

*Narratives on
Attachment
Working with
Families &
Children in
Care*




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Deconstructing 'Attachment'

- ▶ What does this word mean to us as practitioners/ carers/ foster carers/ law enforcement/ judiciary?
 - ▶ Is it a 'strong' word?
 - ▶ In what context do we tend to use it?
 - ▶ Does anyone ever challenge/ get challenged on its use?
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Systemic Therapy and Attachment

- ▶ Social Constructionism.
 - ▶ Power.
 - ▶ Relational approach.
 - ▶ Moving from either/or to both/and.
 - ▶ Recent shift in systemic/family therapy towards the integration of attachment into the literature and practice
 - ▶ Role of Therapist/ Practitioner.
 - ▶ Narratives on the lived experience of the relationships children and adults have.
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Children in foster care and their carers.

- ▶ Conceptualising attachment patterns for children and their foster carers.
 - ▶ Attachments between children and their biological parents.
 - ▶ Sometimes a relationship of uncertainty – for both.
 - ▶ Children building up new attachments – development of a secure base.
 - ▶ Foster carer's attachment and relationship histories being activated.
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Dominant Narratives

- ▶ Narratives of Pity
 - ▶ Narratives of Fear
 - ▶ Narratives of Powerlessness
 - ▶ Narratives of Hope
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Therapeutic work – What works?!

- ▶ Taking a holistic approach
- ▶ Work with all relevant members of the system – bio family
 - foster family
 - Social services

Flexible plan that incorporates the different narratives that are present in terms of attachment and any other challenges present.


- ▶ Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (Hughes & Becker-Weidman)

Holds the dyad of parents/carers – child as central to building or rebuilding relationships which are safe and secure.

Work between the foster carers and children.

- ▶ Reflective Functioning
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What have I learned from the 'experts'?

- ▶ Attachment is a relational issue.
 - ▶ It is a process – constantly evolving.
 - ▶ Narratives can be explored, broadened out – unique outcomes sought.
 - ▶ Attachment and narratives on attachment should be brought forth in a gentle safe way and addressed at every level – perhaps during initial 'assessments' of foster carers.
 - ▶ Practitioner as part of this process is also changing and must pay attention to their own attachment strategies.
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**When little people
are overwhelmed
by big emotions,
it's
our
job
to share our
calm, not
to join their chaos.**



L. R. Knost