

MODULE TITLE

Psychology in Health and Social Care

MODULE NUMBER

LCHS4010

ASSIGNMENT NO: 1

Bowlby's Attachment Theory: A Case Study of Jenny

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Case Background: Jenny's Context



Profile: Jenny

Age: 16 Years Old

Stage: Teenager

Status: Living with mother; bereavement history.

Significant Life Events

11



Pivotal Disruption

Jenny's father death. Sudden loss of a key attachment figure and a caregiver.

Role Reversal

Jenny becomes the primary carer for her mother immediately following the bereavement.

16

Present Day

Five consecutive years as a young carer, managing the household and mother's complex needs.

Responsibilities & Challenges

Responsibilities



Cooking



Cleaning



Shopping



Finances



Medical & Appointments



Challenges



Academic Decline



Social Isolation

These demands create a deficit in her 'Safe Haven' and 'Secure Base' (Bowlby, 1969).

Bowlby's Attachment Theory



Attachment

A "lasting psychological connectedness between human beings" is what Bowlby (Bowlby,1969) defines as attachment. The baby looks for safety as a survival strategy. At strategy. At age 11, a crucial time for the development of an adolescent identity, Jenny's Jenny's attachment bond with her father was was broken.



Emotional Bond

The particular connection that one person has person has to another is called an emotional emotional bond. This connection is unique and unique and long-lasting, in contrast to typical typical social interactions. The relationship relationship between Jenny and her mother mother has changed from one of healthy dependency to one of compulsive caregiving, caregiving, in which Jenny's service rather than rather than mutual support sustains the emotional bond.



Security

The "Secure Base"—the notion that a caregiver caregiver offers a solid base from which a child child can explore the world—is a crucial idea. A idea. A child can concentrate on development development when they feel safe. As a result result of parentification, Jenny now lacks a a secure base and has instead taken on the the role of her mother's secure base(Bowlby,1988)

Applying Attachment Theory to Jenny's Case



Parentification & Role Reversal

- Jenny has shifted from attached child to primary caregiver.
- Her needs for exploration are suppressed to ensure the mother's survival.
- Compulsive caregiving becomes her primary relational strategy.



Internal Working Model (IWM)

- Father's death created a model of unpredictable loss.
- Jenny may view herself as "only valuable when useful."
- Viewed as fragile or likely to leave if not cared for.



Proximity & Safe Haven

- Hindered by the physical/emotional demands of care.
- Mother is unable to act as a Safe Haven due to illness.
- Chronic separation anxiety manifesting as hyper-vigilance.

Nature and Nurture Factors

Nature: Innate Drives

- ✓ Innate desire for closeness in order to survive.
- ✓ Biological reaction to separation under stress.
- ✓ Innate ability to empathizes.

Nurture: Environmental Impact

- ✗ Her mother's illness prevented her from offering a "secure base."
- ✗ her father's unexpected death when she was eleven years old.
- ✗ Five years of heavy adult-level responsibility.

Support Plan for Jenny



Grief & Loss Counseling

- ✓ Provide Jenny with a place to deal with her father's passing. This tackles Bowlby's emphasis on grieving and avoids detachment or pathological mourning (Ainsworth, 1978).
- ✓ Assist Jenny and her mother in re-establishing healthy boundaries so that their relationship is more age-appropriate and moves away from role reversal.



Respite & Peer Interaction

- ✓ By giving the mother expert care, adults maintain the stability of the home, enabling Jenny to resume her role as a "developing child."
- ✓ Encourage peer relationships to build new, healthy emotional bonds outside the home, expanding her Internal Working Model



Educational Scaffolding

- ✓ Flexible deadlines to accommodate mother's health crises.
- ✓ Young Carer group access for shared identity and support.

Strengths, Limitations, & Conclusion

+ Strengths

- ✓ Describes how her present behaviour is directly impacted by the death of her father.
- ✓ Acknowledges "role reversal" as a serious risk to development.
- Assists practitioners in anticipating that Jenny's IWM may cause her to struggle in the future with intimacy or independence.

- Limitations

- ! Jenny's trauma happened in middle childhood (age 11), necessitating a more nuanced adolescent perspective; Bowlby frequently focused on infancy
- ! Jenny's natural resilience may be overlooked by the theory, which suggests that early attachment disruptions are irreversible
- ! Doesn't always take cultural differences in family caregiving expectations into expectations into consideration.

💡 Conclusion

According to Bowlby, Jenny is a "parentified child" whose needs for security and attachment have been compromised in order to preserve her mother's stability. A significant role reversal was sparked by the death of her father. Although her caregiving shows a great deal of loyalty and fortitude, it conceals a profound emotional deprivation. Restoring her sense of security, letting her grieve her losses, and making sure she is no longer her family's only "secure base" are the main goals of effective support.

References

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