

Child signalling difficulty in emotion regulation | theories



" The childhood shows the man, as morning shows the day." Milton, John (1671) Paradise regained book IV. line 220

British born Poet, John Milton compares how we can attempt to predict behaviour of adults by their experience as a child. The interesting use of the weather as a simile depicts how predictions can be made and can unfold to be true; conversely, weather is unpredictable and doesn't always follow a pattern. This he surmised also to be true for people. Scholars, early philosophers and modern day psychologists alike have longed for enlightenment into understanding human behaviour. Many theorists, behaviour and humanistic psychologists have carried out research to attempt to understand the internal working model of the human being and their socialization. Research by Bowlby (1951) and Mary Ainsworth (1967) have been influential in this field and their findings and theories have given insight into patterns of relating and attachment. Rutter's and Carl Rogers' self-actualization theory provided hope for eternal optimists. This essay will demonstrate from an analytical and critical perspective the possible correlation of a particular child signalling difficulty in emotion regulation and his previous and current experiences, patterns of relating and perception of his environment. This essay will critically apply the theories of social learning, cognitive development and humanistic psychology to the child's behaviour. A thorough holistic assessment will be executed on the particular child (see appendix 1) and all areas of concern raised by parents and professionals will be considered, discussed and analysed. The theories will be compared to provide a greater understanding of the needs of the child and how best to support care-givers in implementing change. After all things

considered a behaviour management plan will be synthesized, its strategies outlined and the difficulties and limitations to its implementation discussed. For the purpose of this Essay all names have been changed to protect the identity of the family. Refer to data protection act here

Holistic assessment

If there are concerns with a child's health and development a holistic assessment will need to be synthesised. To produce an assessment of a child holistically is to view it in its entirety. Holism is a relatively new concept it is used where there are multidimensions involved or complex interwoven issues. It is also used if there is a learning or behavioural objective which can be quantitative over time. The assessor would refer to the holistic assessment to establish whether a target or goal has been reached . Evidence for the assessment must include multiple observations in different settings and from more than one source. The assessment will take into consideration all factors that may comprise the child's physiological, psychological health as well as environmental factors that they may be exposed to. The assessment can highlight areas of concern or irradiate where one issue may be antecedent to another. It is often challenging to see where one difficulty begins and another ends. This is especially true in the case study mentioned in this Essay.

The behaviour

Soiling

Social anxiety

No eyecontact

Expression and emotionless

Over compliance

Doesn't seek comfort

Picky eating

Development

Possible reasons : socio demographic job loss.

Maternal deprivation, Bowlby, ainsworth.

Parental conflict : theorist ?

Parental mental health : theorist?

Many different care givers all unresponsive or inconsistent : RAD

Distress from deprivation from father whom he had a bond but was unstable : Maslow

Pre natal cocaine use: theories?

The loss of bonds as bereavement

Learnt behaviour shaping personality skinner no positive reinforcement of warmth

Cognitive damage : science of parenting.

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Early attachment problems

John Bowlby

Mary Ainsworth

Mary Ainsworth suggested attachment between a child and its care giver is innate. She sees experience in early childhood as an external factor that shapes and develops the attachment, and relationship. The level of responsiveness of the care giver has a direct correlation with the development of the attachment.

Rutter

Possible RAD diagnosis

Historically there has been little research into this disorder otherwise known as Reactive attachment disorder. (APSAC)â, notes that;

“ RAD is one of the least researched and most poorly understood disorders in the DSM” (p. 80; Chaffin et al., 2006) .

It states in the DSMâ¹ that there are two types inhibited and disinhibited. Children with inhibited type do not initiate social interaction; their response to others would be seen as developmentally inappropriate. In accordance to the milestones expected to achieve () they could appear socially anxious, highly ambivalent or give contradictory responses. For example they often resist comfort from the care givers. They express no reciprocation to warmth they appear wooden, or emotionless. The children remain watchful of others whilst physically and emotionally keeping their distance.

Social learning theory

Family dynamics

It is worth noting that according to research carried out by the ALSPAC study team evidence suggests that children living in a blended family or a complex family unit where they are not with the biological mother, the children have problems adjusting (Hetherington et al., 1999: cited in Dunn, 2002). Research
alspac

(Parenting capacity

Parenting styles and their effects on a child's development has been studied by Baumrind (1972) through her studies she collated evidence that suggested that parenting styles led to clear different outcomes for the child. The areas of parenting that Baumrind focussed on was warmth and nurturance, parents expectations of their children, consistency of rules and their overall level of communication. According to Baumrind styles of parenting can have an effect on cognitive, physiological, psychological and social development.

Pryor and Rodgers (2001) suggests that stressful situations such as parental conflict, parental mental health and financial difficulties, although, have an impact on a child's wellbeing the level of impact is determined by the quality of parenting and parent-child relationship. There are Three styles of parenting permissive, authoritarian and authoritative. Authoritarian children according to Baumrind (1972) have a generally unhappy demeanour, they appear anxious and withdrawn

Socialization

Regulation of emotions are crucial to our socialization. It has been expressed by carers that Frankie's countenance of emotion is inhibited and facial expressions are almost nonexistence. Gross(2002) would suggest this is caused by a suppression of an emotion. This would have a negative impact on health according to Gross (2002) not from a one off occurrence but if the suppression of that emotion was continual for a substantial period of time. The physiological reaction would still occur so the impact of the emotion would still be felt but not expressed.

“ we hypothesized that individuals who habitually suppress should have lesser negative and positive emotion-expressive behaviour”. (J. GRO. SS 2002)¹°

(Steele et al., 2008) would offer counter evidence that the deciphering of expressive facial responses and their meaning is something that is learnt from their earliest experience of attachment . Primarily from their main carer but also from others in the first year of life. Steel (2008) discovered a substantial correlation between a child who has an insecure or avoidant attachment and their lack of ability to decipher the meaning of facial expression. Thus implying that the quality of the first reciprocal interaction that a baby experiences sets the standard for the quality of social interaction in the future.

“ This learning is preverbal from the first year of life, yet powerful enough to show itself 6 years and 11 years later in emotion recognition tasks” (Steele et al., p. 388).

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Behaviour plan

The proposed behaviour plan intends to support the child and carers in facilitating change of unwanted behaviours, address the problem of emotional regulation which is concerning the carers and professionals involved with the child. The rationale is interrelated to the strategies and their theories.

The unwanted behaviours outlined that will be addressed is soiling, withdrawn behaviour and (" seems upset and cries a lot") see appendix 2.

Play therapy

The concept of play therapy was introduced into psychotherapy by Freud following his work with Little Hans. Freud (1909) elucidated the concept of play therapy and its ability to promote free expression, wish fulfilment, and mastery of traumatic events. To enhance a child's wellbeing and maximise their potential using therapeutic personal centred counselling. The association of play therapy provides a definition of play therapy and what part it can play in a child's wellbeing. The place2b(2009) research model provides evidence that therapeutic support accessed through primary schools either via group or individual, improves children's social and emotional behaviour. Lee, Tiley and White(2009)

" The systematic use of a theoretical model to establish an interpersonal process wherein trained therapists use the therapeutic powers of play to help clients prevent or resolve psychosocial difficulties and achieve optimum growth and development APT (2008)â

(Landreth2002) pertinently stated that play is a child's language and toys are their words.

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