Early attachment experiences and how they present during the first moments of the patient-psychotherapist relationship

KARL HEINZ BRISCH
SALZBURG/AUSTRIA & MUNICH/GERMANY

early life care Forschungsinstitut
PARACELSUS MEDizinische PrivatUniversität
Outline

• Quality of attachment
• Interaction style during the first moments
• Attachment-based psychotherapy
• Prevention
Attachment Theory (1)

• During the infant‘s first year he/she develops a specific emotional attachment to a primary attachment figure.
• The attachment system ensures survival
• The attachment figure is the “haven of safety” and the “secure base” for the infant
• The attachment system is activated by fear and separation.
Attachment Theory (2)

• The attachment system is reassured by the physical proximity of the attachment figure.
• The attachment system is in reciprocity with the exploration system.
„Attachment – Exploration – Seesaw“
## Attachment quality of the infant

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Secure (B)</th>
<th>Insecure Avoidant (A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Insecure-Ambivalent (C)</td>
<td>Disorganised (D)</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Origins of attachment disorders

- Early multiple traumatization of children by attachment figures
  - Severe emotional and physical deprivation and neglect
  - Physical violence
  - Sexual violence
  - Emotional violence
  - Verbal violence
  - Multiple separation from attachment figures
  - Loss of attachment figures without secondary attachment figure
  - Witness of violence between attachment figures
Types of attachment disorders

- No signs of attachment behavior
- Promiscuous attachment behavior (ICD 10)
- Hyper-vigilant attachment behavior
- Inhibited attachment behavior (ICD 10)
- Aggressive attachment behavior
- Addiction behavior
- Role reversal attachment behavior
- Psychosomatic symptoms
Development of secure attachment

- Sensitivity to infants signals
- Gaze
- Verbal interaction
- Rhythm of dialogue
- Touch
Attachment-based therapy I

- Patient's anxiety "activates" his/her search for an attachment figure – attachment dynamics
- Therapist must establish a secure therapeutic bonding with different attachment qualities of patients – attachment transference
- Attachment system of the therapist interacts with the attachment system of the patient
- New attachment experience of safety in therapy
Attachment-based therapy II

• Focus on exploration of
  – Traumatic experiences of loss, separation, violence
• Psychotraumatherapy
• Integration of segregated affects into inner working model
Attachment-based therapy III

• Mourning
• New experiences in relationships outside of therapy room
• Separation from therapist
• Interval-Therapy
Summary

• Attachment theory helps to understand
  – Interaction between client and psychotherapist
  – Psychopathology of attachment dynamics
  – Treatment process in attachment-based therapy
  – Prevention is possible
Reference

Brisch, Karl Heinz (2002)
Treating Attachment Disorders. From Theory to Therapy.
Guilford Press, New York, London

Japanese, Korean, Italian, Russian, Ukrainian, Iranian translation and others are available!
„MONA“-Studie

Motherhood, Nutrition & Attachment
Babies love Smartphones?
Impact of maternal smartphone use on infants’ development

Kontakt: Mag. Marion Hantinger, M.A.  •  0662 2420-80595  •  smart.baby@pmu.ac.at
SAFE-BASIC TRUST STUDY

Kontakt: Antonia Dinzinger, M.Sc.  •  0662 2420-80599  •  elc-institut@pmu.ac.at
Social Return on Investment - SROI of SAFE vs. GUSTA

SROI 1 : 22,4

Preliminary factor

Stakeholder Infants and siblings with secure attachment
19th Internationale Attachment Conference 2020

Friday 11 – Sunday 13, September 2020 in ULM / GERMANY

ATTACHMENT and MENTAL DISORDERS
Causes, Treatment and Prevention
John Bowlby (1980)

- Epilogue:
  - Intimate attachments to other human beings are the hub around which a person's life revolves, not only when he is an infant or a toddler or a schoolchild but throughout his adolescence and his years of maturity as well, and on into old age. From these intimate attachments a person draws his strength and enjoyment of life, and, through what he contributes, he gives strength and enjoyment to others. These are matters about which current science and traditional wisdom are at one.
  - We may therefore hope that, despite all its deficiencies, our present knowledge may be sound enough to guide us in our efforts to help those already beset by difficulty and above all to prevent others becoming so.


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Many thanks for your attention!