbrenner, 1979)



Slide 7 – Evaluation of Bowlby's Theory



- **Strengths**
 - Highlights the importance of early caregiver relationships.
 - Helps explain Isaac's clinginess and separation anxiety.
 - Supports attachment-based interventions in early years settings.
 - Has influenced childcare and safeguarding practices.
- **Limitations**
 - Places strong emphasis on one primary caregiver.
 - Underestimates the role of multiple attachments.
 - Does not fully consider wider environmental influences.
 - Some children show resilience despite early difficulties.
- **Alternative Theory**
 - Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory may also help explain Isaac's development because it considers family, community, education and wider social influences together rather than focusing mainly on attachment.
- **In-text citations:** (Bowlby, 1969; Bronfenbrenner, 1979)

Slide 8 – Conclusion

- Overall, Bowlby's Attachment Theory provides a useful explanation for Isaac's emotional and behavioural difficulties.
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- His disrupted early experiences and his mother's mental health challenges may have affected his ability to form secure attachments, influencing his confidence, social skills and language development.
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- However, attachment is only one part of development, and wider environmental factors should also be considered.
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- The key message is that psychology helps professionals understand children's needs and design effective, evidence-based interventions that improve outcomes through early support and multi-agency working.



- **Slide 9 – Harvard Reference List**

- Ainsworth, M.D.S., Blehar, M.C., Waters, E. and Wall, S. (1978) *Patterns of Attachment: A Psychological Study of the Strange Situation*. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Bowlby, J. (1969) *Attachment and Loss: Volume 1 – Attachment*. London: Penguin.
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- Department for Education (2024) *Working Together to Safeguard Children*. London: Department for Education.
- Howe, D. (2011) *Attachment Across the Lifecourse: A Brief Introduction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Schaffer, H.R. (2007) *Introducing Child Psychology*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishing.