

## Interpersonal Relationships

### Week 6 notes - Attachment

## Developmental Psychology

- **Bowlby** was the seminal researcher who studied child attachment to caregivers
- An infant has the best chance of surviving by being close to its mother
- Child summons mother by voicing distress

## **Bowlby's Theory of Attachment**

- Children develop attachment to the caregiver
- Individual differences in the level of attachment
- All infants born unique

### → Types of Attachment

1. Secure Attachment
2. Anxious Attachment
3. Avoidant Attachment

## Ainsworth et al STUDY

- Mother and child (12-18 months) and stranger interacting
- 1. Mother leaves child with stranger ... then comes back to comfort infant
- 2. Mother leaves infant alone; stranger tries to comfort infant

## Individual differences & Attachment styles

### → what causes individual differences & attachment styles

- 3 factors;
- 1. The mother/caregiver
- 2. Child's innate characteristics
- 3. Cultural context
- Problem: unclear which of these factors is primary causative factor of a child's attachment style and later adults attachment style

### → POTENTIAL ANSWER (**Roisman and Fraley**)

- **\*\* twins\*\***
- Found that shared and non shared environmental aspects were the primary factor behind twin's attachment styles **not** genetics
- Inherited genetics play a **small** role

## Attachment Styles in Diff Countries

- USA: 65% secure, 23% anxious, 12% avoidant

- Germany: (promotes sense of independence) → 33% secure, 49% avoidant
- Israel: 37% secure (many adult supervisors of children)
- Japan: mom stays home with child (promotes dependence) **high** proportion of anxiously attached and no avoidantly attached

#### Socio-economic influences

##### → **Diener, Niveau and Wright study**

- Best predictor of child's attachment style were mother's characteristics and environmental factors
- Ex: mother's depression or perception that child is difficult correlated w lower level of secure attachment

#### **Picard et al STUDY**

- Found that genetic makeup influences attachment style which further influences type of parenting received
- **Van den Boom** found that mothers trained to be responsive parents of difficult babies had babies who were more securely attached

#### From Child to Adult

- Child's attachment style develops during a sensitive period early on
- This style persists into adulthood
- Partners in adulthood become replacements for mother/caregiver

#### **Hazan and Shaver** Attachment characteristics

##### 1. SECURE

- Easy to get close to others
- Comfortable depending on others and having them depend on me
- Doesn't worry about being abandoned

##### 2. AVOIDANT

- Uncomfortable being close to others
- Difficult to trust people and depend on them
- Nervous when anyone gets close
- Does not enjoy intimacy

##### 3. ANXIOUS/AMBIVALENT

- Others reluctant to get as close as i would like
- Worry that my partner doesn't really love me or won't want to stay with me
- Want to merge completely with another person (this scares them away)

### **Hazan and Shaver STUDY**

- Test 108 us adults (mean age=18) on 53 questions
- 56% secure, 23% anxious, and 20% avoidant
- **Secure lovers:** happy, friendly, trusting, unconditional support
- **Avoidant lovers:** fear of intimacy, emotional roller-coaster, jealousy, non-sexual
- **Anxious lovers:** obsessive, need for reciprocation, emotional rollercoaster, extreme sexual attraction, jealousy

### Parental Influence

- Secure: good relationships w parents and among parents
- Anxious: unfair fathers
- Avoidant: cold and rejecting mothers

### Meta analysis - **Fraley**

- **Prototype model:** assumption that attachment style is stable across life span
- **Revisionist model:** attachment is flexible and changeable
- Most reviewed longitudinal studies support PROTOTYPE model w some support of revisionist

### Self Other Model (**Bartholomew and horowitz**)

: attachment is determined by valence of beliefs about the self and others

## **Birnie & Lydon 2011**

- Said people should be described along 2 scales instead of labelling them as → secure, preoccupied, fearful or dismissing

## What drives Attachment from Infancy to Adulthood

1. Snowballing → humans have diff goals at diff stages in life that lead to drive attachment (Infancy sets the stage and later development has unique goals)
  2. Object relations → early child-parent interactions are basis for adult expectations for relationships
  3. Social cognitive perspective → attachment is transferred via existing mental models of specific ppl (loved ones, friends, etc) ... Transference is either (1) global or (2) specific
- Study results of social cognitive perspective : specific attachment models applied to similar targets to a greater degree

## **Feeney & Kirkpatrick - 1996**

### → Effects of attachment & adulthood

- Studied effects of stress on attachment when partner present & absent
- **Physiological arousal:** significantly higher in anxiously/avoidantly attached compared to securely attached
- Arousal persisted when partner present
- **Secure:** low levels of arousal in both situations

## **Fraley & Shaver - 1998**

### → Effects of attachment & adulthood

- Anxious women sought more proximity with partners
- Fearful women pulled away from partners (despite high stress levels)
- **Anxious and avoidant men:** failed to exhibit proximity seeking behaviours

## Speed Dating & Attachment Styles

1. **Securely attached:** most desirable partners
2. **Anxiously attached:** more fretful, withdrawn, submissive, make poor first impression
3. **Avoidantly attached:** we do not know yet since they do not show up for speed dating

### → does attachment style dictate partner choice?

- We seek partners based on similarity of attachment style
- Or everyone might want to seek a securely attached partner
- Ppl tend to seek partners w similar attachment styles

### Anxious Pairings

- Anxious + anxious pairings are less stable in the long run
- **Anxious women:** tend to pair up with avoidant men
- **Anxious men:** tend to pair w avoidant and anxious women
- Ppl w anxious/avoidant attachment styles have less trust, commitment and satisfaction in relationships compared to secure

### Secure & Insecure

- **Securely attached:** empathetic/altruistic & seek emotional support
- **Insecurely attached:** seek advice/direction in relationship
- Attachment style should predict satisfaction & stability of a relationship

### Divorce Rates

#### → **hazan and shaver 1987**

- Secure → 6%
- Anxious → 10%
- Avoidant → 12%
- North America promotes relationships where men are avoidant and women are caretakers (anxious)

### **Kane et al - 2007**

#### → Stress & Gender differences

- **Men paired w securely attached women** → showed low salivary cortisol levels during/after stressful tasks
- **Men paired w insecure women** → high cortisol levels pre-and-post manipulation
- \*\* women's cortisol levels did not depend on attachment style of men\*\*

