

Introduction:

Attachment Disorder as described by University of Glasgow (no date) is a disorder that effects social functioning. Symptoms of this disorder can be seen as a result from a child being neglected, abused or in the care system. According to Gerhardt (2014) Attachment Disorder develops from the early stages of brain development.

Corbin (2007) supports this and explains further how early trauma in childhood attachments alters the connectivity of neuro chemicals, effecting the part of the brain that enables us to form attachments and feel safe and secure.

Early attachment experiences are critical for the infants developing brain, with attachments made between the child and the care giver, these interactions form the neuro chemicals to promote the part of the brain to cope with stress, feelings and relationships (Corbin, 2007).

According to Newman et al. (2015) describes how new capacities develop within the centre of the brain which lead to the human becoming able to cope with nurturing abilities. Post-natal, the brain grows an outer layer, this is called the cerebral cortex.

Theory to support this concept can be seen on the image provided, this is Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, according to Braveheart Education (2017).

Barriers:

Pennine care (no date) suggest that children with Attachment Disorder have difficulty forming relationships with other children and adults, this is said to stem from lack of trust and insecurity leading from infant experiences.

However, it is possible to overcome this barrier with positive teacher relationships, Bergin and Bergin (2009) believe that an attachment formed with a teacher can enhance the child's academic results, by developing these attachments, the child is said to feel safe and secure, which leads to a regulation in their emotional state.

Reupert and Maybery (2007) highlight the need for teachers to gain more knowledge into such mental disorders as children are at risk are not being diagnosed within the mainstream school.

Mulvenney (2017) reports in The Guardian how children with Attachment Disorder are often emotionally and academically underdeveloped for their age, this can be seen as a barrier to inclusion.

All children have the right to inclusion within a mainstream school, according to Conner (2016). The Warnock Report and the Salamanca Statement (cited in Conner, 2016) both support the inclusion of children within the mainstream schools by introducing legislation not only within the United Kingdom but on an international basis. However, Shah (cited in Atkins, 2016:7) asks whether the child's rights have been infringed as they also need to be given a preference whether to attend an inclusive school or a purpose built school for children with additional needs.

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Strategy: Nurture Groups

According to Cooper and Whitebread (2007), nurture groups are a provision provided in schools to support children with emotional, social and behavioural difficulties. Cooper and Whitebread (2007) reinforce the theory of Maslow, whereas the need for a child to achieve a level of nurturing before they are able to move up to the next level of their psychological needs, thus supporting the concept of nurture groups.

Welsh Assembly Government (2010) states that nurture groups provide a safe and structured environment for children with emotional and behavioural problems, such as those seen in children with Attachment Disorder. These small, intimate groups are said by Welsh Assembly Government (2010) to encourage a child's self-esteem whilst celebrating the smallest success in achievement.

The Nurture Group Network (no date) suggests that these groups aim to help children express their emotions safely, as children with Attachment Disorder often find it hard to label their own emotions as they are unsure as to how they are feeling.

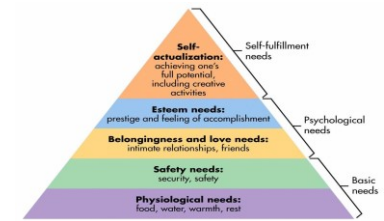
Research into nurture groups have predominantly been carried out within a primary school setting, however, secondary schools do have such groups but these are not always apparent.

Reviewing the use of nurture groups in secondary schools, Nurtureuk (2017) believe that these have been found to have a positive impact on students of an older age, as they address the additional anxieties that teenagers are faced with, such as self-image, relationships, peer pressure and drugs.

However, according to Nurtureuk (2017) these findings are based on qualitative research findings and suggests that more quantitative research based on nurture groups in secondary schools would give a clearer picture as to whether they are as influential as once thought.

Supporting these findings, Early Intervention Foundation (2017) state that nurture groups are influenced by Bowlby's Attachment Theory and intended for children in primary schools.

According to Papamichael (2011) schools taking the holistic approach when developing a nurture group are the most successful, to achieve this they are said to integrate the nurturing attitudes and practicing throughout the whole school with all teachers participating. However, Papamichael (2011) considers the breakdown in communication and lack of participation and partnership from teachers as a possible barrier to the future success of nurture groups.



(Source: Braveheart Education, 2017)

Conclusion:

Early attachment experiences have been found to impact the growth of the brain, resulting in the under developed brain being unable to cope with stress, anxiety and feelings, Attachment Disorder is said to be a result of this process.

As Maslow and Bowlby suggest, secure attachments are needed to enable the child to develop and progress socially, emotionally and physically.

The disorder itself can be considered as a barrier, however, with teachers commitment to support the child and groups such as nurture groups, the brain can learn new ways to process and cope with feelings, anxiety and stress, the future goal being the ability to form positive relationships.

Primary schools have been seen as a major influence in introducing strategies, however, as discussed, further research is needed to gain a clear record of strategies and outcomes achieved within the secondary school environment.

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