Attachment

• Definition: An emotional bond with a specific person that is enduring across time and space

• Harlow and the Rhesus Monkeys
  • Rhesus monkeys at birth were isolated from other monkeys
  • At 6 months the isolated rhesus monkeys showed many socially disturbing behaviors
  • This research showed the value of early social interactions

Long-Term Effects of Attachment

• Security of attachment is related to psychological, social, and cognitive factors.
• Secure attachments have been related to:
  • Acceptable emotional expression
  • peer relations
  • social skills
  • Greater understanding of other’s emotions
  • Greater sharing
  • Less aggressive and antisocial behavior
  • Closer friends
  • Well liked by others
  • Higher grades
• Lasting?
  • Perhaps if the environment remains constant

Bowlby’s Attachment Theory

• Infants use their primary caregiver as a secure base - a presence that provides an infant with a sense of security that allows them to explore the environment.

• The Attachment Process:
  • Is based on ethological theory
  • Focuses on the innate basis of attachment
  • Looks at the quality of attachments with caregivers

• Result: child develops internal working model of attachment - a representation of the self, attachment figures and relationships in general which guides later interactions with people.

Ainsworth’s Work

• This work looks at the security of an infant’s attachment
• The Strange Situation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Episode</th>
<th>Event</th>
<th>Attachment Behavior</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Caregiver/child enter room</td>
<td>None</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Caregiver/child alone</td>
<td>Caregiver as secure base</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Stranger enters</td>
<td>Reaction to stranger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Child and stranger</td>
<td>Separation distress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Caregiver returns/ stranger leaves</td>
<td>Stranger comfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Child alone</td>
<td>Reunion reaction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Stranger enters</td>
<td>Stranger comfort</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Caregiver returns</td>
<td>Reunion reaction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Ainsworth’s 3 Attachment Categories**

- **Secure**
  - Caregiver is a secure base
  - Child shows some distress when caregiver leaves
  - Child is glad to see caregiver at reunion

- **Insecure/Resistant or Ambivalent**
  - Child is clingy in the strange situation
  - Child is upset when caregiver leaves
  - Child reestablishes contact, but resists caregiver’s efforts at comfort

- **Insecure/Avoidant**
  - Child avoids strange situations
  - Child does not greet caregiver upon return
  - Child ignores stranger

Some children didn’t fit so...

- **Disorganized/disoriented**
  - Child shows no consistent way of coping
  - Child has a dazed expression
  - Child demonstrates variable behaviors

**Factors Associated with Security of Attachment**

- Parental sensitivity in child rearing
  - Mothers of securely attached infants respond readily to their children’s signals.
  - Mothers of anxious/resistant infants are inconsistent in caregiving.
  - Mothers of anxious/avoidant infants tend to be indifferent and emotionally unavailable.
  - Disorganized/distressed infants tend to be frightened by or confused by their mothers.

- Child’s temperament.