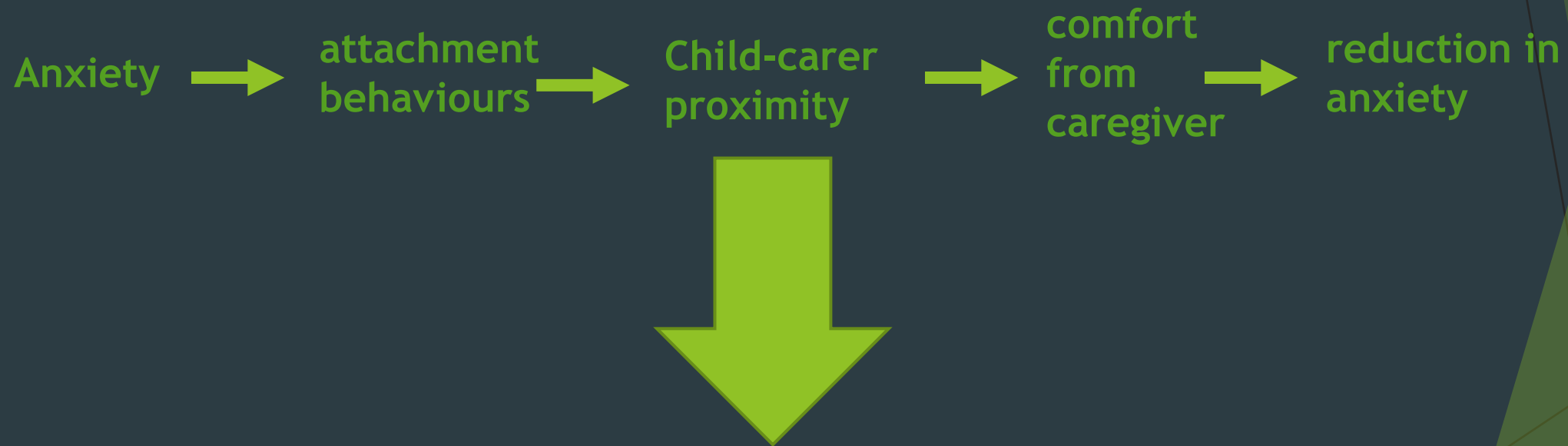


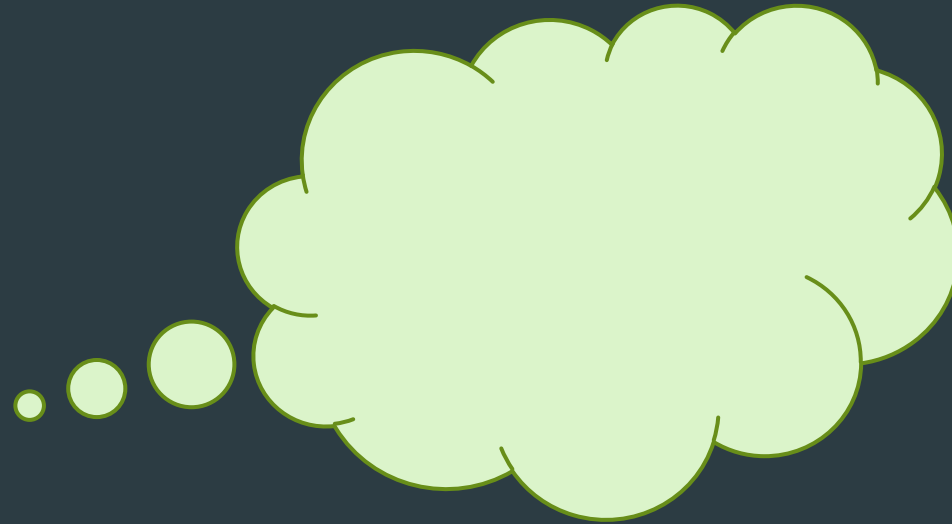
# Why Attachment Matters

# The attachment process



Internal working model of the relationship

# Internal working model of the relationship



- A template
- Influences expectations
- Can change with experience

## Secure attachment

- Infant goes to parent when stressed
- Easily comforted
- Back to the job of exploring/learning

## Insecure-avoidant attachment

- Infant doesn't use parent for soothing

## Insecure- resistant/ambivalent attachment

- Infant goes to carer when stressed
- But not easily comforted

Some insecure attachment patterns  
make perfect sense!

## Insecure- disorganised/disorientated attachment

- Acts as if not sure what to do when stressed

# Stranger anxiety

## Stranger anxiety

From 6-9 months, we prefer intimates:

- Parents
- Extended family – even in very large extended families



# Children's attachment: attachment in children and young people who are adopted from care, in care or at high risk of going into care

NICE guideline

Published: 25 November 2015

[nice.org.uk/guidance/ng26](https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng26)

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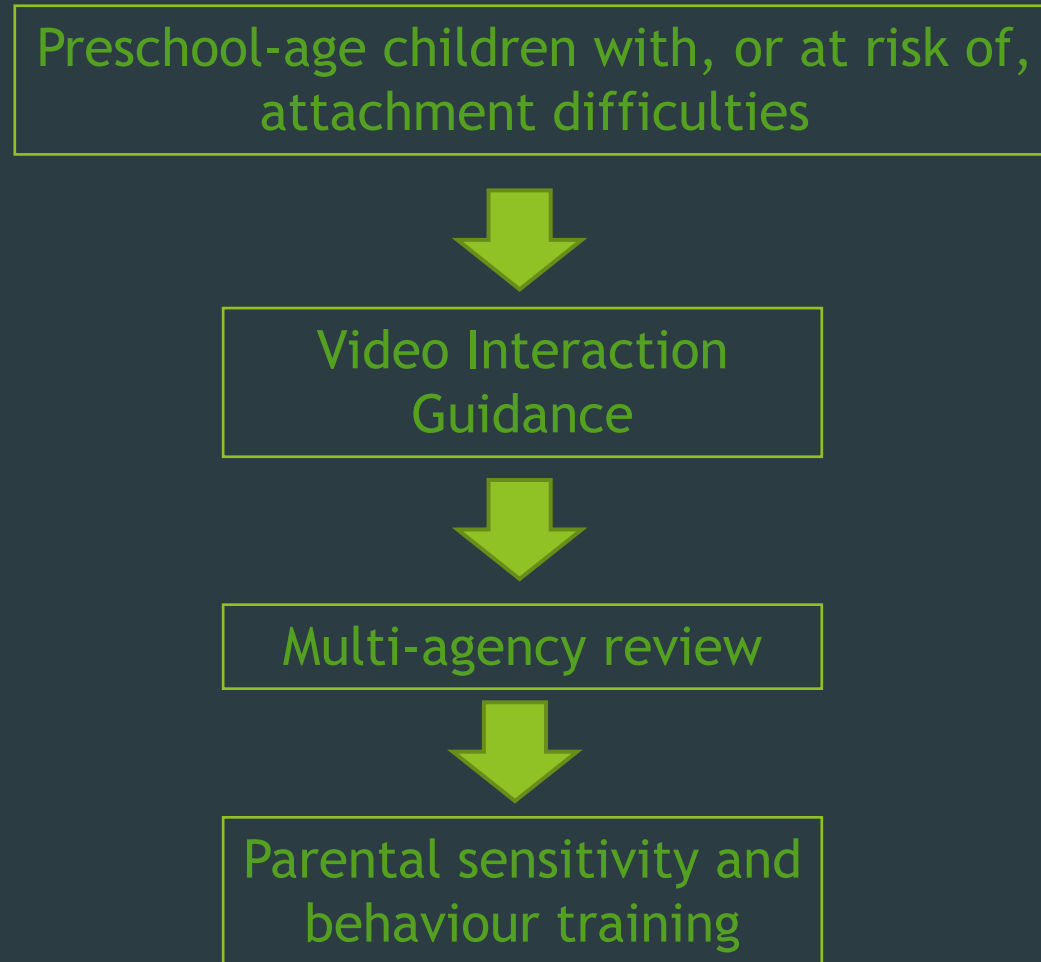
## Selected Recommendations

Ensure that all children, young people and their parents or carers get equal access to interventions for attachment difficulties:

Ensure that the stability or instability of the child or young person's placement does not determine whether psychological interventions or other services are offered.

Ensure safeguarding is maintained during any intervention for a child or young person with attachment difficulties.

# Example of process for investigating and treating attachment difficulties as recommended in NICE Guidelines



# Attachment Treatment

## Video Interaction Guidance



Attachment Treatment



## Video Interaction Guidance

# But what about maltreated children?

- ▶ Neglectful and/or abusive early experiences
- ▶ Turbulent journeys through the care system
- ▶ Foster carers are “temporary”

Essentially no mental health services for children under 5 - especially if maltreated

# Maltreatment specific disorders



## **Disinhibited Social Engagement Disorder**

indiscriminate sociability  
with marked inability to  
exhibit appropriate  
selective attachments

# Maltreatment specific disorders



**Notice the  
“faulty  
signalling”**

## **Reactive Attachment Disorder**

Emotional withdrawal,  
hypervigilant or highly  
ambivalent and contradictory  
responses



# Typical development



# Maltreatment specific disorders



**Notice the  
“hypervigilance  
”**

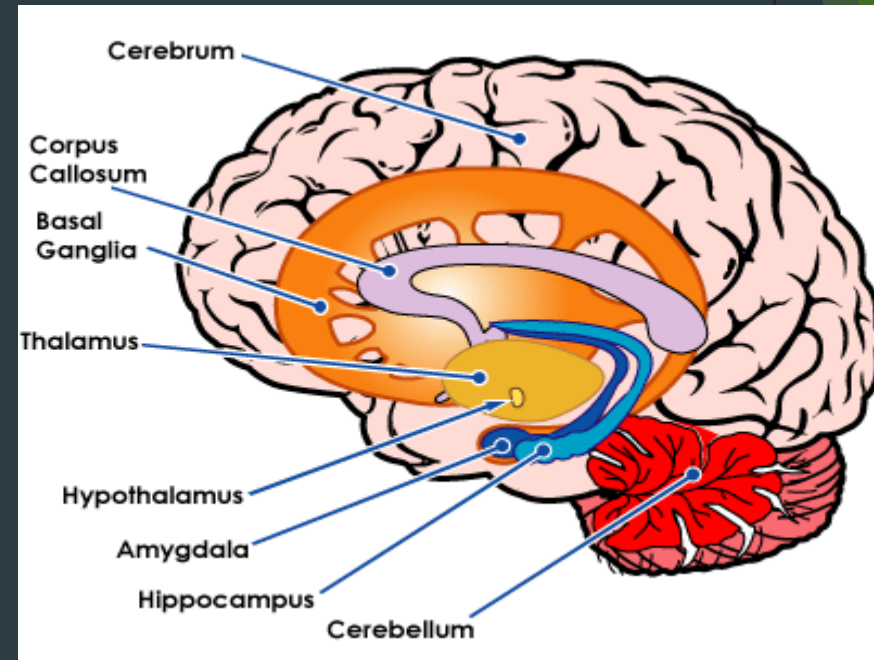
## **Reactive Attachment Disorder**

Emotional withdrawal,  
hypervigilant or highly  
ambivalent and contradictory  
responses

# In the context of maltreatment, certain parts of the brain suffer...

- ▶ Most susceptible are the areas still developing long after birth
- ▶ And those with a high density of receptors for stress hormones

*Teicher, 2003, 2016*



So can these problems be treated?

Yes!

# The most effective intervention is loving family care - with support!

- 
- Children who grew up in terrible conditions in Ceausescu's Romania had psychiatric and cognitive problems that resolved almost completely once adopted to the UK

O'Connor and Rutter

- Trial evidence has shown that changes to cortisol profile can be reversed with “extra nurturing” care

Dozier et al

- Romanian orphans randomised to foster care do **MUCH** better physically and mentally

Zeanah et al

# Gentle challenge



# Why Attachment Matters

- Attachment keeps us safe
- Our attachment figures sooth us when we are too stressed
- Our attachment figures activate us when we need stimulation
- Attachment helps us understand the world
- Attachment helps us navigate the social world





How can we be Celtic partners in taking attachment into action throughout our countries?