



Comprehension century and attachment and

Presenter's Name

XX.XX.XX



SEND for Classroom Teachers
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Aims of the session

- Understanding that many learners may have ‘co-morbid’ SEND (co-morbidity in this context is the presence of one or more disorders, disabilities, or SEN), and will therefore need a personalised approach to their provision.
- Understanding the basics of attachment theory and how negative attachments can affect learning in the classroom.
- Gaining awareness of the mental health difficulties that pupils may face and what we can do to support those pupils.
- Knowing how to structure learning that supports complex needs.
- Being able to identify how to take learning to the next level and support understanding of complex needs.



21st century children (1)

- The young people in our schools are very different now, to 15 years ago.
- Neo-natal survival rates mean more children are surviving with complex needs and are now in our classes.
- Learning and teaching is different now; it has to be... so we have to evolve too.
- In addition we have more and more young people in our schools who have experienced traumatic early childhood.
- These negative attachments can mean increased risks.

21st century children (2)



The modern generation of children and young people includes some with:

- rare chromosomal disorders
- some who survived extreme prematurity or multiple disabilities at birth
- and those affected by prenatal drug and alcohol abuse.

These children have complex learning difficulties and disabilities (CLDD).

They learn and respond differently to previous generations of children with profound and multiple or severe learning difficulties.

Considering attachment...



- Have you heard about attachment?
- What do you think it is?
- Imagine you are in a dangerous situation (Tsunami, Twin Towers, plane crash...)
- You have a mobile and can make one call...
- Who do you phone?
- What makes this relationship special?
- What are its positive characteristics?

So what is attachment? (1)



- Attachment behaviour is there to ensure the survival of the child.
- Attachment is an affectionate bond between two individuals that endures through space and time and serves to join them emotionally.
- Attachment experiences are fundamental to emotional, social, physical and cognitive development.
- Good early attachments serve to promote resilience to later traumatic experiences.
- Bad (negative) early attachments can have a significant impact on individual trust and resilience.

So what is attachment? (2)



Attachment is a special emotional relationship that involves an exchange of comfort, care, and pleasure.

Attachment is the ...lasting psychological connectedness between human beings.

The propensity to make strong emotional bonds to particular individuals [is] a basic component of human nature.

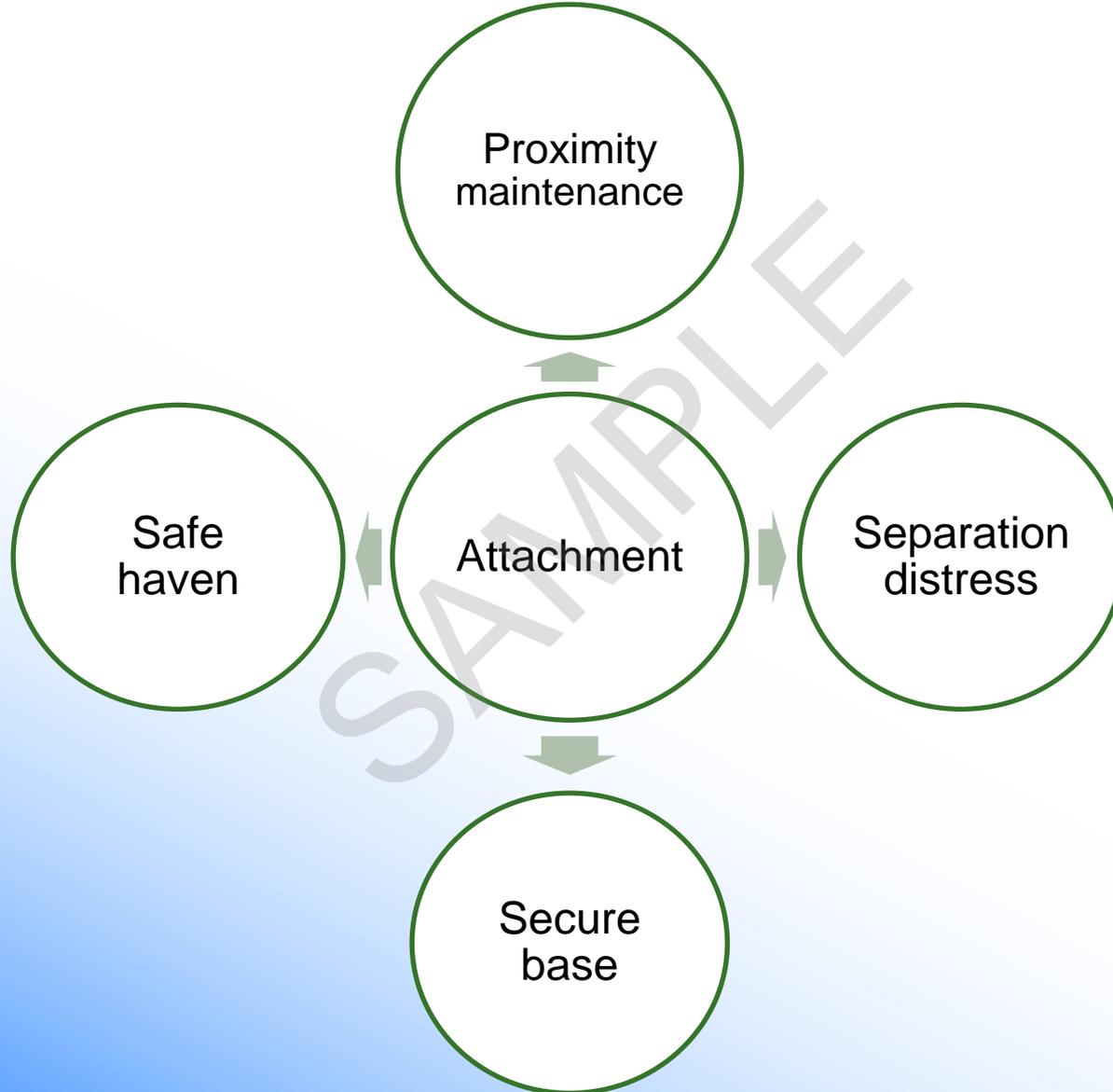
Bowlby, 1988

So what is attachment? (3)



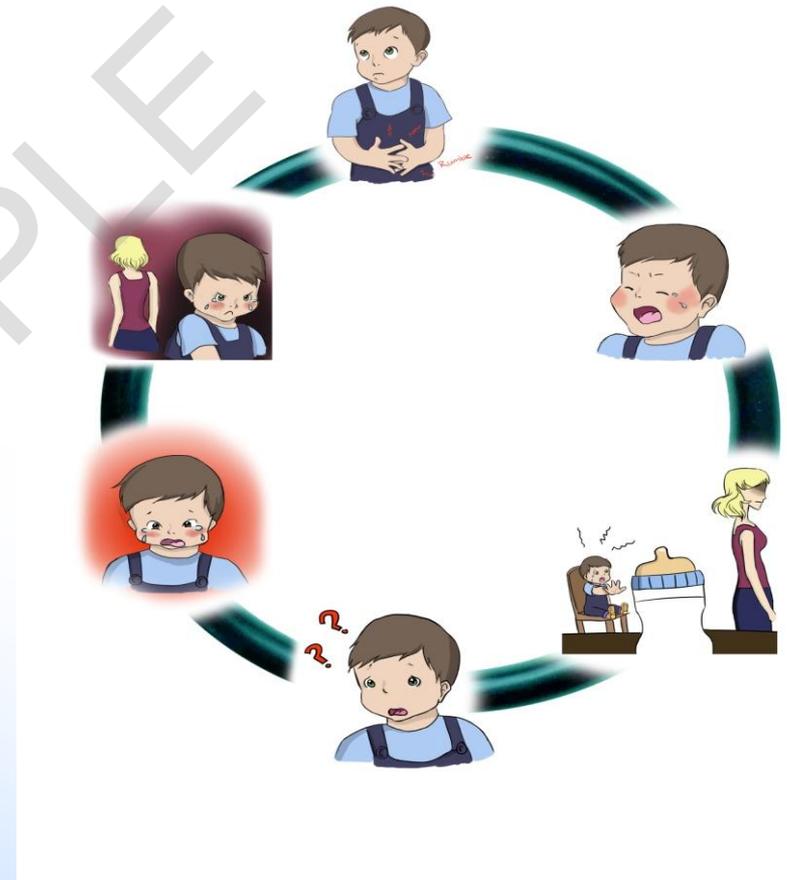
- The brain is developing rapidly during early childhood – attachment behaviours are the key.
- There are ‘critical periods’ or ‘windows of opportunity’.
- Neglect, stress or trauma can have a profound effect on neurological development and the ability to learn.

Characteristics of attachment...



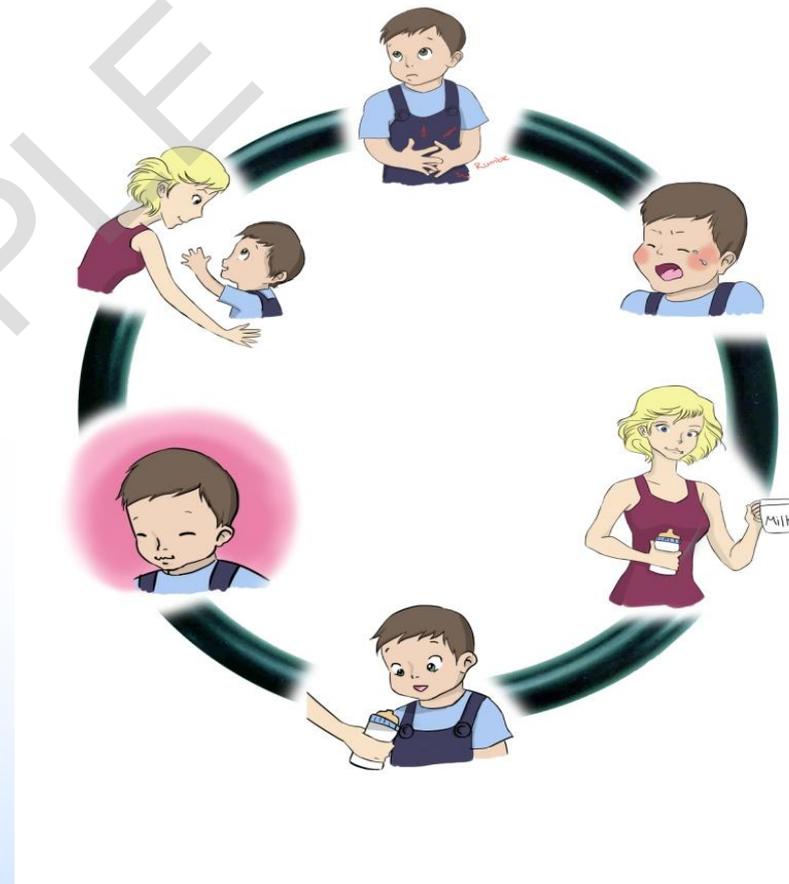
Characteristics of negative attachment

- Inability to regulate emotions (rage, panic, depression, impulsivity).
- Basic mistrust (if someone is nice it must be a trick).
- Low self-esteem/high shame (I am bad, I deserve to be hurt).
- Need for control (I need to take care of myself, I don't trust/understand others).
- Learning difficulties (concentration, self-belief, dissociation).



Characteristics of positive attachment

- Are able to emotionally regulate.
- Are able to be separated from parents or carers.
- Seek comfort from parents or carers when frightened or in need of reassurance.
- Greets the return of parents or carers with positive emotions.
- Prefers parents or carers to strangers.
- Are able to trust appropriate adults – teachers or friends of parents or carers.





Types of attachment...

- Avoidant.
- Resistant/ambivalent.
- Disorganised/disorientated.

Research indicates that attachment aids children to develop:

- physically
- emotionally
- socially
- morally

...and thus enables them to cope with change, stress, separation and loss, to become independent and develop future relationships.

Profile for avoidant attachment



Approach to school/classroom:

Apparent indifference to uncertainty in new situations.

Response to the task:

Need to be autonomous and independent.

Hostility towards teacher is directed towards task.

Task operates as an emotional safety barrier between pupil and teacher.

Skills and difficulties:

Limited use of creativity.

Likely to be underachieving.

Limited use of language.

Response to the teacher:

Denial of need for support and help.

Sensitivity to proximity of the teacher.

Profile for resistant/ambivalent attachment



Approach to school or classroom:

Intense anxiety which may be expressed as controlling and omnipotent.

Response to task:

Difficulties attempting task if unsupported.

Unable to focus on task for fear of losing teacher's attention.

Skills and difficulties:

Likely to be underachieving.

Language may be well developed but not consistent with levels of achievement.

Numeracy may be weak.

Response to teacher:

Need to hold onto attention of teacher.

Apparent dependence on teacher in order to engage in learning.

Expressed hostility to teacher when frustrated.

Profile for disorganised/ disorientated attachment



Approach to school or classroom:

High level of anxiety and uncertainty.

Response to task:

Task may seem like challenge to fears of incompetence – feelings of humiliation and task rejection.

Difficulty accepting 'not knowing'.

May appear omnipotent and to know everything already.

Skills and difficulties:

May seem unimaginative and uncreative, and find conceptual thought difficult.

Likely to be underachieving and possibly at a very immature stage of learning.

Response to teacher:

Great difficulty in experiencing trust in authority of teacher (may submit to Head of school).

May be unable to accept being taught and/or unable to 'permit' the teacher to know more than they do.

So what works in the classroom?



- **Structure:** clear and consistent routines, boundaries, task completion, rituals, claiming behaviours.
- **Engagement:** positive non-verbal praise, using child's name, early games.
- **Nurture:** soothing, supportive, non-verbal, positive care routines.
- **Challenge:** learning new skills in small steps with support and consistency.



What can we do?

Key elements of successful provision include:

- Humour
- Warmth
- Attention
- Praise
- Reward
- Acknowledgement
- Respect
- Circle time
- Buddy systems
- Mentors
- Quiet rooms
- Social skills training
- Counselling
- Work with parents
- Self-esteem building.



Key themes to develop...

We need to develop settings that allow pupils to experience:

- a **safe** place
- **flexible** provision to meet the child's needs
- a **non-judgemental** approach
- systems and routines that are **fair** and **consistent**.

Complexities and co-morbidity...



- Few 21st century children will have discrete, separate needs.
- More and more young people have co-morbid needs (the presence of one or more disorders, disabilities or SEN).
- Think of some of the wider issues – sensory sensitivity, sleep issues, issues with emotional regulation, memory etc.
- Communication is key – between staff but also with parents or carers.
- Having shared aims and goals that are measured with positive outcomes also provides a really useful structure to learning and participation.

Considering mental health...



- What do you think mental health is?
- How would you describe it?
- What does mental health include?
- Mental health problems affect about one in ten children and young people.
- They include depression, anxiety and conduct disorder, and are often a direct response to what is happening in their lives.
- The emotional wellbeing of children is just as important as their physical health.
- Good mental health allows children and young people to develop the resilience to cope with whatever life throws at them and grow into well-rounded, healthy adults.



What can help?



Things that can help keep children and young people mentally well include:

- being in good physical health, eating a balanced diet and getting regular exercise
- having time and the freedom to play, indoors and outdoors
- being part of a family that gets along well most of the time
- going to a school that looks after the wellbeing of all its pupils
- taking part in local activities for young people.

Other important factors...



- feeling loved, trusted, understood, valued and safe
- being interested in life and having opportunities to enjoy themselves
- being hopeful and optimistic
- being able to learn and having opportunities to succeed
- accepting who they are and recognising what they are good at
- having a sense of belonging in their family, school and community
- feeling they have some control over their own life
- having the strength to cope when something is wrong (resilience) and the ability to solve problems.

Understanding risks...



- Most children grow up mentally healthy, but surveys suggest that more children and young people have problems with their mental health today than 30 years ago.
- That's probably because of changes in the way we live now and how that affects the experience of growing up.
- There are certain 'risk factors' that make some children and young people more likely to experience problems than other children, but they don't necessarily mean difficulties are bound to come up or are even probable.
- Can you think of risks that pupils you work with face?

Some risks may include...



- having a long-term physical illness
- having a parent or carer who has had mental health problems, problems with alcohol or has been in trouble with the law
- experiencing the death of someone close to them
- having parents who separate or divorce
- having been severely bullied, or physically or sexually abused
- living in poverty or being homeless
- experiencing discrimination, perhaps because of their race, sexuality or religion
- acting as a carer for a relative, taking on adult responsibilities
- having long-standing educational difficulties.

Three to consider...



- **Depression** affects more children and young people today than in the last few decades, but it is still more common in adults. Teenagers are more likely to experience depression than young children.
- **Self-harm** is a very common problem among young people. Some people find it helps them manage intense emotional pain if they harm themselves, through cutting or burning, for example. They may not wish to take their own lives.
- **Eating disorders** usually start in the teenage years and are more common in girls than boys. The number of young people who develop an eating disorder is small, but eating disorders such as anorexia nervosa and bulimia nervosa can have serious consequences for their physical health and development.

Being aware...



- It is important you are aware of potential risks and issues.
- Assessments and treatments for children and young people with mental health problems put a lot of emphasis on talking and on understanding the problem in order to work out the best way to tackle it.
- If you think a pupil may be experiencing difficulties it is important to pass on your concerns.
- It is important to stress that there are many agencies that can provide support and advice – Educational Psychologists, CAMHS, Young Minds etc.
- In terms of safeguarding there are times you are required to share information if a pupil is at risk, even if they have asked you not to – **make sure you are familiar with the school's procedures and policy with regard to safeguarding.**

Revisiting the aims of the session...



- Participants will understand that many learners may have ‘co-morbid’ SEN, and will therefore need a very personalised approach to their provision.
- Participants will know how to put the learning together and know where to start in practice.
- Participants will be able to identify how to take their learning to the next level and support understanding of complex needs.

Insanity: doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results.

Albert Einstein
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Finally ...

- What can you do to improve your learning environment – learning and teaching and the classroom itself?
- Look at the summary sheet and try to develop your regular classroom practice and routines to be more inclusive.
- If you think an individual may be experiencing difficulty, seek advice from the SENCo and develop positive strategies to support the barriers they face.

Sample material from DIY training pack *SEND for Classroom Teachers* by Gareth D Morewood.
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