

Attachment Aware, Trauma Informed

Victoria Banks

VSH

House Keeping

- Fire alarms
- Exits
- Toilets
- Refreshments

Why is this important?

- to develop a sense of safety, stability and security
- to develop a sense of belonging for pupils and staff
- to develop relationships in the school (pupil/pupil, pupil/staff and even staff/staff)
- to develop knowledge, competence and skills amongst adults, building further on their understanding of attachment and trauma (including the cognitive, emotional and physiological responses) and how/when to 'intervene' – in a preventative and reactive way
- to improve school outcomes for children and young people, including their attainment, attendance, inclusion and feelings of wellbeing



- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZFmqKGEcidg>

What is Attachment ?

Attachment is a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space (Ainsworth, 1973; Bowlby, 1969).



Attachment Theory



John Bowlby
Mid-twentieth-century
English psychologist

During World War II Bowlby did extensive work with child refugees and English evacuees.

By the late 1950s Bowlby had accumulated a body of work to indicate the fundamental importance for the human development of attachment from birth.

Bowlby argued attachment occurred due to an innate evolutionary system.

The Social Brain

We are not an island

Humans are social creatures, we receive bio-chemical rewards when we socially interact: Oxytocin.

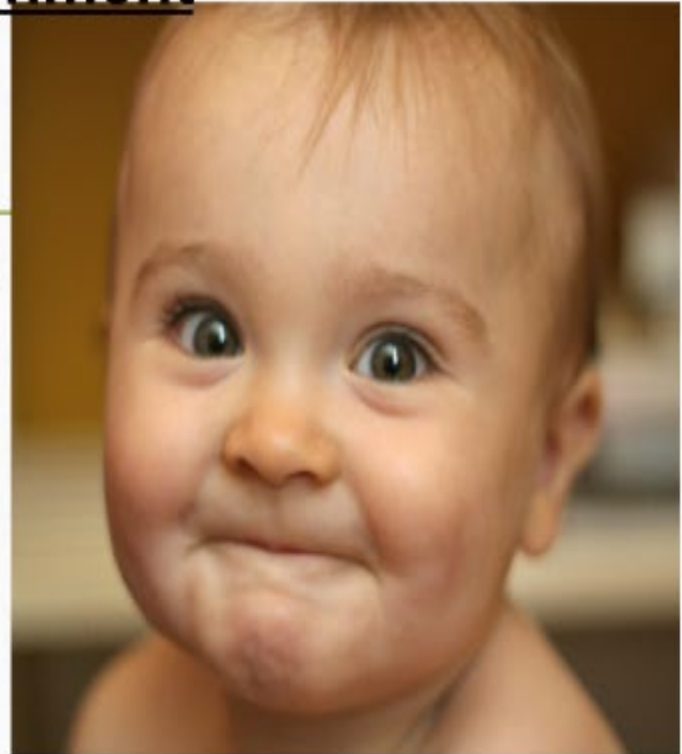
The infant brain develops within an inter-personal context, our relationships affect our behaviour



Bowlby (1969) Theory of Attachment

Innate

Babies are born biologically programmed to form attachments because this will help them survive!



Attachment Styles

Ø Secure (type B)

Ø Insecure avoidant (type A)

Ø Insecure ambivalent/resistant (type C).

Ø Disorganised

(Main, & Solomon, 1990).

Distress, displeasure
or stress is
experienced by baby

Secure Children:
Better language
Better learning
Positive self-beliefs
Good relationships
More sociable
Ready for school

The baby expresses
a need through
crying, showing
signs of discomfort

The primary carer
meets baby's needs,
consistently,
promptly and reliably

Baby feels relaxed
and secure

Anxious

- Negative view of self
- Positive view of others
- Dependent
- Fear of losing relationship
- Can be aggressive
- Can 'act out' of fear

Secure

- Positive view of self
- Positive view of others
- Interdependent
- Likes emotional intimacy
- Trusting

Avoidant

- Positive view of self
- Negative view of others
- Independent/self-reliant
- Dislikes closeness
- Puts up walls
- Avoids conflict

Brain Development

From birth to age 5, a child's brain develops more than at any other time in life. And early brain development has a lasting impact on a child's ability to learn and succeed in school and life. The quality of a child's experiences in the first few years of life – positive or negative – helps shape how their brain develops

- the average baby's brain is about a quarter of the size of the average adult brain
 - it doubles in size in the first year. It keeps growing to about 80% of adult size by age 3 and 90% – nearly full grown – by age 5.
-
- A new born baby has all of the brain cells (neurons) they'll have for the rest of their life, but it's the connections between these cells that really make the brain work
 - At least one million new neural connections (synapses) are made every second, more than at any other time in life.
 - Babies who receive regular touch have stronger neuronal connections, and greater overall well-being.

CEREBRUM

the largest part of the brain

Frontal Lobe

associated with Reasoning, Planning, Parts of Speech, Movement, Emotions, and problem Solving



Parietal Lobe

associated with Sensory Perception and Integration such as Touch, Pressure and Temperature. Important for Understanding Spatial Orientation, Movement Coordination, Information Processing and more

Temporal Lobe

associated with Perception and Recognition of Auditory Stimuli, Memory, and Speech

Occipital Lobe
responsible for Vision

SOURCES:

<http://teachmeanatomy.info/neuro/structures/cerebrum/>

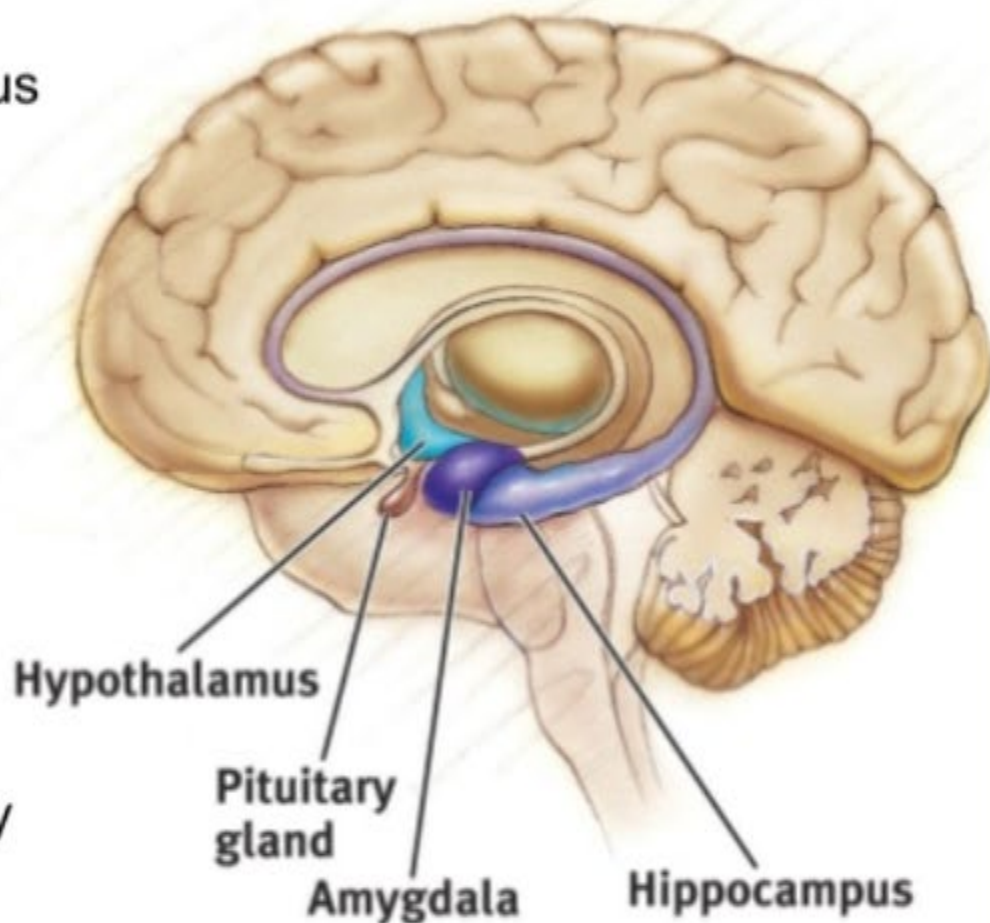
<http://serendip.brynmawr.edu/bb/kinser/Structure1.html>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lobes_of_the_brain

<https://www.thoughtco.com/parietal-lobes-of-the-brain-3865903>

The Limbic System

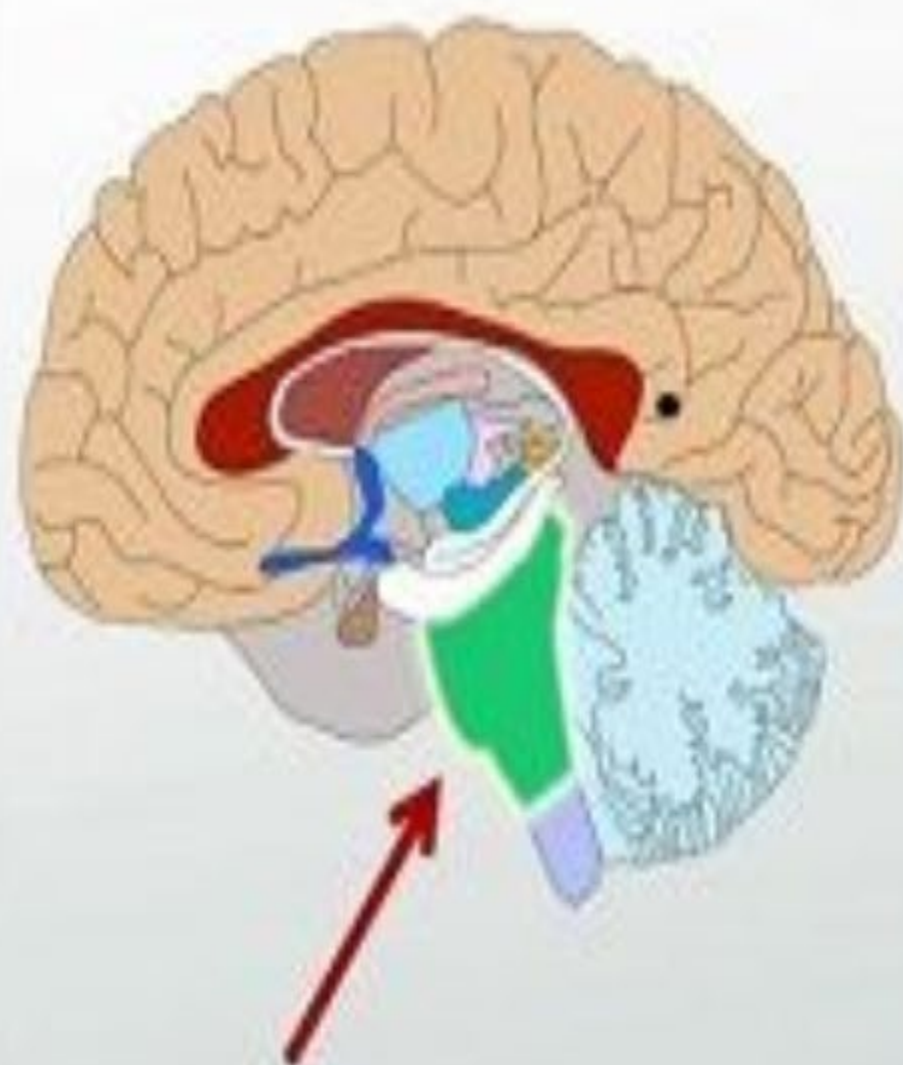
- Hypothalamus, pituitary, amygdala, and hippocampus all deal with basic drives, emotions, and memory
- Hippocampus → Memory processing
- Amygdala → Aggression (fight) and fear (flight)
- Hypothalamus → Hunger, thirst, body temperature, pleasure; regulates pituitary gland (hormones)



Brain Stem

regulates:

- heart rate
- breathing
- blood pressure
- swallowing
- digestion



3 Brains

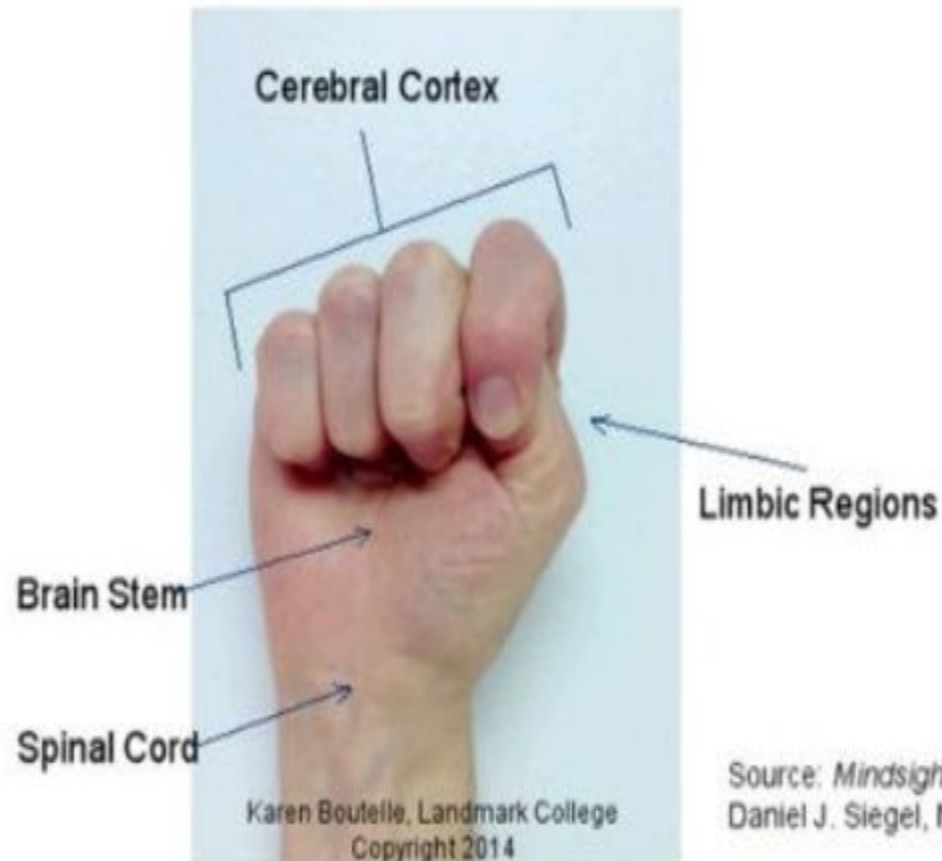
- Human

- Monkey

- Lizard



The Brain in the Palm of Your Hand



What do we know ?

What is attachment ?

How do insecure attachments occur?

Why is our experiences as a baby so important ?

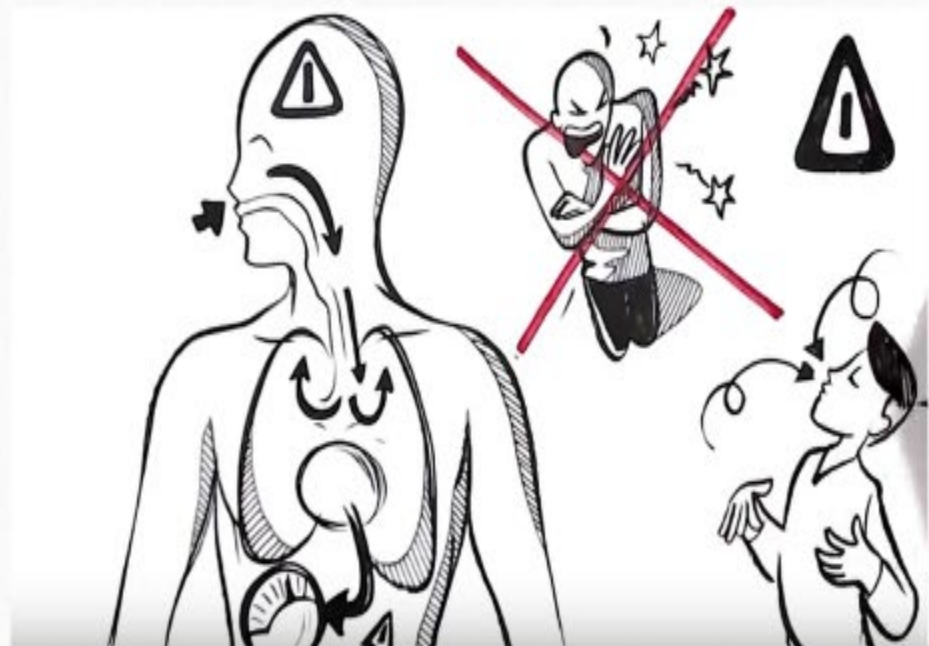
Explain the three brains

Behaviour is Communication

- There is always a reason for problem behaviour.
- Children sometimes have trouble communicating, because they may not be able to verbally describe the problem or know what to do in a situation. At these times, children may act out their feelings or needs. Children engage in challenging behaviour for a reason. The purpose may be getting someone's attention, stopping an activity they don't like, or satisfying sensory needs — but there is always a reason behind the behaviour

FFF

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jEHwB1PG_-Q



Which brain state your child (and also you) are in, impacts the ability to comprehend and process information. There is a significant difference between how one can process in a fear state than and a calm state.

- When a child is in a **calm brain** state -they can think **abstractly**,
- When a child is in an **alert brain** state-they think **concretely**,
- When a child is in an **alarm brain** state-they think **emotionally**,
- When a child is in a **fear brain** state-they think **reactively**,

• When a child is in a **terror brain** state they are reflexive

The Different Brain States and What They Mean.

- Cortex when **calm/alert**
- limbic system when **alarmed**
- brainstem when in **fearful /Terror** (survival is the focus of attention)

The 3 R's: Regulate, Relate & Reason-

Improving Emotional Regulation

- The lowest part of the brain, which develops first, is the brainstem. The brainstem controls the basics for survival: heart rate, body temperature, blood pressure, and other features which are termed "survival-related". This area is NOT capable of conscious thinking.
- Continuing up, is the limbic system. This area stores emotional information (this is where your highly sensitive child lives most of the time).
- Finally, you reach the Cortex, which controls abstract thought and cognitive memory.

With the knowledge that the brain develops from the bottom to the top, when we go to support a dysregulated child, our support begins from the bottom and slowly rises to the top. To do this you must implore the 3 R's: Regulate, Relate, and Reason

Step #1: Stay grounded (regulated)!

Stay in the present moment, breathe steadily, focus your attention on the child, and clear your mind.

Grounding Techniques- For you

Identify how you are feeling.

- Is your heart beating fast or slow?
- How fast is your mind going? Is it racing or is it empty?
- Feel your feet on the ground.
- Rub your fingers together.
- Inhale slow and steady, exhale slow and steady

Open your eyes and look at the room you are in.

- What do you hear?
- What do you see?
- What do you smell?
- What do you taste?
- What do you (physically feel)?
- How do you feel now?
- Is your heart beating fast or slow?
- How fast is your mind going? Is it racing or is it empty?

Step #2: Get down on their level.

- Nothing signals the brains threat alarms than something big and tall looming over us. Remember in this heightened state for your child everything appears larger so by getting down to their level, eye level, you immediately take that threat away.

Step #3: Regulate-Focus on soothing.

- Since your child is in the lower parts of their brain trying to reason with them won't work. At this stage you're all about making them feel calm, safe and loved.

You Could Try

- Somatosensory - heavy work for the big muscle groups (think hugs, wall pushes, weighted blankets), rhythmic and repetitive activities (playing catch, rocking, drumming)
- Top down - reassurance. "You're not in trouble," "I'm not mad," "this doesn't seem like a big deal," "you're okay," etc.
- Relational - reflective listening, clarifying questions, practicing empathy which means trying to understand what's going on for the child

Step #4: Relate.

- As they calm down use short sentences. You can validate their feelings with your words and tone of voice while also providing them with a hug or even taking their hand. Use short sentences such as “I know you feel upset right now, this is very hard”. Your focus here is connecting with your child.

You Could Try

- Now that we've climbed our way out of the brain stem, we can get to work on the limbic system. This is where we focus on **our love for the child**, where we remind them of all the fun things we have planned, or the little things **about them that we're proud of**. It's where we explicitly realign ourselves with their interests so that they can feel we're once again working toward the same goals. We're fighting the problem, not one another!
- Focusing on our love, by the way, doesn't just mean saying "I love you," it means delighting in the child

Step #5: Reason.

- Once your child is all calm, now is the time to talk about alternatives to their behaviours while still reinforcing the limit you set before. You can reassure them that you love and care about them but the behaviour they are exhibiting is not ok.

Collaborative Problem Solving

- There are lots of ways to find solutions, but my favourite is Collaborative Problem Solving. Collaborative Problem Solving is all about finding solutions to problems that work for everyone.

What do we know?

- Behaviour is?
- What do we mean by bottom up?
- What are the three R's ?

Questions

Further skill development

Louise Bomber's - Attachment Aware School Series: Box Set of 5 Pocket Books – Approximately £60

Other helpful books/authors could include, but not limited to:

- Other Louise Bomber books
- Heather Geddes
- Kim Golding
- Dan Hughes
- Bruce Perry

Extra training:

- Emotion Coaching
- Sunshine Circles
- Circle of Adults
- Therapeutic story writing
- Golden book
- Theraplay
- DDP – Dyadic Developmental Practice
- ELSA