



Attachment

Shared Mental Health Care
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Based on Attachment Focused parenting by
Daniel A Hughes
WW Norton, 2009

Daniel A Hughes

- Attachment Focused Parenting
- Founding parents of attachment theory Mary Ainsworth and John Bolby
- They described six key components of attachment:
 1. Persistent relationship
 2. Directed towards a specific person
 3. Emotionally significant
 4. Directed toward maintaining contact with the other
 5. Characterized by distress during periods of involuntary separation
 6. Security seeking and comfort

Attachment

- The child's relationship with the parent
- Securely attached child turns to parent for safety and support
- Inter-subjectivity : The process whereby subjective experience of each member of a pair influences subjective experience of the other.

Attachment concepts

- Key components of securely attached child is a feeling of safety needed for child to explore his or her environment
- An attuned interaction between parent and infant is central to healthy development
- Inter-subjectivity = communication between parent and child whereby the inner lives of both are deepened, expanded and organized into more coherent selves (Trevarthen 2001)

Attachment

- Develop sense of safety
- Ensure habitual presence of Attachment figure
- Maintain predictability
- Enhance Safety when Disciplining
 1. parent should convey decision about need to discipline child, with open confident stance Child needs information to understand why parent has chosen to discipline, parent not to focus on gaining child's agreement
 2. Parent needs to be open to child's perspective while maintaining decision to discipline. Eg " I know it is really disappointing for you not to be able to see the movie with Joey, but we discussed the need for you to complete homework before going out on a week night.

Discipline

- Plan in Advance for change and separations
- Avoid isolation. Isolation in response to anger is what most parents do. When emotions become intense it is best to remain close to the child, so a child learns to regulate their emotions. Time in may be a better alternative than time out though this is easier said than done.
- Time out useful only if parent dysregulated . Parent may need time out with promise to child that she is not rejecting him with “ Let’s talk when we are both calmer”

Helping to build secure attachment

- Be deliberate with surprises
- Repair a sense of safety after conflict
- Be sympathetic to fears
- Bringing vague fears into dialogue
- Parents need to be aware of their own childhood attachment pattern and seek therapy of attachment was not secure

Intersubjectivity

- Child's experience with stressful events may generate shame or a sense of failure
- Example of intersubjective parental response to assist child understand his experience
- “you really seem to be sad that I will not let you visit your friend”
- “You seem so raring to go”
- “You look relieved to be finished after all the work it took”

PACE The Key to Attachment in Parenting

- P playfulness
 - A acceptance
 - C curiosity
 - E empathy
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- “PACE defines the attitude, an interpersonal stance towards one another that cherishes and invites the development of one person without hurting the development of the other” D hughes pg 69

PACE

- Home is your safe haven, a secure base from which to explore the world
- Conveys the attitude that there is something special for each of us , the individual not being sacrificed for the family
- Parental authority does not imply that the inner life of the parent is valued more than the inner life of the children
- When children feel safe they are more likely to accept and be influenced by parental guidance

PACE

- Based on attitude and inner life of parent that appears when she or he is engaged with infant in reciprocal play and dialogue
- Attitude of warm, open and inviting stance of unconditional love and joy
- Comes more naturally with infants than with teenagers where empathy needs to be remembered as teen starts their job of separating (and disagreeing with parents) to define themselves

Establish P of PACE

- Communication between parent and young child based on playfulness
- Relationship characterized by acceptance and openness
- Infant learns to regulate emotions by being matched with parent in underlying vitality affect
- Infant developing shared interests and joint history with parent
- Infant discovering positive traits about self and parent through moments of fun and laughter

A cceptance

- Keep it light when possible
- Admit mistakes
- Developing acceptance not just of newborn but older child
- Reduce your anger
- Avoid negative judgement
- Safeguard the relationship
- Accept the child's inner life

C uriosity

- Develop curiosity with a non-judgmental why?
- How does that seem to you?
- Tell me about that?
- What does that mean to you?
- What kind of feelings does that bring up for you?
- I think I understand what that means to you. Am I missing anything?

Empathy

- Anger or rules can get in the way of understanding a child's emotions and general affective state.
- Anger from a child can bring out an automatic response of anger in parent
- Take time out as parent to avoid an anger response
- Model anger regulation , express anger briefly, match the affect, accept child's anger, accept differences, express empathy, focus on behaviour

Don't Worry Be happy

- Good news is that all parents have off days
- No parent is perfect
- Provided that there are enough good days where loving connection is present
- Empathy and effort to understand child's emotional state, accept him for who he is, ask with curiosity and not judgment
- If abuse or neglect not constant most children will be positively attached to parents

Repair after anger or misbehaviour

- Bridging is Important



Obstacles

- Abuse or Neglect
- Belief that distress of the break will gradually fade away
- Belief that parent is weak to initiate repair when child's behaviour caused the break in the first place
- Belief that if parent initiates repair she will be reinforcing misbehaviour

Attachment Theory

According to Gordon Neufeld Phd

- Attachment pre-eminent need of all human relationships
- Attachment defined asthat drive or relationship characterized by the pursuit and preservation of proximity
- When conditions are ideal ie warm and safe children will attach at the level of their development

Attachment Requirements

- A good enough invitation
- Safe enough from disruption
- A soft enough heart

Neufeld's Developmental Stages of Attachment

- Age one ,infant uses all senses using attachment instincts such as rooting , sucking grasping
- Age 2 sameness and identification where toddler has drive to be like those to whom they attach via imitation and modeling
- Age 3 Belonging and Loyalty
- Age 4 Significance; desire to matter to those he holds dear

Implications for Working with Children

- Nature's answer to handling physical separation is more attachment not less.
- Children in order to grow up need to deepen their attachments with primary caretakers in order to become their own person
- Therapists role according to Neufeld is to help children hold on to their parents and parents hold on to their children when physically apart

Questions ?

