

Attachment – word
count 1466



Word count 1466 Introduction: Attachment theory can be useful to highlight core and basic human needs for social interaction and proximity to others. Used as a model of human development, it can help us consider how relationships between infants and their caregivers forge and underpin the development of fundamental areas of our lives; our self beliefs and constructs of the world around us; of ourselves and expectations of others; our abilities to self regulate our emotions and feelings; our sense of curiosity, motivation and confidence to explore and learn and how we are able to relate to others and tasks/activities.

In this paper I will firstly be discussing the major theories of attachment these being John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. Secondly I will explain how attachment informs in social work. ' Among the most significant developments of psychiatry during the past quarter of a century has been the steady growth of evidence that the quality of parental care which a child receives in his earliest years is of vital importance to his future mental health' (Bowlby. J. p11. 953) Attachment is an emotional relationship that involves comfort care and contentment. The roots of attachment were thought to be from Freud's theory's about love, however John Bowlby is accredited with being the fore father of attachment theory. Bowlby shared the psychoanalytic view that early experiences in childhood have a major influence on development and behaviour later in life. Our early attachment styles are established in childhood through the infant/caregiver relationship. Kennell and Klaus said that sometime attachment is confused with the natural bonding process that takes place between mother and child, and we should be careful not to mix these too up. Bowlby believed that attachment

begins in infancy and carries on throughout life, resulting in several behavioural systems that are required for survival and reproduction. Bowlby suggested that there are four central characteristics of attachment; these are proximity maintenance, this is when the child strives to stay close to the care giver enabling the child to stay safe.

Safe haven, this is when the child feel scared or afraid turning to the caregiver for support and comfort. Secure base, this is when the caregiver gives the child a protected place to discover the world from. Separation distress this is when the child get upset or distressed when it is absent from the caregiver. Bowlby suggested that attachment was an element of selected relationships throughout the lifep, even though most of his research focused on infancy. Mary Ainsworth created a method called the strange situation.

The method that Ainsworth had created was to examine that bond between the care giver and the child. The method is to examine the child playing for approximately twenty minutes while the care giver and the person who is unknown to the child enters and exit the room. This method creates a familiar and unfamiliar situation for the child. For some children this type of situation can be very stressful. The case of ' Genie' was an extreme example of a child that had no attachment or social contact resulting in her being a feral child.

She was unable to talk dress herself or toilet herself, when support was implemented within a few days progress was seen to be made, showing that even though no attachment had been made the child was still able to learn

new behaviours. A striking example of adult attachment to a parent is the comment made by a 40 year old lady who had lost her mother; I never realised, until she was gone, how much my own sense of confidence depended on knowing that if I ran into trouble I could always turn to her for help and advice. Goldberg 2000 p10)in my own experience of working with adult services, I gained an understanding of how separation could have affected an elderly couple's health. After 60 years of marriage social services where call in to assess their situation as they where no longer able to cope due to the fact the wife had seniledementia. Initially the was talk of them being home together however a standard care home would not have met the need of the wife, anursinghome was needed for her. This was seen as being detrimental to both their health due to separation.

Therefore, it was seen to be better to provide them with support in their own home. In conclusion children who are securely attached tend to have trusting, long-term relationships in their adulthood. As adults and being securely attached, these same individuals have a great understanding and perspective on important relationships in their lives. They demonstrate a forgiving attitude toward their mate and tend to show compassion for others. They tend to speak of how their past experiences have influenced their present feelings and relationships.

References Bowlby, J. (1953) Childcare and the growth of maternal love. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books. Feeney, J. Noller, P. (1996) Adult Attachment. London: sage publications. Goldberg, S. (2000) Attachment and Development. London: Arnold publishers. Howe, D. (1995) Attachment theory for social work practice. London: Macmillan press. Smith, Cowie, <https://assignbuster.com/attachment-word-count-1466/>

Blades. online. ' The Adult Attachment Interview(AAI). Understanding Children's Development'. York College: Homepage, (<http://www.ycc.ac.uk/yc/new/HUMSOC/psycho/unit1/adultatt.htm>), (5 December 2008)