

Research on Attachment

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Research Paper

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I. Research Topic and Rational Statement

Studying childhood development over the past year and having many more years of personal experience in the child care field itself, I've seen a prevailing occurrence and observation of the many different forms of attachment bonds; specifically, between child and parent or primary caregiver. This brought up the question in my mind of what true impacts we are having on our children and how or why we're having these effects? How, if possible, are childcare givers or adults able to change in their experiences or reactions or teachings/strategies to better this attachment/bond? This brought me to my research question of, "How does insecure attachment styles harm children, and then are they/we in turn stuck in this negative repetitive cycle further into our adulthood with relationships and attachments?"

II. Research Review

As much as we learn and hear about this throughout child development, it shouldn't come as a shock; all of our experiences and interactions throughout life shape and mold who we are. Specifically, early on childhood experiences that can shape our attachment styles on into adulthood. Hong, introduces us to "mutual adaption" between parent/caregiver and child and their social environment. We see throughout Siegel's book, how the authors introduce the relevance and impacts of reflection on experiences as

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they can often create “unresolved, or left over issues.” These issues can influence how we react to our children, and then in turn negatively impact their development.

These issues can then turn into “parental ambiance”; when provoked into emotional vulnerability, parents suddenly come unaware or unconscious of these attachment “themes” created to protect ourselves and can’t make sense in our own lives, much less to tolerate the emotions of a child. (Siegel.) Based off these different attachment themes, or responses, we can see a formation of adult attachment styles: secure, ambivalent, and avoidant. Throughout, Malekpour presents to us the “array of developmental deficits” children endure over time when they do not have an emotionally invested relationship and bond with a caregiver/parent. We can also see throughout, that a secure bond and attachment will help positively guide and impact a child’s cognitive/social and emotional domains of development.

All of my resources, go into detail of the three insecure attachment bonds showing the different aspects and affects on both the adult and the child; and therefore, their relationship/bond. Siegel goes into more detail of how we attach and how we make sense of those attachments/experiences, throughout his Chapter 5 and 6 of his ‘Parenting from the inside out’ book. I like how him and Mary Hartzell, also shows and express how without proper reflection (drawing upon these memories) and taking on responsibility for their unresolved issues, parents miss an opportunity to become better parents and further their own development to positively benefit their child’s development. “Research shows that relationships with parents can change and as they do the child’s attachment changes. This means it’s never too late to make a positive change in a child’s life.” (Siegel.)

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Siegel and Hartzell then carry on showing how to do so; reflection and healing being the first step. We then see the many different ways of approach and/or strategies expressed through findings and research in Siegel's book, on how to positively facilitate or build a strong structure and foundation for secure attachments. We can see in chapter two, the authors express the way we perceive reality and the importance of sharing stories. Sharing stories with props, and puppets even for younger ages, can help children integrate both the events and the emotional content of the experience. This also then helps children understand and regulate internal emotional states themselves. The mind, is how we process and perceive things; right hemisphere or "mode" vs. left hemisphere/"mode". (Siegel.) These functions of the mind can then also lead into how we bond to others, in the sense of taking the high road, or low road. Often once you go down the low road, your emotional responses are heightened and your regulation responses are quite minimal. This creates tension between you and the child, and creates a sense of insecurity/discomfort in the child. They give tips on how to wait to response till you've calmed down and are "centered". (Siegel.)

Once you're centered, calm-cool and collected, you're able to have attunement with your child. A parent can then use integrative communication to create a sense of connectivity. (Siegel. Pg.71) The author gives great tips and resources for parents/adults to use throughout on understanding content or how to implement. You also need to be aware of contingent communication, to create and guide in positive relationship attachment/bonds. Contingent communication is where you're responsive and respectful of your child's emotions/responses and internal understanding/uniqueness. (Siegel. Pg. 80.) The beginning steps to change or adaptation, is by communicating and forming

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healthy relationships with others. Siegel gives many resources, and tips on how to overcome and change/adapt your relationship/attachment style. If you experienced an insecure attachment in early childhood, and have remanence of negative occurrences/relationships, this doesn't mean indefinitely that you're going to pass that down to your children. With the proper reflection, resonation, and positive communication/experiences with your child; you can become what they call "earned security" status. (Siegel. Pg.123)

III. Conclusions

Throughout my research I learned that our experiences and therefore attachment early on in life with our parents and caregivers, can and most likely will have an impact or affect on our attachment/relationship bonds later in life. Not only that, but it's central to many other developmental deficits or domains. Children thrive off of experiences, and connectivity, and security with that intimate caregiver/person. Not only from birth, but we can even carry this on all throughout life. Especially since Siegel opened my mind up to the possibilities of self-reflection and integration, in order to resonate and get over these unresolved issues from our past. This means, essentially and factually through research; that given the time and dedication and thought, you can change and positively influence your own development as well as your child's.

I now have a fuller understanding of brain development and how this affects how we perceive things or react to experiences. Not only as children, but as adults and throughout life. With the correct knowledge and skills, a great resource being this book, we can better understand ourselves to help positively influence our children's

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lives. Through out this book I've learned and taken in a bunch of new terms relating to how we should interact with children. Such as coherence, integration, internal and interpersonal integration, and contingent communication. All of these being positive ways of influencing positive attachment styles/bonds.

IV. Implications and future research

This research is crucial and vital to us as caregivers, adults, or parents. If we want to be able to positively affect and impact our children and future generations to come, then we need to have a better understanding of self and what impacts we directly have. Being the initial caregiver, or parents, creating a positive and secure attachment is key for all developmental domains. They're all interconnect and woven. I'd like to see more implementations of programs or activities for parents to attend where they can not only learn the importance of attachment, but the way's it affects us even as adults today. Then, how we can change and adapt to make sure our children don't experience the same negative outcomes, memories, or experiences that we believe to have been hardships on ourselves.

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