

# Attachment

A bond to a significant other

**(a.k.a. bonding)**



# Who can you form attachments with?



Before the age of 6 months, babies do not show any form of attachments.

- After 6 months they show 2 different types of attachment behaviour.....



# Mary Ainsworth's strange situation

- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTsewNrHUU>
  - (1) Parent and infant alone.
  - (2) Stranger joins parent and infant.
  - (3) Parent leaves infant and stranger alone.
  - (4) Parent returns and stranger leaves.
  - (5) Parent leaves; infant left completely alone.
  - (6) Stranger returns.
  - (7) Parent returns and stranger leaves.

# Secure attachment

- Relationship based on trust & security
- Mother as safe base when playing with toys
- Distressed when leaves
- Comforted by stranger
- Prefers mother though
- 70%



# Insecure Avoidant attachment

- Child is quite independent of caregiver
- Not much attention to mother when playing
- Distressed when mother leaves but easily comforted by stranger
- Ignored mother when she returned
- 15%



# Insecure Ambivalent attachment

- Child is clingy and demanding, can be awkward
- Distressed when mother leaves
- Cannot be comforted by stranger
- Desperate for mothers attention when she returned but then also pushed her away
- 15%





# Bowlby's Theory



- **Instinct** to bond (nature)
- **Monotropy** (one attachment)
- **Critical period** (first 3 years)
- No attachments lead to negative psychological effects in adulthood
- **Deprivation** (attachment is lost) leads to clingy demanding children who often have school phobia, can be aggressive and depressed as adults.
- Teenage boys who suffered deprivation – '**affectionless psychopaths**'. NO remorse or guilt.
- **Privation** ( no attachment formed, e.g. Genie) – leads to extreme effects such as **poor social skills, poor language, and poor motor skills**. Irreversible.
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bWzO8DtRd-s>

# Criticisms of Bowlby's theory

- Multiple attachments- Children can form a number of attachments, this goes against the idea of monotropy.



Critical period is too extreme – the first 3 years of life is more of a SENSITIVE period rather than a CRITICAL one because children have formed healthy bonds after the age of 3



Bolby said the effects of deprivation can NOT be reversed. There are cases of children who have suffered from deprivation forming healthy bonds with foster carers and have successful marriages. 2 Czech twins.



# The alternative theory:

## BEHAVIOURIST THEORY!!!

- Our behaviours are **LEARNT** (nurture)

Reinforcement through consequences e.g.

# Reward

# Punishment



Rewards – comforting, feeding, cuddling are rewards that reinforce the attachment. The child responding and being happy in your company is rewarding for the care giver.

Neglect is a punishment so children learn to avoid the care giver.

1. **Secure attachments** are formed when the parent was **sensitive, cooperative and accepting**.
2. **Avoidant** – parents are not **interested in child, self centred and strict**. Kids end up being bullied.
3. **Ambivalent** – parents **misunderstand child's behaviour and don't give good emotional support**. Kids more likely to be bullies.

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"IF WE DIDN'T DO SO WELL IN THE EASY BOX, THEY WOULDN'T HAVE GIVEN US THIS COMPLICATED BOX."

# Hazen & Shaver (1987)



## Procedure

Questionnaire in local paper (“love quiz”).  
Opportunity sample. People aged 14 – 82.  
2 variables measured = attachment style,  
multi choice adult relationship style. 1200  
replied, 620 analysed.



## Results



1. 56% Secure attachments – happy friendly accepting and supportive relationships. Unlikely to be divorced.



2. 25% Avoidant – afraid of intimacy, prone to jealousy, fine by themselves.



3. 19% Ambivalent – prone to obsession, extreme sexual attraction, extreme jealousy, most likely to be divorced.

4. ALSO.....

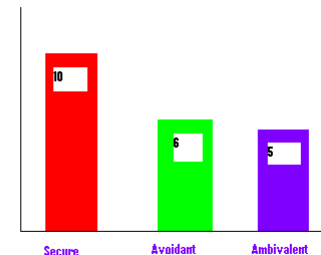


## Conclusion

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IYpeKbHKVbU>

Attachments have LONG TERM EFFECTS. Clear relationships between attachment style in childhood and adult relationships.

Relationship (years)



# Limitations of Hazen & Shaver

- Unrepresentative sample

People in poor relationships were less likely to respond to questionnaire, more females than males responded, local paper so may have been culture bias.



## Honest & Accurate answers

People can't accurately remember their childhood and they may lie about their intimate relationships.



## Multi choice questionnaire

Answers might not have gone into enough detail. People couldn't give more detail about their relationships.



# Applications

Hospitals

- 50 years ago new born babies were taken from mothers after birth to prevent infection and allow mothers to rest. Bolwby's research showed that children who were given limited access to their parents in hospitals showed that children became distressed, and then became uninterested and suffered from despair. Now parents and children are not separated and contact is encouraged to help form attachments.



Family home  
Nurseries

To provide advice on how to raise children.