

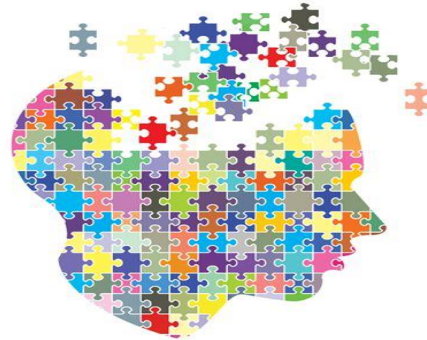


Developing Resilient Learners

# Attachment Awareness

*Emotional Intelligence*

Training for Primary Schools



Promoting Emotional Health, Wellbeing and  
Resilience in Primary Schools



Developing Resilient Learners

# About us

- Children's Mental Health and Well-being
- Increase awareness, develop knowledge and confidence
- Reduce the stigma attached to mental health
- Appreciation of emotional needs

[www.developingresilientlearners.co.uk](http://www.developingresilientlearners.co.uk)



# Mental and Emotional Health



Mental health includes our **emotional, psychological, and social well-being**. It affects how we **think, feel, and act**. It also helps determine how we handle **different situations, relate to others, and make choices**.

# Resilience

## Building Resilience in Primary School children

DECISION MAKING

PROBLEM SOLVING

EMOTION REGULATION

THESKILLCOLLECTIVE.COM

The ability to cope with stress or challenge and to bounce back from adversity. However, it is also about having the skills to cope with stress in a socially acceptable way.

# Mental Health Spectrum

- Like Physical health, Mental health is something we all have.



# Self care



Please feel free to  
take a break

The session will be  
recorded so you can  
come back to it 😊

# Attachment Awareness for schools

**Helping schools to recognise the issues involved, to support pupils with attachment difficulties, and thereby to improve attainment, behaviour and overall wellbeing for both pupils and staff**



# What is Attachment ?

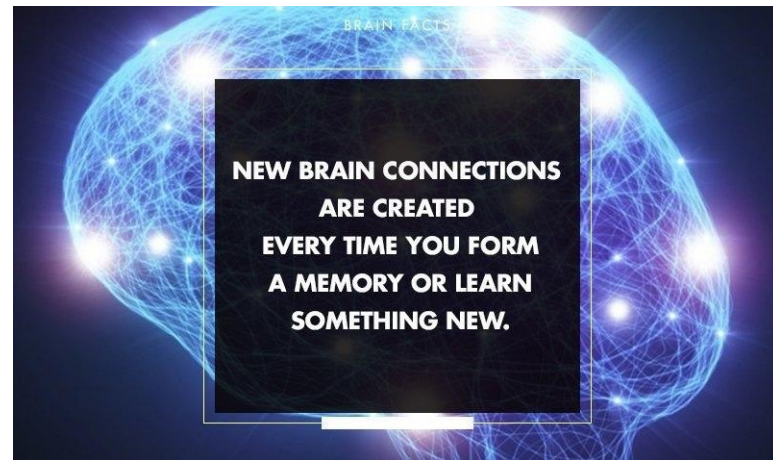
- What does attachment mean to us ?
- Attachment is the **emotional** bond that typically forms between infant and caregiver.





# The Primary goal of Attachment

- Survival of a helpless infant
- Establishes neural pathways that organise later behaviour in many domains.
- Provides the foundation for self-regulation.



The first three years of life shape a human's **mental, emotional** and **physical health** for life – and quite out of proportion to the later years of childhood.

# Self Regulation

- self-monitoring
- goal setting
- reflective thinking
- decision making
- planning
- plan enactment
- management of emotions



# Why is attachment so important ?



The importance of attachment lies in **specific behaviours in children**, such as **seeking proximity to the figure they bond with when upset or threatened**. We all have a style of relating to someone or something and that style varies depending on the level of trust you may have with those people with whom you interact.

# Types of attachment

## CHILDHOOD ATTACHMENT STYLES

CONTENT  
ENGAGED  
ON TASK



SECURE

WITHDRAWN  
QUIET  
ANXIOUS



AVOIDANT

ANXIOUS  
NOT FOCUSED  
INSECURE  
ASKING A LOT OF  
QUESTIONS



AMBIVALENT

ANGRY  
DEPRESSED  
NOT FOLLOWING  
DIRECTIONS  
SHORT FUSE  
DIFFICULTY  
MAKING FRIENDS



DISORGANIZED

# Insecure Attachments

- Insecure attachments develop when a child's physical or emotional needs go unmet.
- A child whose needs go unmet can begin life feeling rejected, afraid and worthless.
- A constant release of cortisol can have a negative impact on a child's overall brain development



LOW ← SELF ESTEEM → HIGH

HIGH  
↑  
TRUST  
↓  
LOW

**CLINGY**

“ I know I don’t deserve you, but I depend on you so much”

INSECURE

**COOL**

“ I love you and I know you love me. We rock!”

SECURE

**STALKER**

“ You’re too good for me. You would just end up hurting me anyway”

INSECURE

**LONER**

“ I don’t trust you. I’m better off alone.”

INSECURE

# Spotting the signs

- There are a number of **risk factors**, such as poverty, poor parental mental health, neglect, family bereavement, and frequent moves of home or school, but children from apparently non-vulnerable backgrounds may also suffer in this way.



# How do we recognise insecure attachment in schools ?

- Avoiding regular eye contact.
- Presenting as self-sufficient and charming to hide their feelings of vulnerability and self-hate.
- A lack of remorse.
- Being overly affectionate – often with strangers – or completely lacking the ability to receive affection.
- Being obsessive about having their teacher’s complete attention, and then being demanding and clingy.
- Feeling the need to be in control whenever possible and becoming hyper-anxious if that control appears to them to be lost.
- Acting impulsively to fulfil a need, and failing to connect consequences with actions.
- Acting destructively, apparently without a conscience.
- Struggling to relate positively to their peers – who often treat them warily because of the unpredictability of their behaviour.



- Struggling to trust anyone and often overly critical of the adults on whom they know they can rely.
- Having a short attention span and struggling with concentration.
- Finding it difficult to share or take turns.
- Presenting regressed, often immature behaviour.
- Regularly showing signs of depression and low self-esteem.
- Struggling to recognise or manage their own feelings, as well as having difficulty recognising the feelings of others – particularly towards them.
- Seeking the attention of significant others around them in negative ways, including self-harm, false allegations and reacting overly strongly to changes around them.
- Seeming to never be truly happy or relaxed.
- Appearing to sabotage placements at school

# Take away



- The nature of a child's primary attachments to caregivers lay the foundations for **socioemotional well-being** and therefore children's **capacity to learn**
- Educators themselves need to establish an attachment-like relationship with their pupils, particularly with challenging and vulnerable pupils, in order to enhance learning opportunities
- **Secure attachment** relationships correlate strongly with higher academic attainment, **better self-regulation** and social competence

# Implications for teachers

**If we are getting it right for children who have an attachment disorder then we are almost certainly getting it right for all the children or young people we work with.**

- How might a securely attached and an insecurely attached child experience school life differently?
- In what ways do schools provide 'safe havens' for children? When might they not be safe havens for some children?
- How might the behaviour of children with each of the four attachment styles manifest itself in school?



# Attachment-aware teaching

- Attachment-aware teaching matters for every child - *not just the vulnerable pupils*
- As the child gets older, she or he seeks out more adults to form strong attachments with.
- In order for a child to learn, they have to **trust the teacher**, and to trust them they need to have a secure attachment to them.



# The implications of Attachment Theory for schools

- To support pupils with attachment difficulties improve attainment, behaviour and overall wellbeing for both pupils and staff.
- It is **not an instant solution**, nor does it replace existing school policies and approaches. It certainly does not seek to turn teachers into therapists

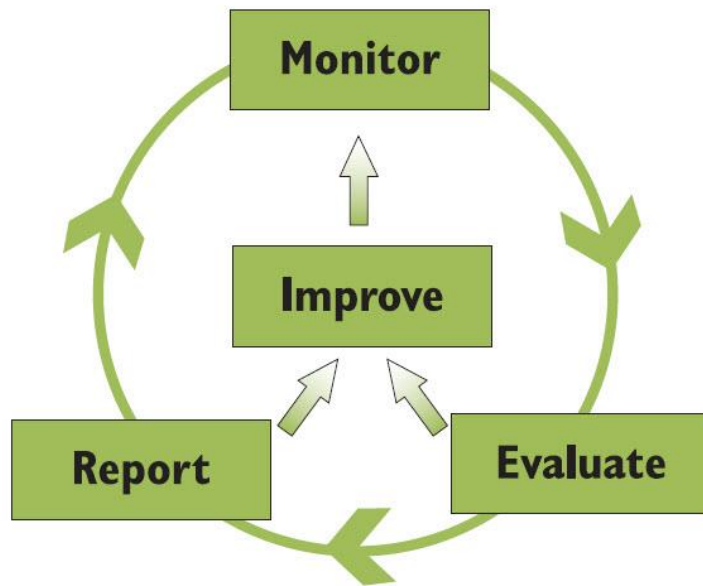
# Schools and teachers need to

- Be **child-centred** and acknowledge children's different **attachment styles**
- Create **nurturing relationships** to promote learning and behaviour and satisfy children's innate need to have a secure '**sense of belonging**'
- Acknowledge **adults' roles** as a potential secondary attachment figure who can help to **reshape insecure** attachment behaviours and support the development of more secure ones.
- Create **additional infrastructures** for children with emotional and behavioural impairments (as we do for physical and learning impairments)

# The Attachment Aware school

- Promote consistent thinking and practice across all school
- Recognise the significant role played by key adults.
- Train all staff in attachment-aware approaches.
- Promote the emotional wellbeing, development and learning of all pupils and staff.
- Manage behaviour and build children's capacity for self-regulation, resilience and confidence.
- Respond to the needs of those children and young people who have unmet attachment needs
- Work where appropriate with other agencies, families and the local community to meet those needs.
- Continually monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of its work.

# Does your school



- promote emotional resilience?
- enhance individual capacities for learning?
- develop nurturing relationships?
- manage transitions?



# Overcoming challenges



- Understand how that child is feeling and validate these feelings
- connections between emotion, social functioning
- offer a secure base, a place of safety and attachment
- Approximately one third of children have an insecure attachment with at least one care –giver
- recognises the importance of emotions

# Staff support



## Why staff support is essential

- consistent approach by all staff
- To enable staff to step back from intense interactions with children
- Responsibility of schools to ensure the emotional well-being of all staff
- To minimise the risk of 'secondary trauma' or 'burnout' for staff who are working closely with traumatised children

# Staff Support



## Effective staff support systems

- Whole school approach
- Supervision
- 1:1 staff supervision if high levels of trauma involved
- Informal 'debriefs' for staff to problem-solve
- Staff supervision policy
- High quality ongoing CPD in 'Attachment and Learning'

# Evaluating Attachment Processes

Schools that are attachment aware should assess how effective they have been in:



1. Raising standards of achievement
2. Reducing disruption and exclusions
3. Increasing a sense of belonging for all children
4. Increasing well-being for all
5. Increasing effective partner agency working

# Our Attachment Aware school



- What does a basic understanding of attachment tell you about your school's approach to interpreting children's behaviour?
- Why might some existing behaviour management systems in schools not work for children with unmet attachment needs?
- What are the links between attachment and educational attainment?

Think of a class of children you teach or know.  
How might an understanding of attachment affect how this class is supported to learn more effectively?

The word "Congratulations!" is written in a large, white, 3D sans-serif font. The letters are surrounded by a shower of colorful confetti in shades of red, green, blue, and yellow. The text and confetti are set against a white background with a subtle drop shadow.

# **You are an Attachment Aware Practitioner**

- “One good relationship, when you have someone who's able to make you feel that they're interested in you, that they care about you, can actually reverse history of pretty bad things,”

(Professor Peter Fonagy 2019)

# Contact Us



Developing Resilient Learners

Melody Ward

Tel: 07990846175

Email : [developingresilientlearners@gmail.com](mailto:developingresilientlearners@gmail.com)

[www.developingresilientlearners.co.uk](http://www.developingresilientlearners.co.uk)