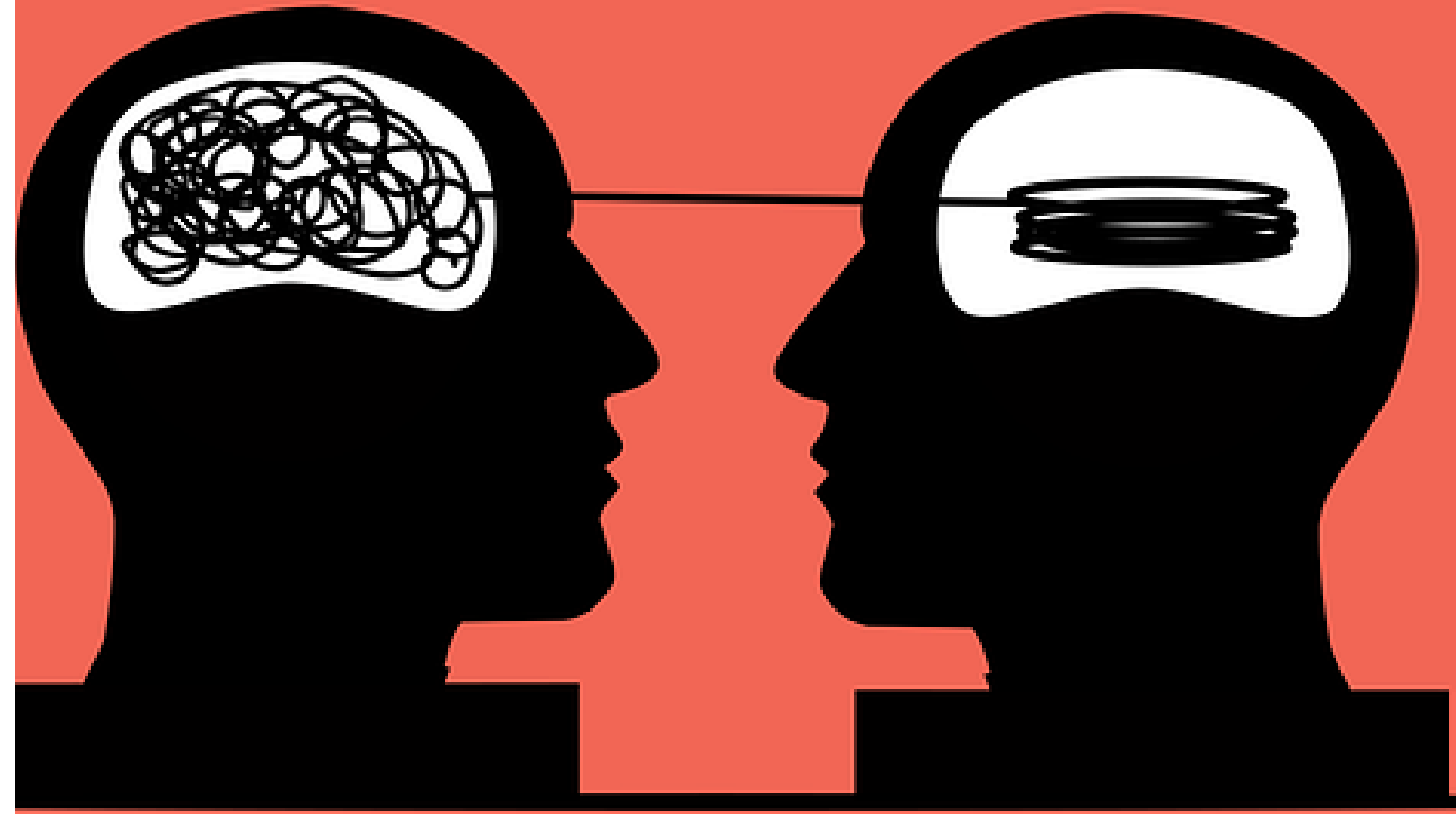


Counselling Skills and Approaches ECPS5019

Week 3

Psychodynamic &
Attachment
Theory/Application



Schedule for the Day

Psychodynamic Perspective & Approaches

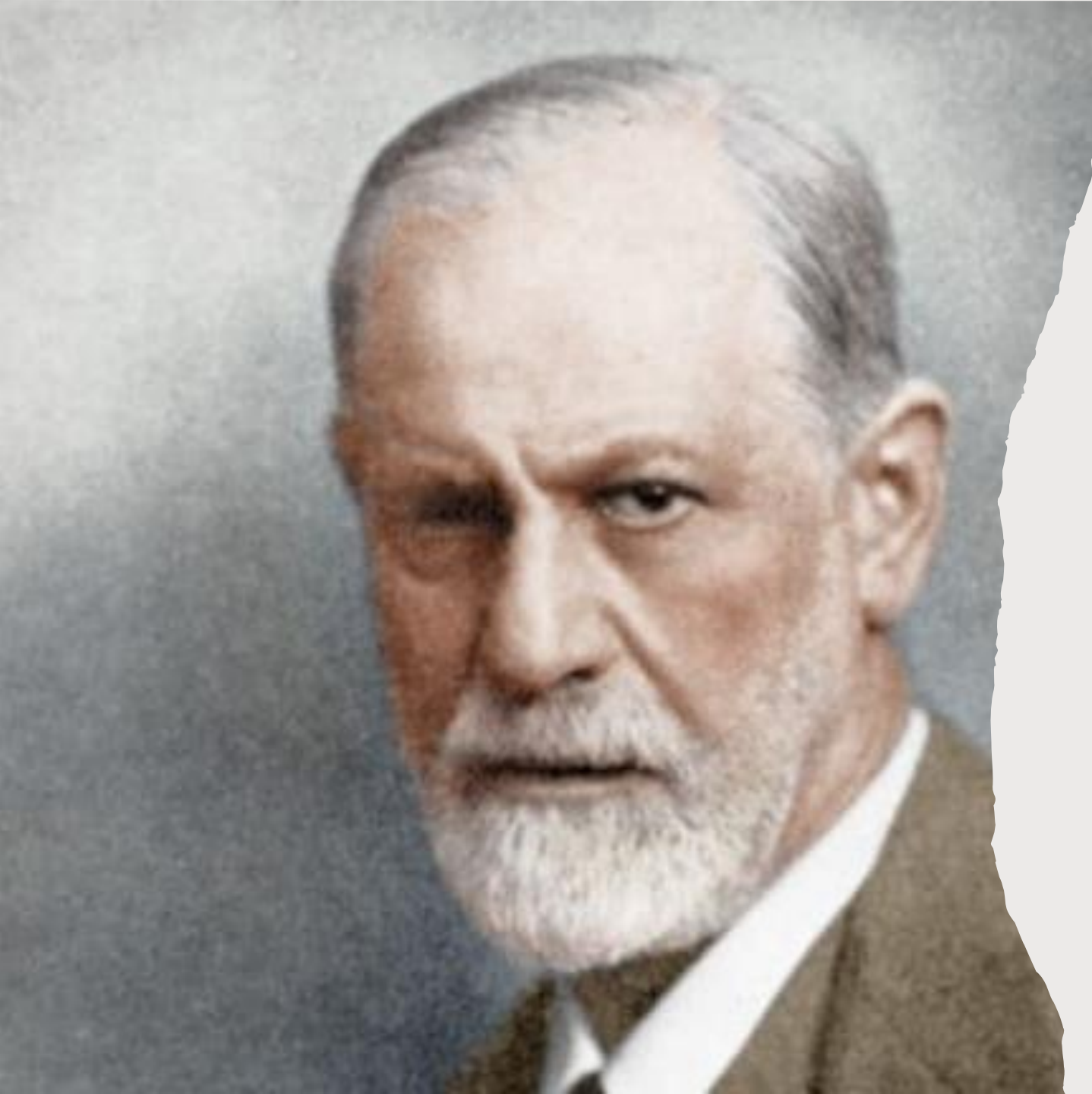
- **Traditional vs Contemporary**
- **Objects relations theory**
- **Significance of understanding attachment.**



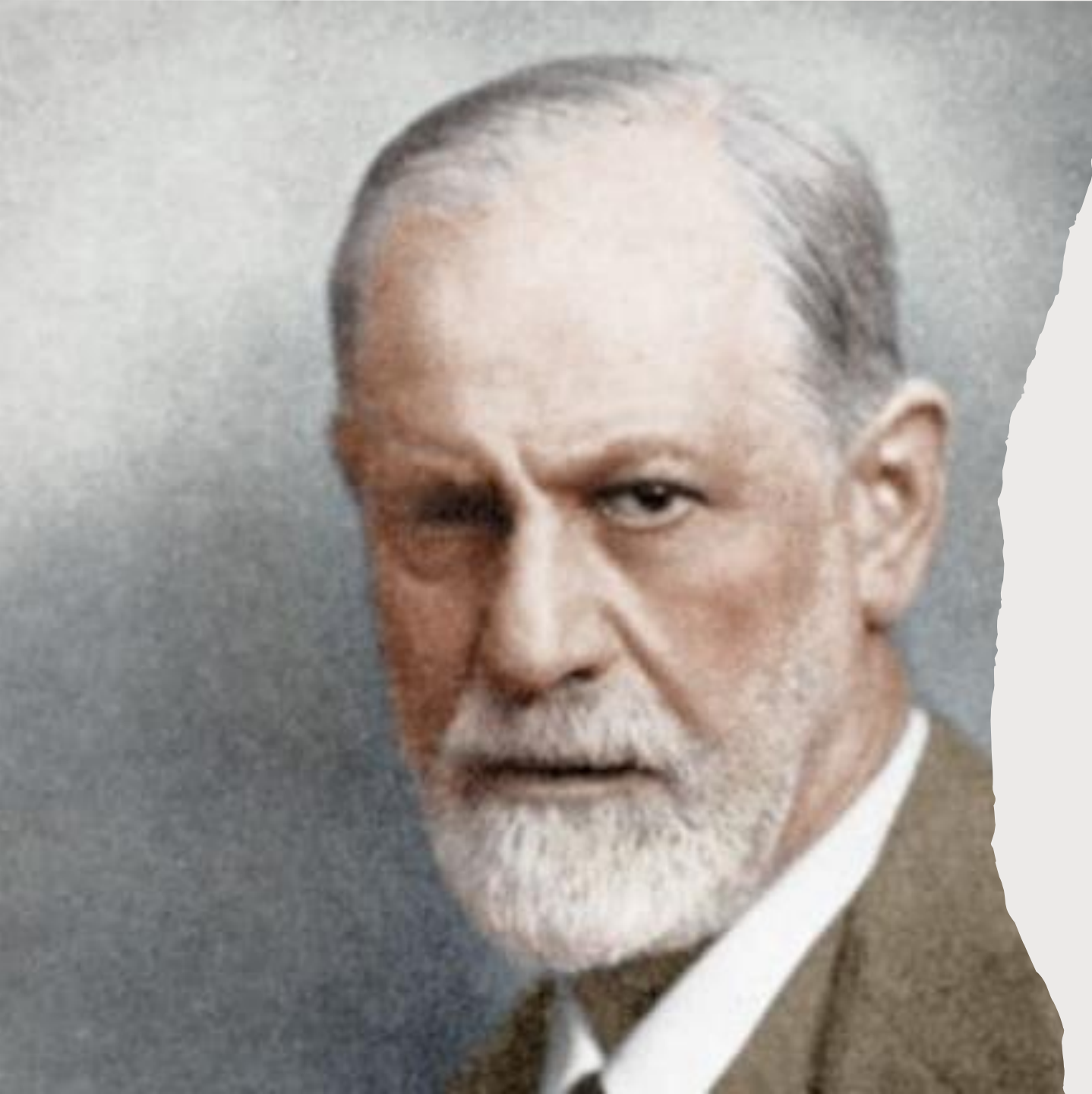
Psychoanalysis and Psychodynamic



What are
psychodynamic
approaches and
where did they come
from?



Who was Sigmund
Freud? (1856 – 1939)



Freud's story...

Born in 1856

Freud's theories are largely based on middle class Viennese Jewish women...

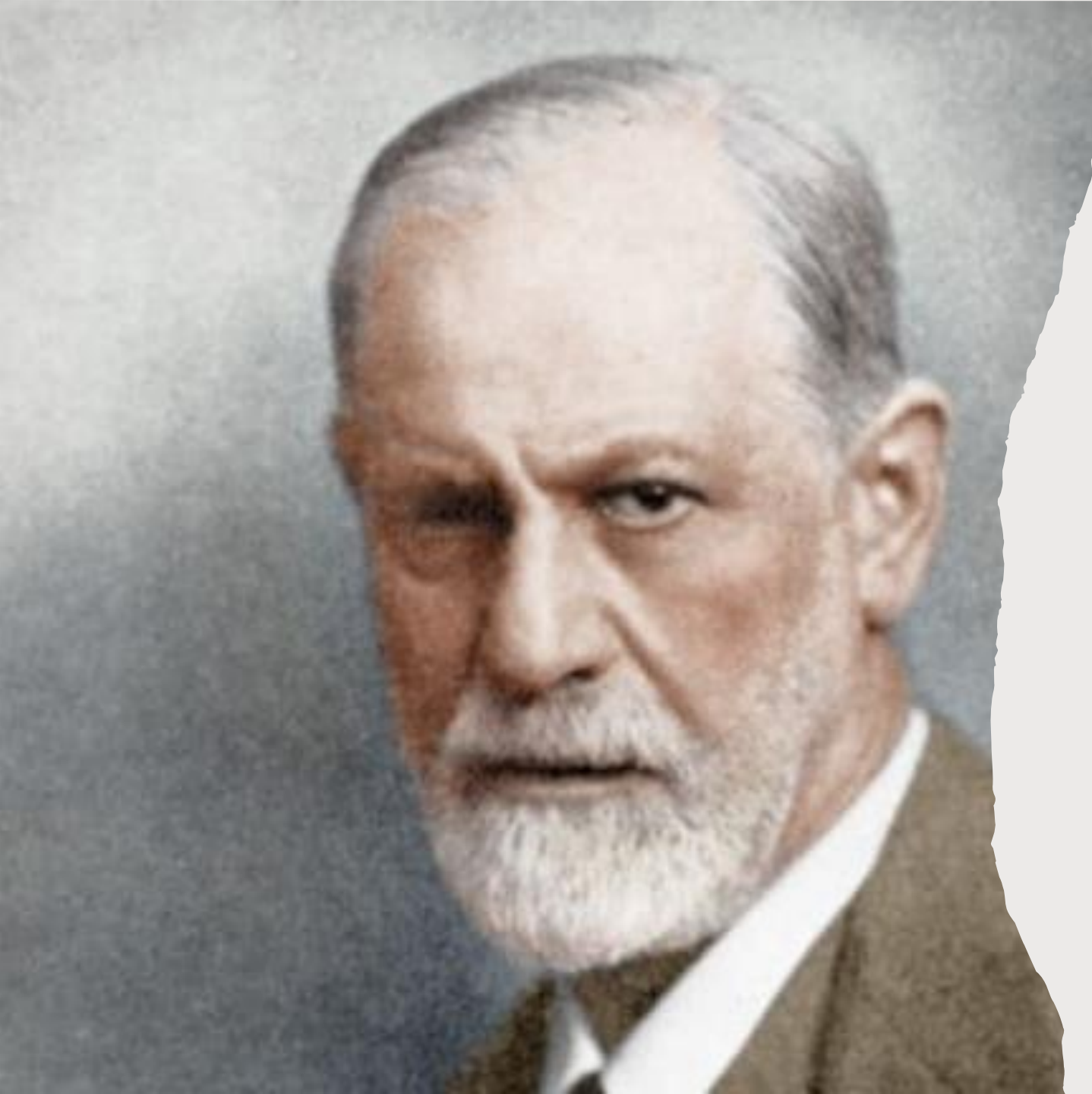
He thought the subconscious mind contained suppressed feelings...

He outlined a series of normal stages of development and said that failure to pass through these stages resulted in mental disorders...

He argued that boys pass through the Oedipus complex and girls go through the Electra complex

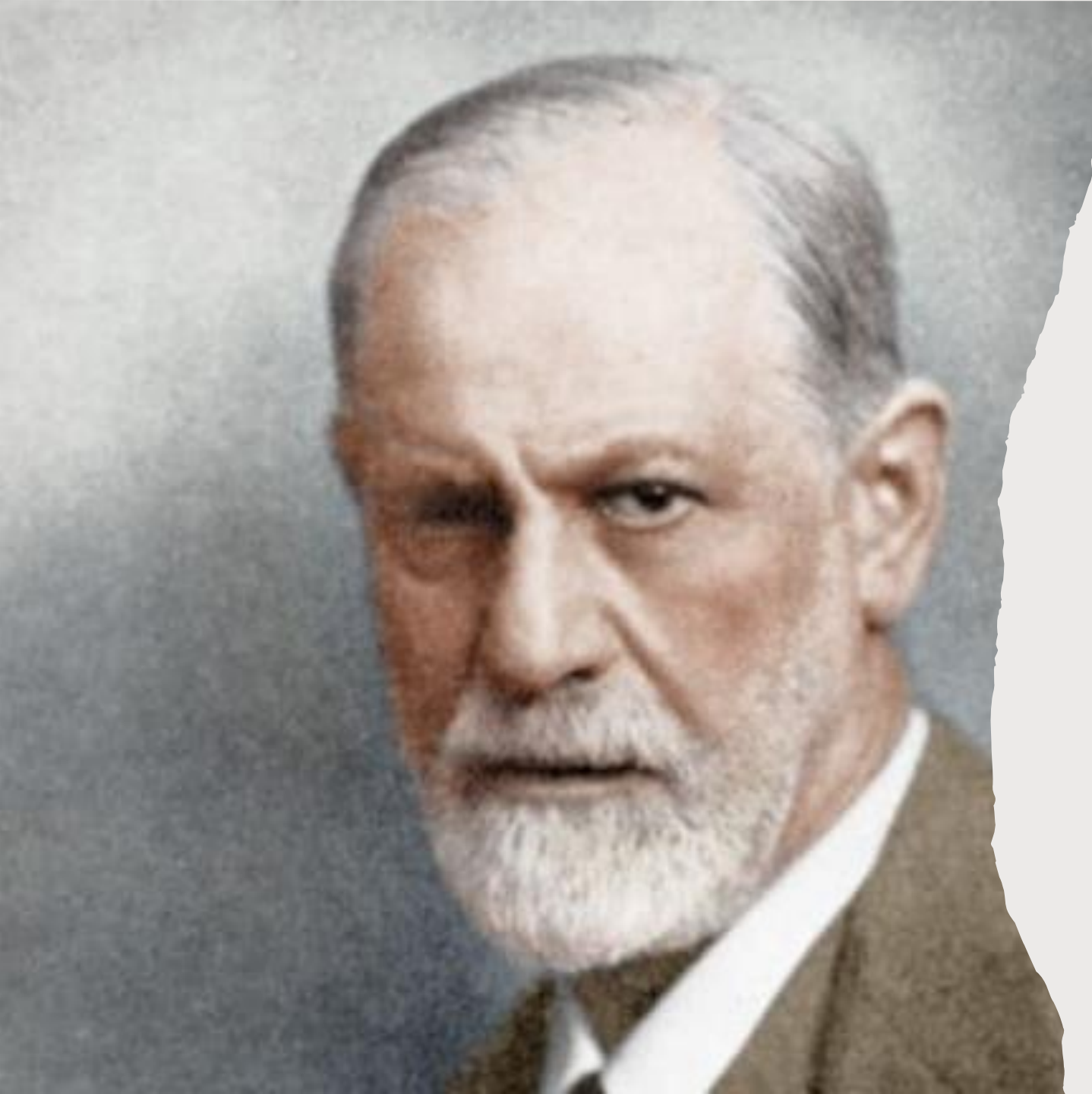
He claimed that symptoms could be cleared up if the contents of the unconscious mind were made conscious...

True or False?



Freud's ideas have influenced many counselling and psychotherapy approaches and has revolutionized how we understand fear and sadness today

Many key figures in the psychotherapy world originally trained as psychoanalysts.



Freuds contributions
to psychology and
psychotherapy
today...

Relevance of Freud – Psychoanalysis

“Talking Cure”

Freud began working on his theories towards the end of the 19th century. He died in 1939, however his legacy is still being developed, revised and discussed.

Even in the earliest days of his therapeutic work, Freud valued the relationship. In today's counselling world, these basic tenets are still as important as they were in the earliest days of psychoanalysis.



It's important to note that Freud's ideas were sometimes original, but often they were a convincing development of ideas that were around at the time.



He did however, create a new approach, he did produce a framework of practice and he was able to develop those various ideas and synthesise them to produce the psychoanalytical approach.



As has been mentioned earlier, many of the original concepts of psychoanalysis can be seen in the foundations of many of the counselling approaches that developed later in the 20th century.

The
unconscious
mind...





Object Relations Theory

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WS2JeJihS1A&t=657s>

Attachment Theory





Attachment Theory.. Aims for today

To consider...

- Attachment theory – what it is
- Why attachment matters
- How attachment patterns are formed
- What happens when patterns go wrong



Activity one...

What does the term attachment mean to you? What words, phrases, concepts, understandings do you think of?

Why is attachment formation is important?

Because attachment affects...

Felt security ~ ability to trust

Self regulation ~ managing our emotions

Language development

Sense of self ~ self-esteem

Cognitive functions ~ ability to learn

Making friends ~ playing

Adult relationships

Parenting ~ generations of children

How does it benefit us?

- Helps us view children within their unique experience
- Encourage us to understand behaviour as communication
- Gives us a clear understanding of what children need
- Guides us in restorative experiences for children with difficulties
- Allows us to reflect on our own experience and what we may bring to our relationships
- Understand our own parenting styles

Bowlby's early ideas...

- An evolutionary need to be close to mother for protection
- A spatial theory
- Mother is a secure base
- Exploratory behaviour
- Separation anxiety
- Attachment behaviours
- Attachment a lifelong phenomenon ~ internal working model

The basics of infant attachment...

- Babies **seek proximity** to caregiver and react with anxiety to separation from them (Bowlby, 1973)
- The **central theme** of attachment theory is that mothers who are available and responsive to their infants needs establish a sense of security
- The infant knows that the caregiver is dependable, which creates a **secure base** for the child to then **explore the world** and **establishes a bases for future relationships**

Understanding attachment according to Dr. Bruce Perry (2001)

... [Developmental Trauma: What you Can't See CAN Hurt You | "Don't Try This Alone" \(attachmentdisorderhealing.com\)](#)

Special enduring form of 'emotional' relationship with another person

Involves soothing, comfort and pleasure

Loss, or threat of loss of the specific person evokes distress

The child finds security and safety in the context of the relationship

The first 2 years of life

The blueprint for a lifetime
of decision making



Attachment formation

A process...

- Pre-attachment - birth to 2 months
- Attachment in the making – a hierarchy of preferences – to 8 months
- Attachment behaviour – to 18 months
- Increasing independence – 18 months onwards

Bonding in pregnancy

Body makes room for growing foetus

Mind makes room for 'baby to be' and 'self as mother'

Identity shift from 'not mother' to 'mother to be'

Openness needed for this process can leave women vulnerable to psychological damage

Clear Attachment 8 months to 2 years

Selective attachment to one figure separation anxiety

Babies protest when parent leaves

Emergence of object permanence

Multiple attachments by 18 months

Increased mobility offers a range of behaviours to maintain proximity

Following, approaching, clinging, vocalization, use of language

Ability to mentally represent relationship develops

24
months+

Less need to be in literal proximity to attachment figure

Toddler begins to develop independence and autonomy ~ conflicts with drive for proximity

'Felt security' = ability to mentalise

Growth of symbolic representations

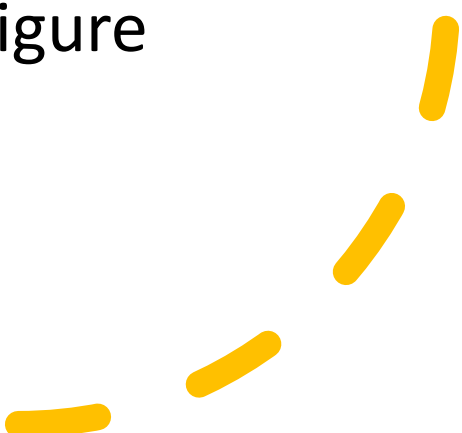
Developed sense of trust



Attachment is
about survival

A large orange circle on the left side of the slide, partially cut off by the edge.

Basic characteristics of attachment behaviour, what the **baby** does

- The child strives to stay near the caregiver, thus keeping the child safe (**proximity maintenance**)
 - The child returns to the attachment figure for comfort and safety at times of distress (**a secure base**)
 - The child reacts with distress when separated from the attachment figure (**separation anxiety**)
- 
- A series of four yellow dashed line segments in the bottom right corner, arranged in a curved, upward-sloping pattern.

Basic characteristics of attachment behaviour: What the care giver does

- The caregiver provides a secure, attuned base for the child to explore the world



Attachment behaviours

Care giver:

- Reflective function
- Empathy
- Containment
- Responsivity
- Timeless
- Motherese

Baby:

- Smiling
- Cooing
- Grasping
- Eye contact
- Crying
- Clinging
- Risk taking
- Pointing



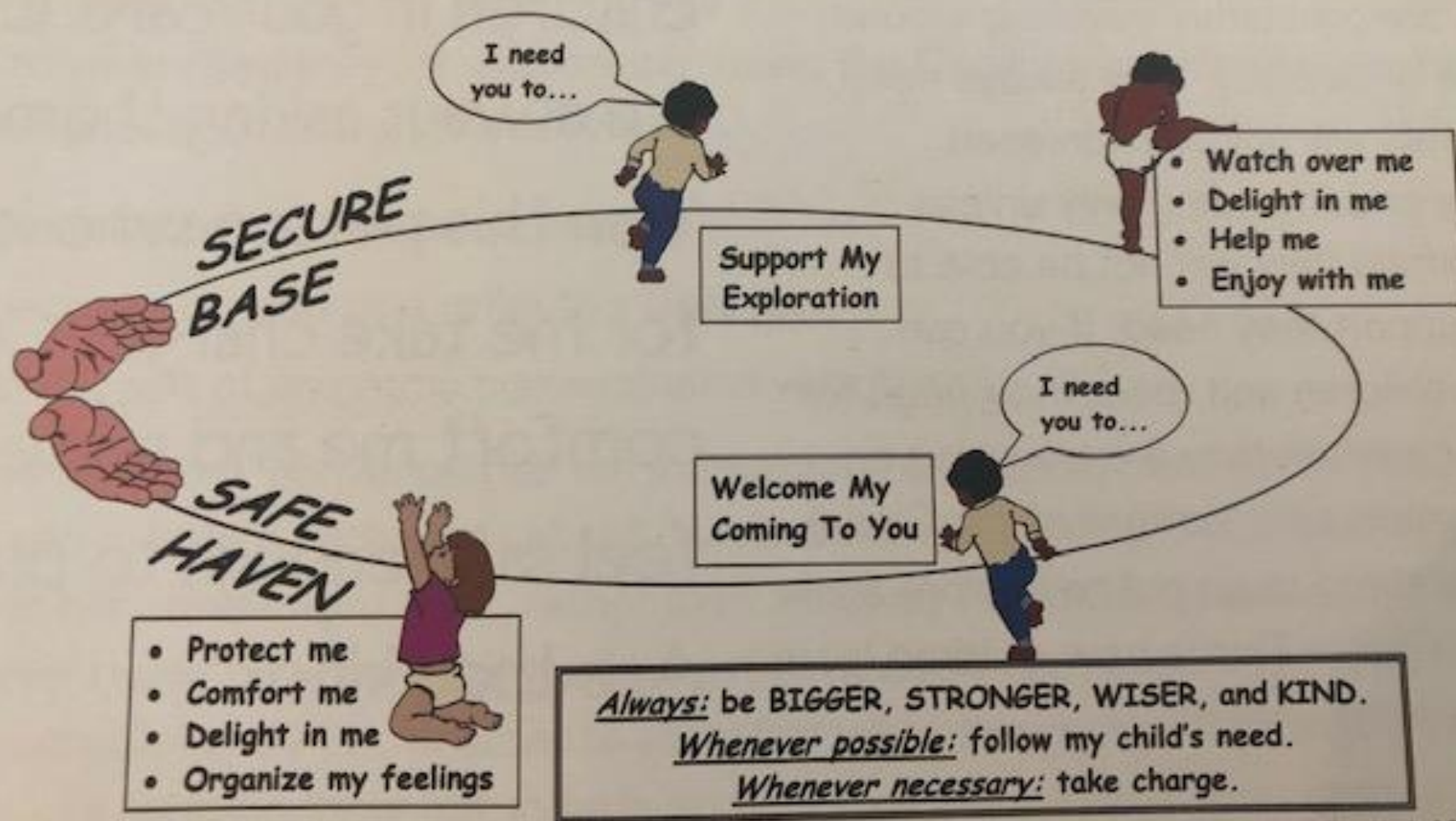
A Secure Base



Off Exploring

CIRCLE OF SECURITY

PARENT ATTENDING TO THE CHILD'S NEEDS



Attachment is
about
relationships



The
caregiver
system...

'attuned' responses

Baby 'held in mind'

Baby seen as an individual

Baby's inner world seen as
meaningful



Attachment
patterns arise from
interactions
between the
caregiver and the
baby

Mother/infant bonding...

A process NOT and event

Begins in pregnancy and continues after birth

The foundations of attachment

Affected by factors – Within mother, within baby, environmental factors

Benefits of attuned parenting

There is a substantial and growing body of evidence telling us that stable, highly responsive caregiving throughout the early childhood period is associated with a variety of developmental benefits:

Children whose primary care giver displays more responsive behaviour during the first several years of life...

- Achieve language milestone earlier
- Score significantly higher on cognitive tests
- Develop better social skills
- Have more secure attachments with parents and caregivers
- Have fewer emotional and behavioural problems

Qualities of
caregiving
that support
the
development
of a secure
attachment

Sensitivity/attunement

Mind-mindedness/reflective function/mentalization

Marked mirroring

Containment

Reciprocity

Continuity of care

Disrupted attachments: risk factors to babies/infants

Negative risk factors to attachment and bonding in infants

Parents own poor attachment history

Child's development difficulties, disability, chronic illness

Parents mental health problems, post natal depression, past abuse histories

Domestic violence and other forms of abuse

Single parenthood, teenage parenthood and poor social support

Child's temperament

Positive factors for infant and child attachment

The good news for infants...

Mothers/caregivers mis-attune with their babies more times than they attune (about 70%) – human beings are therefore very forgiving and resilient (60% - 70%) 'securely attached')

Angels in the nursery – one secure figure maybe enough, even if parental bonding is poor

Resilience and normal pathology

Ainsworth: 3
attachment
relationships...

Consistently responsive =
Secure attachment

Consistently un-responsive
= insecure attachment

Inconsistently responsive =
ambivalent attachment

Securely attached children

Know that distress and need will be recognized

Have a sense of trust

Uses caregiver as a secure base

May show distress at separation but the baby can be soothed at reunion

Insecure Avoidant Pattern

Children experience parents as rejecting, critical, uninterested, controlling

Distress responded to with irritation, annoyance, agitation

Attachment behaviour results in the opposite of what is wanted, child learns to **minimize attachment behaviour**

Represses and denies distress

Develops emotional self-containment to maintain proximity and avoid rejection

A flight from display of attachment needs

Insecure Ambivalent Attachment

Children experience caregivers as unresponsive, inconsistent, unreliable, neglectful, intrusive,

Distress may not be recognized or responded to erratically

Parents often caught up in their own emotional needs or internal states

Child learns to maximise attachment behaviours – fight for attention

Feels a sense of unworthiness and emptiness

Strong but ambivalent feelings towards others – either love or anger

A fourth
pattern:
Disorganised

Attachment figure is experienced as
frightened or frightening, emotionally
unavailable (psychotic, heavy substance
misuse) or dangerous ~ abusive towards
child, other, including animals

Implications for adult life...

Secure – working model of self as worthy of care, autonomous, regulates negative emotions

Insecure avoidant – dismisses self, compulsive self-reliance, shuts down to avoid distress

Insecure ambivalent – clinging, neediness, low self-worth, hypervigilance to distress, attracts drama

Disorganised – chaotic, fear of intimacy, expects rejection (approach/avoidance conflict), need for control. Both avoidant and ambivalent attachment strategies. Extreme concerning behaviours may emerge.

The Internal Working Model

“what infants expect if what comes before” ~ Bowlby

The internal working model forms the template for future relationships

Internal working model – Secure attachment

- Self as loved, effective, autonomous, competent
- Sees other people as available, co-operative, dependable, trustworthy

Internal working model – Avoidant attachment

- Self as unloved but self reliant
- Other people as unpredictable, unreliable, insensitive and intrusive

Internal working model – Ambivalent

- Self as unworthy, ineffective, dependent
- Other people as unpredictable, unreliable, insensitive, neglecting

Internal working model – Disorganised

- Self as confused, disconnected, bad and unsafe
- Others as frightening, unreliable, fragile



Rupture and Repair

Repairing
attachment...

CONNECTION before re-
correction

DEPENDENCY before
independence

HIGH BOUNDARIES and
high warmth



Presence...

“ The greatest gift we
can offer anyone is
true presence” –

Thich Nhat Hanh, 1998

Further reading...

- Bowlby, J. (1971) Attachment and loss; Vol.1, Attachment. Harmondsworth: Penguin
- Bretherton, I. 1992. The Origins of Attachment Theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. Developmental Psychology. 28, 5. p759-775
- Holmes, J. (2014) John Bowlby and Attachment Theory. Hove: Routledge.
- Van der Horst, F.C.P and van der Veer, R. 2010. The ontogeny of an idea: John Bowlby and Contemporaries on Mother-Child Separation. History of Psychology, 13, 1 pp.25-45

Any Questions & Feedback

