



# Attachment Styles in Practice

THEORY, EVIDENCE, PRACTICE

Professional interest in the clinical applications of attachment theory continues to grow and evolve, due to its increasing recognition as a primary key to understanding the development and relational dynamics of vulnerable clients - whether they be children, young people or adults. Yet for many practitioners the current use of attachment focuses only on four categories based on secure and insecure attachment. This workshop takes a deeper look into how attachment styles can be used in therapeutic settings by offering a practical and sophisticated exposition for evidence based assessment, formulation, planning and treatment that is sure to transform attachment focused interventions.

Patterns of attachment are formed in response to the caregiving that we receive in our earliest relationships and impact on our emotional and physical wellbeing across the lifespan from the 'cradle to the grave'. Helping vulnerable parents raise their children adequately is of crucial importance for parents, their children and child protection. Parents that have complex needs have often been endangered themselves and, as a consequence, sometimes endanger their children either through abuse, neglect or the effects of parental mental illness and addiction. It is possible to repair attachment difficulties, but first it is necessary to recognise the attachment style, unhealthy relationship patterns, and the impact they are having, so that targeted interventions can be developed to support struggling parents and endangered children. Traditional interventions, which do not teach parents how to understand their attachment history (and subsequent style) or to successfully engage the child, often fail to provide the necessary support required to form secure attachment that underlies behavioural change.

This one day workshop shows how to work successfully with emotional and behavioural problems rooted in deficient early attachments. It introduces the Attachment Style Interview (ASI), an evidence-based accessible instrument that reveals how attachment disorders may be properly conceptualised, to inform more targeted planning and treatment. In particular, it explores the emotional difficulties of children in out-of-home care who struggle to form secure attachments. In this concise, accessible introduction to attachment styles and their application to therapeutic practice we will explore:

Using a number of illustrative case vignettes, the presenter provides guidance on the application of attachment styles in different contexts and with various client groups, including child protection, foster care, residential care, youth work, juvenile justice, mental health, family and children's courts. New formulations are offered for problems that have resisted treatment and cases demonstrate how the ideas can be applied in real therapeutic settings.

This workshop is suitable for a range of professionals including social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, teachers, case managers, legal professionals and researchers. Foster and adoptive parents, and those with an interest in attachment theory will also find it of interest. You will gain a new, deeper way of looking at different attachment styles.

