



MODULE CODE: ECCY7007

ASSESSMENT COMPONENT:

Presentation

STUDENT NAME:

Rachel-Elizabeth Paynter

STUDENT NUMBER:

2007219

Use of Generative AI in Assessment

RESEARCH	For this assessment, you can use Generative AI to support you in research, including searching for bibliography, using tools to summarise, compare and interrogate materials.	Yes ☒ No ☐
STRUCTURE	For this assessment, you can use Generative AI to support you in structuring your submission, including creating a draft argument structure, identifying parts and headings, etc.	Yes ☐ No ☒
PROOFREADING	For this assessment, you can use Generative AI to check your own text/creation for grammatical and syntactical mistakes, including rephrasing of your own work within specific standards.	Yes ☒ No ☐
WRITING	For this assessment, you can use Generative AI to create text for submission.	Yes ☐ No ☒
CREATIVE	For this assessment, you can use Generative AI to create creative materials, such as images.	Yes ☐ No ☒
PROGRAMING	For this assessment, you can use Generative AI to create and check code.	Yes ☐ No ☒
NONE	For this assessment, you are not allowed to use any type of Generative AI support. This includes research support, structure support, writing/proofreading support, and creative support.	Yes ☐ No ☒

AI Acknowledgement

I acknowledge the use of ChatGPT (<https://chatgpt.com/>) on 23rd January 2026 to proofread my work. Using the prompt:

1. Please proofread this work, focussing on spelling and grammar accuracy as well as clarity.

I confirm that I have not presented any AI generated text as my own work. I confirm that I have copies of my drafts, notes, and other resources I used before, and after the use of AI tools which I may be asked to provide in evidence.

Slide 1



Slide 2



Attachment Theory

Secure Anxious

Fearful Avoidant

What is attachment?

ATTACHMENT IS THE LASTING CONNECTIONS BETWEEN HUMAN BEINGS. (NSPCC, 2021)



Introduction.

Looking at attachment.

Age 3-5 years old, key age, starting school etc.

Risks of unsecure attachments.

What intervention can be put in place to support.

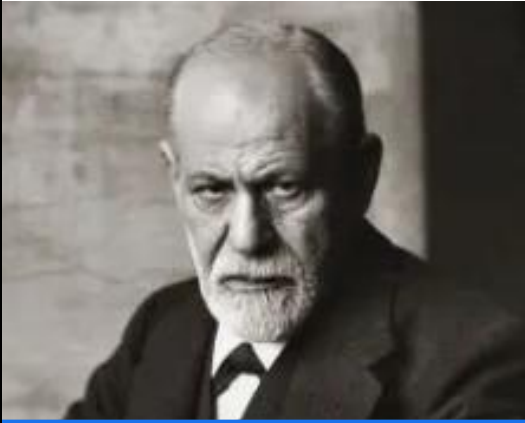
Slide 3

Presentation Aims

- critically examine **Bowlby's attachment theory** as a framework for understanding development in children aged 3–7
- Analyse the **developmental implications of poor attachment**
- Evaluate **evidence-based strategies** to support attachment in early childhood



Slide 4



"The reason why the infant in arms wants to perceive the presence of its mother is only because it already knows by experience that she satisfies all of its needs without delay. The situation, then, which it regards as a 'danger' and against which it wants to be safeguarded is that of non-satisfaction, of a growing tension due to need, against which it is helpless"

(Freud, 1926)



Read Quote

What does this mean?

Freud, in this quote is suggesting that:

Attachment is born out of need.

Mother meets the child's need therefore attachment is formed.

Separation from mother means the needs are not met.

It is learnt behaviour, not innate.

Attachment is about survival and built trust on meeting the child's needs.

Slide 5

Bowlby's Attachment Theory: Core Concepts

- Bowlby's attachment theory emphasizes the bond between the child and their primary caregiver
- These are innate and are programmed to support survival
- These bonds provide a safe base for the child
- Forms a foundation for future relationships
- These attachments are vital for the emotional development of the child

A photograph of a smiling woman holding a baby, with a small circular inset showing a woman with glasses.

Bowlby's monotropic theory of attachment suggests attachment is important for a child's survival.

Safe base – allows child to go explore the world knowing there is a safe point to return to

(Mikulincer, Shaver, Berant, 2013)

Challenge – cultural bias (Patel, Gunion, Watt, & Booth, 2023) fixed attachment at 2 (Smith, Cameron, & Reimer (2017) To much focus on the mother – Wider community (Harlow, 2021)

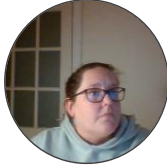
Slide 6



Bowlby's Attachment Stages

- Pre-attachment – Newborn to six weeks
- Attachment in the making – six weeks to six–eight months
- Clear cut attachment – six–eight months to eighteen months- two years
- Formation of reciprocal relationships – eighteen months- two years onwards

(Bowlby, 1969)



Pre-attachment –

Infants show no particular attachment to a caregiver and respond similarly to all caregivers.

Attachment in the making –

Infants begin to show a preference for familiar caregivers and develop trust.

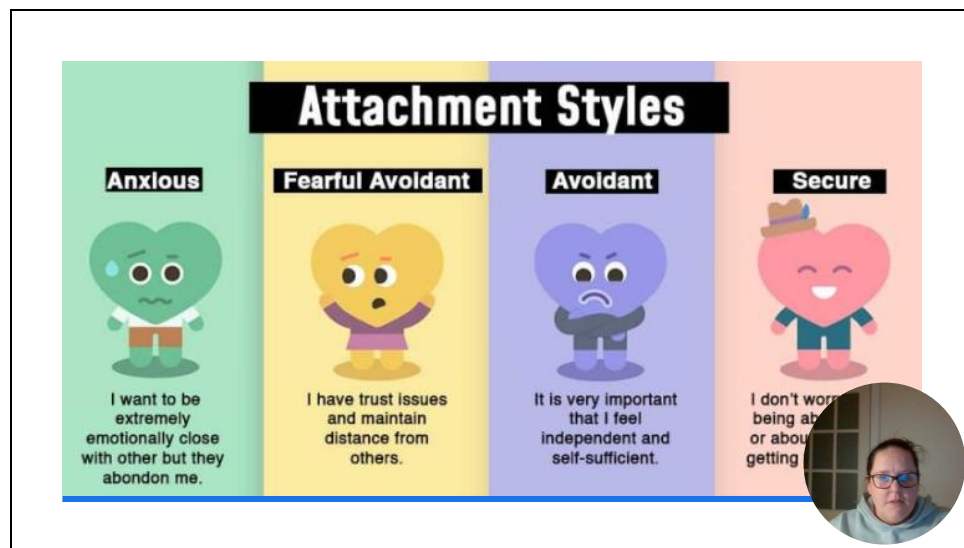
Clear cut attachment –

Infants actively seek comfort from their primary caregiver and show distress when separated.

Formation of reciprocal relationships – Children will acquire language skills and better understand the pattern of carers leaving and returning.

(Harcourt, 2021).

Slide 7



anxious and guarded around strangers, exhibit distress when their caregiver leaves. Ainsworth et al. (1978) resisted interactions with their mother when they were reunited, aggression toward the mother for abandoning them.

Conflicted Behaviours: often exhibit contradictory behaviours, such as seeking comfort from caregivers but then pushing them away.

When caregivers are not emotionally available, Ainsworth et al. (1978) found these children were not distressed when separated from their mothers and engaged with the stranger similarly to their mother.

most desired attachment style in children. It best places them to develop positively for the future. Show distress when their caregiver leaves the room, settle and compose themselves when their caregiver returns.

Slide 8

Internal Working Models

- The internal working models is a concept that was developed by Bowlby
- They are frameworks that shape how a person views themselves, their relationships and others.
- The components of the Internal working models are
 - Model of the self
 - Model of others
 - Model of relationships.



Model of self:

how individuals perceive their own worthiness of love and care. A positive self-model leads to feelings of security and confidence in relationships.

Model of others:

expectations about how others will respond to one's needs. It shapes beliefs about the reliability and availability of attachment figures.

Model of relationships: expectations on how relationships function, impacts how the person may approach a new relationship and impacts conflict management.

The stability of IWM's is a critical aspect of understanding how early attachment experiences affect attachment styles later in life. The stability of IWM's is influenced by the quality of the care they received as well as the interactions with them. Positive interactions can reinforce attachment styles and positive IWM's while negative or traumatic experiences can lead to the development of insecure attachment styles or negative IWMs.

(Holmes, 2024)

Slide 9

Attachment Presentation in 3–7-Year-Olds

In three- to seven-year-olds the children are moving away from relying on the family and primary caregivers, moving into education and developing friendships

Building attachments with teachers in the school

Attachment is needed for cognitive engagement in children of this age as it forms the foundation for emotional development and social skills



Teacher as secondary attachment figure

Behavioural manifestations: Emotional dysregulation, Hyper-independence or dependency, Controlling or withdrawn behaviours.



Causes of poor attachment

- Neglect or abuse
- Inconsistent caregiving
- Separation from primary caregivers
- Parents mental health issues



Neglect and Abuse – develop insecure attachment. Physical abuse linked to avoidant attachment while neglect is linked to anxious attachment, suggesting that the type of maltreatment can influence the attachment style that develops.

Inconsistent caregiving – This is when the parent is their place of safety but also induces fear which created confusion in their relationships with attachment figures.

Separation – Trauma leading to responses such as stress, difficulty forming new relationships and emotional and psychological difficulties.

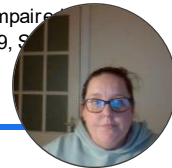
Mental health difficulties may lead to inconsistent care of the child leading to insecure attachments.

(Naish, Oakley, O'Brien, Penna, & Thrower, 2023)

Implications of Poor Attachment: Emotional & Psychological



- Increased anxiety and stress reactivity
- Difficulties with emotional regulation
- Heightened risk of internalising/externalising behaviours
- Poor co-regulation → impaired regulation (Bowlby, 1969, Sroufe, 2001)



Poor attachment can lead to significant anxiety and stress. Can manifest as clinginess, low self-esteem, and sensitivity. These stem from a fear of abandonment or rejection. (Bradford, Burningham, Sandberg, & Johnson, 2017)

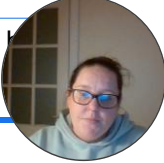
Secure attachment is linked to emotional functioning and so insecure attachments can lead to the child having difficulties in regulating their emotions.

Children with poor attachment have a higher risk of developing internalising and externalising behaviours. Internalising behaviours could include depression, anxiety, and social isolation. Externalised problems involve behaviours such as aggression which can lead to risks with social and emotional development.

Bowlby – early experiences influence how a child is able to regulate their emotions and form attachments. Coregulation is the signals between people of emotional safety and regulation. For children with poor attachments struggle self-regulating then I can affect emotional wellbeing

Slide 12

Implications for Social & Educational Development	Difficulty building relationships with their peers
	Finding it difficult to build trust with adult
	This can lead to challenges within relationship between the teacher and the child
	Impact on attainment at school
	This can lead to children's behaviours being misinterpreted in the school setting.



Peers – Children who have secure attachments engage positively with their peers and build healthy friendships, however, those with insecure attachments may have difficulties in forming these friendships.

Trust – If they have not built secure attachments with their primary caregiver then they may struggle with forming these relationships with other adults in their life, e.g., teachers. This could then lead to negative teacher – child relationships in school as the child has not built the foundation of attachment.

School readiness and attainment – Insecure attachments can significantly impact the child's readiness to learn. Secure attachments are also linked to higher grades, test scores, and willingness to take on challenges.

The challenges faced with children with poor attachment – school may see the behaviours of poor attachment as behavioural difficulties, has the potential for children to be misinterpreted when the full picture is not seen.

(Walters, 2025)

Slide 13

Long-Term Developmental Risks

- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Mental health vulnerability
- Intergenerational attachment patterns
- Attachment is a risk factor, not a deterministic outcome



ACE's – The long-term effects of poor attachment are linked to ACE's – e.g. a child who experienced abuse would have both ACE's and poor attachment (Crandall et al, 2019)

Poor attachment in childhood and the effect that this can have on the child in later life can significantly impact the child's mental health. (Pote, Picciotto, & Norris, 2024)

Intergenerational – you behave how you know so for a child with poor attachment they could treat their own children how they were treated if interventions are not put in place to support. Also thought that these can be influenced by factors such as gender differences and environmental factors. (Zelekha, & Yaakobi, 2020)

Note – poor attachment is a risk factor however with appropriate interventions then these can be reduced (Howe, 2011)

Slide 14



Supporting Attachment: Caregiver- Level Interventions

- Sensitive, responsive caregiving
- Emotion coaching
- Repairing relational ruptures
- Parenting interventions grounded in attachment theory
- Importance of caregiver reflective functioning



Emotional coaching – Approach focusses on nurturing and emotionally supportive relationships. Helps children to become aware of their emotions. Involves validating children’s emotions, setting limits where needed and supporting the child in problem solving.

Repairing relational ruptures – Acknowledge the rupture, address the cause, repair the relationship, practice reliability. (Steindl, Matos, & Dimaggio, 2023)

Dyadic Development Psychotherapy – aims to support the emotional bond between the child and the caregiver.

Circle of security – Safe environment for the child to express themselves and enhance caregivers’ ability to provide comfort in times of distress. (Smith-Nielsen, 2025)

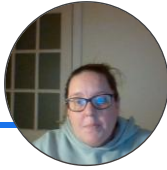
Attachment and Biobehavioural catch up – enhancing caregiver sensitivity and responsiveness helping to support attachment healing and improve a child emotional regulation.

Caregiving reflection on themselves

Supporting Attachment in Educational Settings



- Key person approach
- Emotionally available adults
- Predictable routines and boundaries
- Trauma-informed and attachment-aware practice
- Schools as relational environments, not just academic spaces



Key person – Approach to build trust and attachment bonds between the child and their key worker, supports attachment for the child – both if they do not have a secure attachment and in the transition into school. (O'Connor, 2017)

Emotionally Available Adult – Safe space for the child to express feelings, build trust, comfort, and safety.

Predictable routines and boundaries – Develop predictable patterns of behaviour, child knows what is expected of them and how to respond, sense of safety. Boundaries help to manage behaviour and emotions.

Trauma informed – Providing a safe space for the student, fosters positive relationships, develop resilience. (Naish, Oakley, O'Brien, Penna, S & Thrower, 2023)

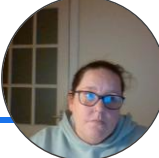
Schools are more than just education now but are relational environments – fostering social, emotional, and behavioural development. Supportive school climate can significantly impact student wellbeing and academic performance. Creating environments that are not only for learning but also built trust, stability, and sense of belonging which can contribute to better educational outcomes.

(Geddes, 2006)

Targeted & Multi-Agency Interventions



- Play-based therapies
- Attachment-focused programmes
- Interdisciplinary working (education, health, social care)
- Avoiding pathologisation
- Cultural sensitivity



Using play therapy to support the child to explore their emotions and experience. Play also allows the child to build trust. Where the caregivers participate in the sessions it allows for them to understand the needs of the child through play.

AFP aim to strengthen the emotional bond between the child and their caregiver. It supports healthy emotional, social, and cognitive development.

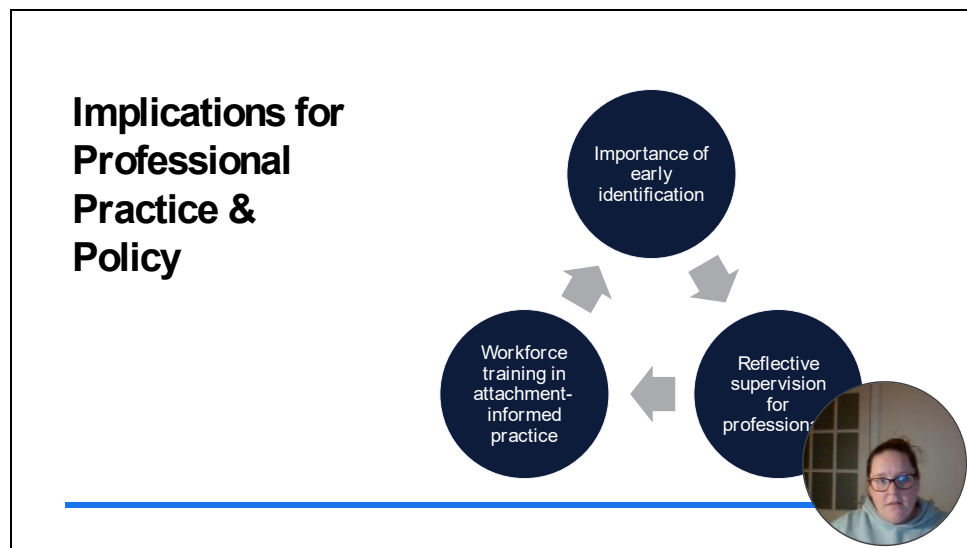
Benefits of interdisciplinary working

(May, Mowthorpe, & Griffiths, 2014).

Pathologisation – Unfairly or wrongly considering something is the issue.

Cultural sensitivity – some cultures view their attachment with children differently, important to take the cultural differences into consideration.

Slide 17



Early identification – better outcomes

Reflection – avoid burnout, better support for family.

Training

Slide 18

Conclusion

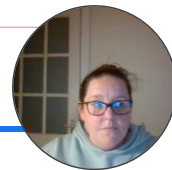
Bowlby's theory remains a foundational framework however there are studies that suggest that parts of his theories need updating

Poor attachment significantly impacts development in ages 3–7 in all areas of development

Attachment is **dynamic, relational, and reparable**

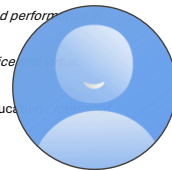
Practice must move beyond behaviour management to relational understanding

Nature vs Nurture



References

- Bradford, A. B., Burningham, K. L., Sandberg, J. G., & Johnson, L. N. (2017). The Association between the Parent–Child Relationship and Symptoms of Anxiety and Depression: The Roles of Attachment and Perceived Spouse Attachment Behaviours. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 43(2), 291–307. <https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12190>
- Crandall, A., Miller, J. R., Cheung, A., Novilla, L. K., Glade, R., Novilla, M. L. B., Magnusson, B. M., Leavitt, B. L., Barnes, M. D., & Hanson, C. L. (2019). ACEs and counter-ACEs: How positive and negative childhood experiences influence adult health. *Child Abuse & Neglect*, 96, Article 104089. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chiabu.2019.104089>
- Freud, S. (1926) Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety, SE 20, London: Hogarth.
- Geddes, H. (2006). *Attachment in the classroom : the links between children's early experience, emotional well-being and performance in school*. Worth Pub.
- Harcourt, E. (Ed.). (2021). *Attachment and character : attachment theory, ethics, and the developmental psychology of vice*. Oxford University Press.
- Harlow, E. (2021). Attachment theory: developments, debates and recent applications in social work, social care and education. *Social Work Practice*, 35(1), 79–91. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02650533.2019.1700493>



Slide 20

Holmes, J., & Holmes, J. (2014). John Bowlby and Attachment Theory (2nd ed.). Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315879772>

Holmes, J. (2024). Bowlby's trilogy. *BJPsych Advances*, 30(5), 326–328. <https://doi.org/10.1192/bja.2023.53>

Howe, D. (2011). *Attachment across the lifecourse : a brief introduction*. Palgrave Macmillan.

May, D., Mowthorpe, L., & Griffiths, E. (2014). Teetering on the edge of care: the role of intensive attachment-based play therapies. *Adoption & Fostering*, 38(2), 131–148. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0308575914532063>

McGarvie, s. (2024) Attachment Theory, Bowlby's Stages & Attachment Styles. Available at: <https://positivepsychology.com/attachment-theory/>

Mikulincer, M., Shaver, P. R., & Berant, E. (2013). An Attachment Perspective on Therapeutic Processes and Outcomes. *Journal of Personality*, 81(6), 606–616. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2012.00806.x>

Naish, S., Oakley, A., O'Brien, H., Penna, S., & Thrower, D. (2023). *The a-z of Trauma-Informed Teaching : Strategies and Solutions with Behaviour and Support for Children Aged 3-11*. (1st ed.). Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

NSPCC, (2021) Attachment and child development. Available at: <https://learning.nspcc.org.uk/child-health-development/attachment/0-5-years>



Slide 21

O'Connor, A. (2017). *Understanding transitions in the early years : supporting change through attachment and resilience* (Second edition.). Routledge.

Patel, L., Gunion, S., Watt, A., & Booth, S. (2023). *Re-examining attachment theory in educational psychology: A call for culturally responsive practice*. *Educational Psychology in Scotland*, 23(1), 52–58. <https://doi.org/10.53841/bpsepis.2023.23.1.52>

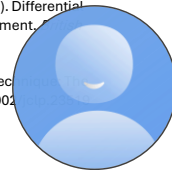
Pote, H., Picciotto, A., & Norris, C. (2024). *Child Psychology : Pathways to Good Practice*. (1st ed.). John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

Sherman, L. J., Rice, K., & Cassidy, J. (2015). Infant capacities related to building internal working models of attachment figures: A theoretical and empirical review. *Developmental Review*, 37, 109–141. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dr.2015.06.001>

Smith, M., Cameron, C., & Reimer, D. (2017). From Attachment to Recognition for Children in Care. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 47(6), 1606–1623. <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcx096>

Smith-Nielsen, J., Støve, L. L., Stuart, A. C., Jäkel, J., Egmo, I., Røhder, K., Wendelboe, K. I., & Væver, M. S. (2025). Differential effects of the circle of security-parenting programme on infant–mother attachment: The role of infant temperament. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. <https://doi.org/10.1111/bjc.70031>

Steindl, S. R., Matos, M., & Dimaggio, G. (2023). The interplay between therapeutic relationship and therapeutic technique: The whole is more than the sum of its parts. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 79(7), 1686–1692. <https://doi.org/10.1002/jcop.25000>



Slide 22

Walters, G. D. (2025). Insecure Attachment, Poor Self-Regulation, and Weak Empathy as Developmental Antecedents to Delinquency when Mediated by Antisocial Cognition. *Youth & Society*, 57(5), 779–802. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0044118X241307963>

Zelekha, Y., & Yaakobi, E. (2020). Intergenerational attachment orientations: Gender differences and environmental contribution. *PloS One*, 15(7), e02333906. <https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.02333906>

