

# Bowlbys attachment theory

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Introduction For the purpose of this assignment I will begin with a discussion of John Bowlby's theory of attachment, this is one of the most used theories in children's social work today. I will then discuss the origins of attachment theory, with giving an overview of what attachment theory consists of. In addition I will critically analyse this theory by incorporating other theorist's views. Further I will give a brief account of how Mary Ainsworth researched attachment and her outcomes and classifications, which strengthened and widened the theory.

Finally I will discuss how this theory is used within social work settings, together with influencing policy initiatives . A brief overview is given regarding the ethical approach used together with its relevance to anti discriminatory practise. Bowlby initially began his career as a child psychiatrist, which later led him to undertake training at the British Psychoanalytic Institute. These early experiences contributed positively in Bowlby's research, which then led to the origins of attachment theory. This was his first empirical study to be undertaken. He examined cases of maladjusted children in a school.

Bowlby then linked the children who were committing petty crime, also suffered with affectionless emotions. He then noted that all of these children had a history of separation and maternal deprivation Bowlby then proceeded to expand his research, influenced by Konrad Lorenz's (1935) paper on imprinting. In which Lorenz researched behaviour of baby geese, where he stated is a phrase sensitive learning which is implied within a " \_critical period" (Lorenz 1935). \_Bowlby's research was then one compromising concepts from ethologic, cybernetics and psychoanalysis methods.

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Thus making him believe that, humans are also born with tendencies to naturally promote attachment. The main concepts which Bowlby mainly focused on was; monotropy a tendency to attach to one particular care giver usually the mother. In addition he stated " \_the propensity to make strong emotional bonds to one particular individual is a basic component of human nature" (Bowlby 1988). \_He also goes on to state attachment " aids in survival". Bowlby had distinguished four categories that consisted in attachment. The proximity Maintenance: Desire to be near the people we are attached to.

Safe Haven: Returning to the attachment figure for comfort and safety in the face of fear or threat Secure Base: The attachment figure acts as a base of security from which the child can explore the surrounding environment.

Separation Distress: Anxiety that occurs in the absence of the attachment figure. Ambivalent Attachment: \_Where the child usually become very distressed when parents leave. This type is un common, normally a result of poor maternal availability. \_ After Ainsworth's research, (Main, Solomon 1986) added a fourth attachment style from their own research Conclusion