



Inserting attachment into PBS: Integration or annihilation?

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When (should?) there be a marriage between attachment & behavioural approaches to ID

Not until:

1. Address historical UK rejection of the emotional world of people with IDs (60/70s) & Neoliberal Individualism's rejection of community and relationships (80s onwards)
2. Address explicit critique from UK feminist psychologists, and implicit critique from parent organisations, that attachment is mother-blaming
3. Keep attachment separate from PBS until :
 - ▶ Understanding of attachment relationships better established
 - ▶ Standardised individual care plan formats move beyond particular outcomes to make space for relationships & lives in process
 - ▶ Much better support for relationship sensitivity and reflexivity in minimum-wage staff from socially deprived environments (A Trade in People: Brown, James & Hatton, 2017)

1. Address historical dismissal of emotional life in ID (Toms, 2010)

- ▶ Curtis Report (HMSO 1946) brought US Mental Hygiene's (William James, James Dewey, psychoanalysis) focus on children's emotional life to UK
- ▶ But children with ID excluded
 - WRT evacuees from London
- ▶ **Bedwetting** sign of emotional distress needing mother-substitute care, not punishment in Curtis report
- ▶ But children with ID sent to institutions, not families
 - ▶ One register of 'offenders' listed >half children with ID for bedwetting
 - ▶ All reported to 'camp commandant' for punishment
- ▶ Tizard's early Brooklands studies first to emphasise children with ID have same emotional needs as all children.
- ▶ Mittler rejected behaviourism as mechanistic, ignoring emotions

British dismissal of attachment focuses on 1951 Maternal Deprivation not 1969 Attachment and Loss

WHO expert committee (1951) repeated Bowlby's conclusion that day nurseries & creches permanently damage emotional health

Clarke & Clarke (1976) (eds) Early experience: myth and evidence

- Concluded: "Children more resilient than been accepted, & whole of development important not just early years." (p272)
- Rutter only author who referred to Attachment and Loss (1969)

Burman (1994) *Deconstructing Developmental Psychology*

- "Attachment theory ... naturalises class and cultural privilege" (p85)
- "Exploitation and oppression suffuse the structure of developmental psychology" (p188)

Little attention to emotional relationships in ID:
effective dismissal of attachment in
Challenging Behaviour full NICE guideline, 2015

- ▶ “There are very few studies of attachment and behaviour that challenges in children or adults with a learning disability.” p25
- ▶ “In good services, full assessments, including functional assessments were offered Often the interventions employed the LaVigna and Willis multi-element model, and were based on PBS.” p31

Widespread belief in PBS, but efficacy not supported

- ▶ 40 year rejection of behaviourism by academic psychologists, but still advocated by professional psychologists (Baistow, 2001)
- ▶ Full guideline on CB in ID (2015) repeatedly states that the evidence in favour of behavioural interventions is **low or very low quality**
- ▶ Hassiotis et al (2018): “No treatment effects were found for the primary outcome, challenging behaviour over 12 months... or secondary outcomes. Conclusions: Staff training in PBS did not reduce challenging behaviour.”

Neoliberal Individualism rejects community & relationships

Neoliberalism: a transatlantic free market ideology based on individual liberty & limited government that flourished from 1980. Neoliberal belief that markets are wiser than any individual or government promulgated by business-funded, transatlantic think tanks

- ▶ State provision been transformed, not reduced. Claim to promote deregulation & small government, but neoliberal states “impose, drive, underwrite and manage the internationalization of production and finance... often under the perverse ideological veil of promoting non-intervention.” (Fine & Saad-Filho, 2017:687)
- ▶ “The sense of deterioration in well-being and the quality of social relations in society is reversible. Understanding the effects of inequality means that we suddenly have a policy handle on the wellbeing of whole societies.” (Wilkinson and Pickett 2010: 33)
- ▶ The British government’s dismantling of education at all levels, including universities, through privatisation reveals a transatlantic political culture “unable to escape a fantasy world in which free markets solve everything.” (2014: 343).

Critiques

The history of emotions took off in the past decade because feelings have been diminished and degraded by popular culture.

- ▶ “Emotion in the neoliberal age seems vague, empty, or else crude.... Magnitude has taken the place of refinement....” (Boddice, 2019: 18-19)
- ▶ Arfken (2018): contemporary psychology promulgates a neoliberal, alienated, individualist epistemology
- ▶ Bettache & Chiu (2019):
 - ▶ neoliberalism separates people from their worlds and from one another
 - ▶ modern psychology constitutes a potent neoliberal institution that quells dissent & encourages people to tolerate the status quo

2. Address explicit critique from UK feminist psychologists and implicit critique from parent organisations that attachment is mother-blaming

- Parents of PwID complain of constant external & official scrutiny (Todd & Shearn 2003; Goodley 2014)
- Positioned within complex & constantly changing policy & benefit systems
- High carer burden, little narrative support
- Avoid attachment amplifying parent-professional tensions

Vital to avoid compounding parent difficulties

- ▶ Mothers isolated: “I couldn’t be a friend to anyone because I physically and emotionally could not be there for them.” (Connors, 2009)
- ▶ Parents have poor physical & mental health (Kastanias et al, 2015)
- ▶ For parents over 60y, caring for adult with ID has major negative impact on health
- ▶ Must avoid humanising some lives by silencing others:
 - ▶ “Surely, people with developmental disabilities are vulnerable, but so too are the people who surround them” (Clifford-Simplican, 2015:224)



Differences between Dutch and English staff

Rajinder Bhaker (2015). Describing Attachment using the Reunion Coding Scheme in People with Severe Intellectual Disabilities. Masters in Mental Health Studies, University of Nottingham

- ▶ Adapted Strange Situation – only one separation
- ▶ Non-clinical sample of People w severe IDs
- ▶ Measures: AAI with main carer + Reunion Coding Scheme + Secure Base Safe Haven Observation scale

Bhaker: conclusions

- ▶ This adapted Strange Situation procedure yielded attachment behaviour that could be described & agreed by attachment-informed observers, & was consistent with representations of caregiver attachment on AAI
 - ▶ **But**
- ▶ Ratings by staff without attachment knowledge on screening measures (RCS & SBSHO) not sensitive to observable indicators of insecure attachment [***differs from Dutch staff rating SBSHO***]

Not just untimely but illogical

- ▶ 'Portmanteau' interventions are illogical



- ▶ It will fail in the UK *currently* for 2 reasons

Lewis Carroll, Portmanteau words & The Logic of Sense (Deleuze 1969/1990)

- ▶ Carroll the logician introduced 'portmanteau' words: SLITHEY (lithe & slimy), MIMSY (flimsy & miserable) to underline their lack of meaning
- ▶ Deleuze drew on this to reveal *sense and nonsense*
- ▶ Portmanteau concepts do not *make sense*: One class or concept contains members of different types

Attachment & PBS

- ▶ PBS is the application of the science of applied behaviour analysis in the support of people with challenging behaviour. (La Vigna & Willis 2012)
- ▶ Gore et al 2013 on PBS:
 - ▶ Primary use of applied behaviour analysis to assess and support behaviour change
 - ▶ Secondary use of other **complementary**, evidence-based approaches to support behaviour change at multiple levels of a system
- ▶ Attachment & ID (Schuengel et al 2016)

Attachment is a cognitive-emotional system that directs people towards specific others in their immediate social world who are perceived to be wiser and stronger, and willing to share their resources. This system is highly active in young children but also activated in adults whenever life's challenges outstrip personal resources. Patterns of attachment reflect cognitive-affective processing that emerge from social relationships.

Attachment and Behaviourism are not complementary,
they are different kinds of concept

Attachment also requires sensitivity to emotional needs of workforce

- ▶ PBS & attachment should co-exist in UK without premature merger.
- ▶ Grow understanding of attachment concepts, measures, research
- ▶ But for merger to work:
 - ▶ New care plan formats would need to be designed with space for both individual outcomes & the person's ongoing relationships
 - ▶ Reducing staff 'churn' to allow meaningful relationships to develop
 - ▶ And enable a workforce trained in behaviourism and normalisation for 40 years to understand & engage with attachment
- ▶ Then develop appreciation of how to move between different kinds of intervention in series rather than in parallel

Conclusions

- ▶ Premature incorporation of attachment into PBS is unnecessary (*it might fall from favour*) and is more likely to result in annihilation rather than integration of attachment
- ▶ If incorporation is useful, the pace needs to be slower in the UK than in European nations whose direct care staff understand social pedagogy, & have higher levels of education & emotional support