

Component 1

Assignment Title: Presentation

Case Study: Shona

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Understanding Separation Anxiety Through John Bowlby's Attachment Theory

Applying attachment theory to Shona's early childhood
development and nursery experience.

Who is John Bowlby

- **British psychiatrist and psychoanalyst**
- **Developed attachment theory.**
- **Believed children have a natural need to form emotional relationships with caregivers.**
- **These relationships provide safety and security, particularly during separation or unfamiliar situations.**

(Bowlby, 2008)

Key principles of Bowlby's Attachment Theory

- **Attachment**

The emotional bond between a child and their main caregiver.

- **Secure base**

A familiar, trusted caregiver who helps a child feel safe enough to explore.

- **Separation anxiety**

Distress a child may feel when separated from their caregiver

- **Internal working model**

Expectations about relationships that develop through early experiences.

(Bowlby, 2008)

Understanding Shona's Behaviour Through the attachment theory

- Anxiety when separated from her main caregivers
- Struggling to settle into nursery
- Finding it difficult to join in with other children
- Needing reassurance to feel safe and secure.

Emotional – Anxiety may affect her sense of security.

Social – Difficulty joining in with group play may affect friendships.

Cognitive – Anxiety may affect her engagement in learning activities.

Physical – Distress may reduce her involvement in active play.

Supporting Shona at Nursery

- **Consistent key person**

Builds trust & provides comfort and reassurance.

- **Predictable routine and visual timetable**

Helps Shona to understand what happens next.

- **Encouragement**

Helping her gradually to join in with activities.

- **Working closely with parents and caregivers**

Supports a consistent approach between home and nursery.

- **Monitoring and additional support**

Observe Shona's development, record concerns and involve the SENCO where needed.

Mary Ainsworth and attachment Patterns

- **Built on Bowlby's attachment theory**

Explored how children responded to separation from caregiver

- **Developed the Strange Situation procedure**

Observed young children's reactions to being separated and returned to their caregivers

- **Identified three attachment patterns.**
 - **Secure attachment-** Seeks comfort from their caregiver and is reassured when they return
 - **Insecure – avoidant attachment –** Shows little outward distress and may avoid contact when the caregiver returns
 - **Insecure-resistant attachment-** Becomes distressed and may struggle to settle when caregiver returns

(Landa and Duschinsky, 2013)

Strengths and Limitations of Attachment Research

Strengths

- **Bowlby highlighted the importance of early emotional bonds.**
- **Ainsworth's research provided observational evidence supporting the attachment theory.**
- **Their research helps guide childcare practice.**

Limitations

- **Bowlby's theory places greater emphasis on primary caregiver Relationships.**
- **Ainsworth's original study involved only a small group of children.**
- **Cultural differences may affect how attachment behaviours are expressed and interpreted.**

Nature vs Nurture: What influences Attachments?

Nature

- **Natural need for attachment**

Children are biologically driven to seek safety and closeness.

- **Biological influences**

Inherited characteristics and temperament may affect how children respond.

Nurture

- **Sensitive and responsive caregiving.**

Helps children to develop trust and security.

- **Relationships & experiences**

Influence how children develop expectations of others.

Applying it to Shona

Consistent care and reassurance at nursery can help Shona to gradually feel safe and confident.

Conclusion

- **Understanding Shona's behaviour- Bowlby's attachment theory helps explain her separation anxiety and need for reassurance when starting nursery.**
- **Importance of secure relationships – Bowlby and Ainsworth's research highlights the role of early relationships in children's emotional security and development.**
- **Nature and nurture – Both biological influences and caregiving experiences can affect how children respond to separation and unfamiliar environments.**
- **Supporting Shona at nursery – A consistent key person, visual timetables, gradual involvement into activities and working closely with her caregivers can help her feel secure, build confidence and support her emotional, social and learning development.**

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