

**RELATIONSHIPS OVER RULES: EDUCATING ADOLESCENTS THROUGH
AN ATTACHMENT LENS**

by

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Abstract

Attachment theory is an integral aspect of relationships and bonds that form between people: parent and child, friends, teacher and student and intimate partners. Most of the literature available on attachment theory is focused on these relationships. It is evident that educators are in a profession where they have the opportunity to develop long-term bonds and relationships with their students. The benefits to the student-teacher relationship are substantive, yet attachment theory is not naturally integrated into the professional development of educators. Focusing on curriculum and meeting academic standards may leave little time and resources to understand the processes and interactions that take place in the classroom. To address this void, the purpose of this project is to develop a workshop to inform and create educator awareness focusing on attachment, including educators developing awareness of their own attachment styles and the attachment styles of their adolescent students. Creating awareness allows for a better understanding of how and why students and teachers behave, interact and react in all situations which in turn allows for more positive interactions. A review of literature on attachment is provided that focuses on the following: attachment theory, attachment and adolescents, attachment in the classroom including students, teachers and strategies and understanding one's own attachment style. In keeping with this focus, trauma and multicultural concerns will be addressed. The one-day workshop includes a powerpoint presentation that covers the specifics around this topic and opportunities for questions, group discussions and activities. The activities will be hands on and experiential and give the participants more than an intellectual understanding of the concepts.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Attachment related resources are growing internationally and nationally yet are still limited provincially and locally (Appendix 1). In order for awareness to develop and changes to take place, resources need to be available for all helping professions, including educators. Educators would generally not seek workshops on attachment within their professional development. The limited resources available for educators provides evidence that there is a significant gap in this area and validates the benefits of this workshop. In addition, the teacher training educators receive through the provincial universities offers little in regard to attachment. There are nine universities in British Columbia that offer a one or two-year post-baccalaureate teaching program. A post-baccalaureate program in education generally requires an elementary tract applicant to have an undergraduate degree in any area plus breadth courses in English, Math, Science, Geography, and History. A secondary tract applicant is required to have an undergraduate degree in any academic area such as Math, Science, English or History. Although some of these universities offer optional courses in counselling as part of the elective requirements, after reviewing their programs it was evident that the professional development requirements are very limited, if not non-existent, in relation to learning specifically about attachment. In support of these findings, Neufeld & Mate (2013) stated that “teacher training completely ignores attachment; thus, educators learn about teaching subjects but not about the essential importance of connected relationships to the learning process of young human beings” (p. 34). Cozolino (2014) asserted that historically people learned in a tribal context from people they were related to and about things that were important such as survival and that the current education system abandoned that model which has been a disadvantage to many students.

Significance of the Project

As a review of the literature will indicate, early attachment relationships significantly influence how a person will proceed in life; attachment patterns can change, and attachment relationships can create an amazing opportunity to positively impact a person's future (Hughes, 2009; Riley, 2011). Unfortunately, many people are unaware of an intricate system applied to how we relate to others, ourselves, and the world. This system develops throughout our lives and focuses on lifelong relational experiences. Knowledge is key and learning about attachment theory is something that everybody would benefit from, especially those working with children and adolescents. Many teachers are already aware of the importance of teacher-student relationships (Murray & Pianta, 2007; Lind, Poppen, & Murray, 2017) and the literature outlining this importance is extensive. For example, Murray & Pianta (2007) "outline the importance of teacher-student relationships for adolescent mental health and social functioning" (p. 110). To further support this, Ellerbrook, Abbas, Dickey, Denmon, Saeblla, & Hart (2015) urge secondary educators to prioritize the fundamental R in education – relationships, as this can set the foundation for student success. However, there is limited literature available on understanding relationships in schools from an attachment perspective. Cortazar & Herreros (2010) support this by asserting that attachment theory is a widely underutilized resource in education. The goal of this project is to address that void by helping educators learn about attachment and how it is implicated in their teaching so that learning is enhanced. Through this project teachers will learn to recognize their students' attachment patterns, reflect on and understand their own attachment patterns, understand how attachment influences the student-teacher relationship, and gain strategies and supports that will be useful while working with students enduring attachment difficulties. Gaining knowledge of attachment provides educators

opportunities for introspection, reflection, and a deeper understanding of how and why they and their students interact and react in the way that they do.

Background of the Project

A great deal of impetus for this project stemmed from my high school experiences. I was very anxious and unable to live up to my potential in high school and having the proper support was what I needed. I eventually found a ‘secure base’ at school when I was placed in an alternate education program. I had a “physical secure base” by going to one classroom and an “emotional secure base” by having a few key adult educators who became available, reliable and demonstrated care, compassion and safety on a daily basis. Consequently, I progressed, even achieving honour roll standing, then continued on my path to attaining a psychology degree. I later attained a teaching degree which I believe was a path I followed as a result of my positive experiences with my teachers in high school. Throughout my experience as a teacher supporting students, the majority of my work has been with those that are struggling in some capacity, such as learning, mental health, socioemotional, behavioural, and socioeconomical challenges. I spent years observing kids and being curious about how they change when they feel safe in their environment. I took workshops in many areas, primarily focusing on special education, assessment tools, and technical aspects of teaching, but none of them ever explained what I was observing; proof that a safe relationship between a teacher and a student completely changes the learning dynamics for that child. I knew this already from my own experience as a student, but I wanted more understanding and it wasn’t until I was in a Master of Counselling program that “attachment” kept coming up. The overall emphasis in the counselling program was on the importance of relationships and processing things on a deeper level and I kept connecting the lessons and activities I was learning to my experiences as a teacher. I realized that this was the

language and theory that I was missing for something I innately believe in. As a consequence, the combination of all of my experiences including being a young student in high school and university and those as a teacher and as I complete my counselling program, have led me to this work. My passion for creating a project on “educating adolescents through an attachment lens” has essentially developed over my lifetime.

Relation to the BC Curriculum Core Competencies

The new curriculum in BC was designed by teams of educators from throughout the province and the Ministry of Education in British Columbia (BC's New Curriculum, n.d.) supported the development. The new curriculum includes core competencies that align well with this project. “Core competencies are sets of intellectual, personal, and social and emotional proficiencies that all students need to develop in order to engage in deep learning and life-long learning” (BC’s New Curriculum, n.d). There are three core competencies and each of them relates to attachment:

- **Communication** -encompasses the set of abilities that students use to impart and exchange information, experiences and ideas, to explore the world around them, and to understand and effectively engage in the use of digital media. It includes four interrelated facets: 1) Connect and engage with others (to share and develop ideas); 2) Acquire, interpret and present information (includes inquiries); 3) Collaborate to plan, carry out, and review constructions and activities; and 4) Explain/recount and reflect on experiences and accomplishments.
- **Thinking** - encompasses the knowledge, skills and processes we associate with intellectual development. It is through the competency as thinkers that students take subject-specific concepts and content and transform them into new understanding. Thinking competence includes specific thinking skills as well as habits of mind, and metacognitive awareness.

There are two thinking competencies: 1) Creative thinking, which includes novelty and value;

generating ideas; and developing ideas and 2) Critical thinking, which includes, analyzing and critiquing, questioning and investigating, and developing and design.

- **Personal and Social** - encompasses the set of abilities that relate to students' identity in the world, both as individuals and as members of their community and society. Personal and social competency encompasses the abilities students need to thrive as individuals, to understand and care about themselves and others, and to find and achieve their purposes in the world. It includes three interrelated competencies that relate to the broad areas of Social Emotional Learning (SEL): 1) Positive personal and cultural identity, which begins with families and includes relationships and cultural contexts, personal values and choices, and personal strengths and abilities, 2) Personal awareness and responsibility, which describe and illustrate students' development and include, self-determination, self-regulation, and well-being and 3) Social responsibility, which includes, contributing to community and caring for the environment, solving problems in peaceful ways, valuing diversity, and building relationships.

A review of attachment literature indicates the challenges that students with attachment difficulties may have in general and in school. Many of these core competencies would be especially challenging for these students: connecting, engaging, exploring, independence, collaboration, identity, and caring about the self, others and relationships. Initially, these core competencies can be seen as a hindrance to these students because from an assessment standpoint an educator would struggle to find evidence of student achievement. However, these core competencies provide value to educators for the inclusion of attachment theory within educational strategies. With the proper knowledge of attachment theory, teachers will be better able to guide students in meeting these core competencies by implementing strategies that will

support their attachment needs. For example, if students struggle with connecting and engaging with the teacher and other students directly, that teacher could support them by connecting and engaging with them through a task that is less threatening. The core competencies justify the need for attachment theory. The core competencies justify the need for attachment theory when they are woven seamlessly within pedagogy so that students with attachment difficulties are recognized and supported, again providing evidence to the value of all educators enriching their knowledge of attachment. The purpose of this one-day attachment workshop for educators is to provide a foundation of knowledge and possibly further independent inquiry if desired by the participants. The next section will include the literature review that highlights attachment theory, attachment patterns in adolescents, trauma, intergenerational trauma, and attachment in education, followed by the workshop outline and concluding with the workshop.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Attachment theory is a complex theory that explains how humans relate and identify with themselves throughout the entire lifespan. The theory suggests that attachment is a biological function required for survival and that infants are born predisposed to form attachment relationships with a primary caregiver (Golding, Turner, Worrall, Roberts, and Cadman, 2016). Attachment theory has a constructivist view suggesting the knowledge that children gain about relationship processes is through their experience within relationships (Riley, 2009). In order to understand attachment as it relates to educators and their adolescent students, it is necessary to understand the theory behind attachment, the impact of attachment on adolescents, and how educators are impacted by their own attachment styles. When educators have a better understanding of their own attachment styles they can better support their students and themselves as they will be more cognizant and reflective of the interactions and processes that take place emotionally, relationally and situationally.

Understanding Attachment Theory

Attachment theory was initially developed by John Bowlby between 1958 and 1962 (Holmes, 1993; Bretherton, 1992). Bowlby grew up in England and was primarily raised by nannies. He became attached to one particular nanny until she left when he was four years old and this resulted in emotional scarring (Marshall, 2014). Bowlby later became a psychiatrist and psychoanalyst and started research as a result of his own experiences. Bretherton (1992) outlined his first papers to address his work on attachment theory as “The Nature of the Child’s Ties to His Mother” (1958), “Separation Anxiety” (1959) and “Grief and Mourning in Infancy and Early Childhood” (1960). His work was greatly expanded on by Mary Ainsworth who began working

with Bowlby in England in the late 1950's (Bretherton, 1992). The literature suggests that Bowlby developed the ideas behind attachment theory while Ainsworth conducted research that supported his ideas, allowing her to expand on them by developing different categories of attachment: secure, avoidant, and ambivalent. Their work was unified around 1963 (Bretherton, 1992).

From his own experiences, Bowlby believed that separation from parents and the emotional attitudes of parents have life-shaping effects and lead to life-long struggles for individuals (Marshall, 2014). Through his work on attachment he later asserted that the quality of attachment formed to our primary caregiver influences how we relate to others, how we see ourselves, and influences us psychologically (Taylor, 2010). It is important to distinguish between the various concepts that Bowlby presents in attachment theory, including attachment, attachment figure, secure base, attachment behaviour, the attachment behavioural system, and the internal working model. In terms of evolution, attachment is necessary for survival as infants are unable to care for themselves in order to survive (Riley, 2011). From a biological standpoint, Ainsworth (1973) and Bowlby (1969) asserted that “attachment is a deep and enduring affectionate bond that connects one person to another across time and space” (Bergin & Bergin, 2009 p. 142).

Bowlby used the term attachment figure to identify the primary caregiver in a child's life who is consistent, stable and secure while offering the child comfort and soothing during stressful times (Cozolino, 2014). Bowlby (1988) suggested that in general, most children prefer one person to go to when they are distressed, often their mother-figure, however, they will be flexible and choose another significant person in her absence. The term ‘secure base’ is very important in attachment theory and both Ainsworth and Bowlby used it to describe the

atmosphere that the attachment figure creates for the attached person. Ainsworth suggested that the secure base provides safety for curiosity and exploration (Holmes, 1993) and Bowlby suggested that it is the person the child goes to when they are frightened (Cozolino, 2014).

In order to attain or maintain proximity to the attachment figure children will use sophisticated methods of communication known as attachment behaviours (Bowlby, 1988). The common attachment behaviours include proximity seeking, separation anxiety, and separation protest. By demonstrating proximity seeking behaviours the infant will move toward and maintain physical contact with their attachment figure (Cozolino, 2014). Separation anxiety occurs when the attachment figure is absent; the infant will become distressed and tantrum. Separation protest is a normal response produced in children when separated from their parents and may include crying, screaming, shouting, biting, and kicking (Holmes, 1993). Attachment behaviours function as a control system within the central nervous system (Bowlby, 1988), also known as the attachment behavioural system.

The purpose of the attachment behavioural system is to maintain closeness to the attachment figure while experiencing limits of distance and accessibility (Bowlby, 1988). The attachment behavioural system competes with the infants drive to explore. The infant's drive is to be secure by keeping close to the attachment figure who provides a safe haven and guarantees care, protection and security, so that they can explore, play and come back to their 'secure base' as needed. The mother's ability to recognize and respond to her infant's signals in order to achieve contact and proximity will determine the attachment quality (Geddes, 2006). It is through the attachment behavioural system that the infant begins to develop mental representations of his mother and of himself through their interactions (Bowlby, 1988).

Attachment theory is complicated as it emphasizes that emotional bonds are biologically formed, managed and maintained using mental representations of the self and the attachment figure (Bowlby, 1988). These mental representations are known as the internal working model and will be explained in more detail in the next section.

Internal Working Model

Internal working models are unconscious. They are shaped by the child's proximity seeking experiences (Taylor, 2010) and through the repetitive positive and negative experiences the child has with their primary caregiver and others (Riley, 2009). It is through these experiences that infants learn whether or not to expect others to be available and responsive (Thompson, 2008). The child develops a mental representation of the way things operate, "encodes and remembers information consistent with these mental structures, and acts accordingly" (Taylor, 2010, p. 22).

Internal working models provide a foundation of core beliefs about oneself and others (Taylor, 2010). Bergin and Bergin (2009) outlined the internal working model as having three important components; seeing others as trustworthy, seeing the self as valuable, and seeing the self as effective when interacting with others. Internal working models help children and adults to interpret and reconstruct their understanding of new relationships based on their past experiences (Thompson, 2008). They are associated with the capacity to create and maintain relationships, and to develop a positive self-image and constructive social representations of others and of relationships (Thompson, 2008).

The internal working model of a child whose proximity seeking attempts in infancy were accepted may result in the child seeing him/herself as lovable, worthy, and effective; relationships represent a secure base with others being available, loving, interested and

responsive (Taylor, 2010). For a child whose proximity seeking attempts in infancy were inconsistent or blocked they may see themselves more negatively, uninteresting, unvalued, ineffective, unworthy and unwanted, and they may see others as neglectful, rejecting, unresponsive and hostile (Taylor, 2010).

There is a link between internal working models and attachment patterns. They are both developing concurrently through their experiences with others. They both affect how the child will respond and relate to others, them self and the world. Bowlby (1982) suggested that the internal working model is developed by three years of age, and Riley (2009) noted that an individual's attachment pattern is largely determined by three years of age as well, thus further supporting the connection between the development of the internal working model and attachment patterns. It is important to note, however, that more recent research has suggested that internal working models change throughout life as a result of experience (Riley, 2009). For example, Pace, Zavattini & D'Alessio (2012) conducted a study on late adopted children and their adoptive mothers and found that a stable and nurturing environment provided these children the opportunity to build positive representations of attachment relationships and revise their IWM's from insecure to secure.

The Strange Situation & Attachment Styles in Children

Ainsworth and Bowlby both agreed that the quality of early attachment relationships influences the reliance and security felt by the infant towards the attachment figure (Ainsworth, Blehar, Waters, & Wall, 1978). In 1963, Ainsworth conducted an early attachment relationship study called The Strange Situation where she evaluated 26 families in Baltimore for 54 weeks (Bretherton, 1992). In this study, a mother and infant were put in a playroom where they were later joined by an unfamiliar woman. There were two separations between the mother and the

infant to follow. In the first separation, the mother would leave the infant in the room with the stranger and then return. In the second separation, the mother and stranger would leave the infant in the room alone and the stranger would return first, followed by mother. Ainsworth's interest was to observe the children's behaviour patterns at each separation from and reintroduction to their mother. The observations lead to her developing three different attachment pattern classifications including secure, insecure-avoidant, and insecure-ambivalent. Ainsworth found that infants classified as secure were thought to display optimal attachment behaviours while the other two patterns of attachment, insecure-avoidant and insecure-ambivalent, were suggestive of a less than optimal mother-child bond (Shumaker, Deutsch, & Brenninkmeyer, 2009). Later on, the disorganized attachment pattern was developed and integrated into Ainsworth's original classification system which is discussed further below.

Secure. Ainsworth observed that some children cried during the separation from their mother, but they were easily soothed upon reunion (Taylor, 2010). They actively sought and maintained proximity to their mother, and their mother was responsive (Taylor, 2010). These children appeared to have internalized their mothers as a source of comfort, and they were quick to return to exploration and play (Cozolino, 2014), demonstrating a secure attachment.

Avoidant. Ainsworth observed that insecure-avoidant children showed no distress in separation episodes (Geddes, 2006), shunning contact with their mother and remaining inhibited in their play upon reunion (Taylor, 2010). Avoidant children tended to have dismissive and rejecting mothers (Cozolino, 2014); the mother was observed to be less sensitive to their child and somewhat neglectful of their emotional needs (Geddes, 2006). The stranger and the mother were treated in similar ways (Taylor, 2010), and the children appeared to lack an expectation that

their mothers would be a source of soothing and safety (Cozolino, 2014). Another interrelated term in the literature is anxious-avoidant.

Ambivalent. The insecure-ambivalent child was noted by Ainsworth as becoming very upset when their mother left the room and they were not easily comforted on her return (Taylor, 2010). They resisted contact and comfort but also demonstrated some proximity seeking behaviour, giving the impression of being ambivalent about their reunion (Taylor, 2010). They often had overinvolved or inconsistently available mothers (Cozolino, 2014), and the “mothers were highly insensitive to the child’s experience but seemed to enjoy bodily contact, perhaps more in response to their own needs than those of the baby” (Geddes, 2006, p. 88). These children tended to be clingy and they engaged in less environmental exploration (Cozolino, 2014). Other interrelated terms for this attachment pattern in the literature are resistant-ambivalent and anxious-resistant.

Disorganized. In 1986, a new insecure “disorganized/disoriented” infant classification was proposed by Main and Solomon for the Ainsworth Strange Situation procedure (Duschinsky, 2015). Upon reunion, these children showed signs of fear and avoidance while approaching the caregiver (Duschinsky, 2015). These children have likely experienced a lack of responsiveness and care (Geddes, 2006). They have an inability to cope with stress and anxiety because the attachment figure represents both safety and fear (Taylor, 2010), making their attachment behaviours very confused and disorganized (Marshall, 2014). Their behaviours are often contradictory: demonstrating proximity seeking followed by avoidance, approaching their mother with their head averted or looking away while being held, and presenting as anxious by rocking or showing confusion and apprehensiveness by putting their hand in their mouth or stilling when their mother returns to the room (Geddes, 2006). Often these children had mothers

suffering from unresolved grief or trauma (Cozolino, 2014). Appendix 2 provides an effective model of how attachment works by referencing an adaptation of “The Circle of Security” (Hoffman, Cooper, & Powell, 2017).

Secure vs. Insecure Attachment in Children

Children are recognizably securely or insecurely attached to their caregiver by the age of three years (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991). The attachment style of the child will determine how they cope and manage in the world, psychologically, socially, and emotionally. A secure attachment pattern is protective, whereas an insecure attachment pattern is a risk factor for later emotional and developmental difficulties (Golding et al., 2016). Bergin & Bergin (2009) suggested secure children have the best outcomes, avoidant and resistant children are in between, and disorganized children have the most negative outcomes.

Securely attached children are able to build relationships, connect with the world around them and feel safe (Marshall, 2014). There will likely be some aspects missing but they are able to develop and function in a healthy way because they have a sense of security and love (Marshall, 2014). In a study by Muris et al. (2014), it was found that children who labeled themselves insecurely attached reported higher levels of shame (unambiguous as well as ambiguous) and maladaptive types of guilt (ambiguous and ruminative) and higher levels of attachment security were found to be accompanied with higher levels of self-conscious emotions in general. When faced with challenges, children with insecure attachment are less confident and more uncertain than securely attached children (Sroufe, 1983).

More specifically, children with an avoidant attachment style likely fear being dependent and needy and will present as self-reliant to protect themselves (Geddes, 2006). Their core belief is that they cannot trust an adult to meet their needs and their main drive is not to be noticed and

to present as okay even though they are hurting and anxious (Marshall, 2014). Ambivalently attached children are very anxious as they are uncertain that their attachment needs will be met (Geddes, 2006). This uncertainty makes them prone to separation anxiety resulting in them being clingy, and anxious about exploring the world (Bowlby, 1988). Their aim is to be noticed (Marshall, 2014). Lastly, children with disorganized attachment patterns may have behaviours focused around survival due to their development of constant and overwhelming fears, anxiety, and helplessness (Geddes, 2006). Their internal working model creates the belief that they are undeserving and of little value, and they may expect the world to be dangerous, hostile, and disregarding (Geddes, 2006). As a consequence of their fear and need to survive, they may be very reactive and have expressions of rage, anger and aggression (Geddes, 2006).

Clearly, attachment security has many implications on the way children relate to themselves and the world. Bowlby (1988) asserted that attachment theory explains resiliency and mental stability in some individuals and anxiety, depression, a false sense of self, and vulnerability to mental instability in others. There are many studies that make the connection between attachment security and development with behaviour in children. For example, Thompson (2008) discusses the impacts of attachment security on personality, emotion regulation, self-concept, emotion understanding, social cognition, conscience and memory; all of which are suggested to be positively influenced by healthy attachments. In addition, Marshall (2014) suggests that avoidant, ambivalent, or disorganized children's symptoms may include:

- a poor sense of identity,
- hypervigilance,
- easily overexcited,
- under or over-reaction to pain,

- inappropriate sexualized behaviour,
- an inability to describe feelings,
- memory and organizational difficulties,
- mistrust in relationships,
- friendship difficulties,
- lack of empathy,
- over-familiarity with strangers,
- a heightened sense of justice,
- lying,
- stealing,
- difficulties with eye contact and touch,
- lack of cause-and-effect,
- an inability to cope with change or transition,
- dissociation,
- poor attention and listening skills,
- erratic progression in learning, and
- little or no response to rewards and sanctions.

Marshall (2014) emphasized the importance of understanding attachment difficulties by looking for the underlying root of behaviours and considering whether it is normal child development, age appropriate behaviour, difficulties due to the child's environment, or if other conditions such as ADHD, ODD, autism, or FASD can be ruled out. To further support the importance of understanding attachment, Neufeld & Mate (2013) emphasized that "in the

psychological life of the developing young human being – and for many grown-ups too, if we're honest about it, attachment is what matters the most" (p. 18).

Attachment & Adolescents

Adolescence is a complex time full of development and changes. During this period of life, adolescents experience hormonal and chemical changes, changes in sleep patterns, emotional and social development, and identity development (Golding et al., 2016). When considering all of these changes, it is clear that an adolescent's experience of attachment is far more complicated and intricate than it is for children (Shumaker, 2009). Adolescents go through emotional, cognitive, and behavioural changes in regard to attachment relationships; evolving from receiving care to being a caregiver (Allen, 2008). They are in an interesting place regarding attachment. Like adults, it is believed that their internal working models are "becoming consolidated into a single overarching representational model" (Dykas, Ziv, & Cassidy, 2008, p. 124); and they are developing mixed strategies for approaching attachment relationships (Golding et al., 2016). However, unlike adults, they are separating from their parents and their social relationships and experiences are constantly changing.

As a consequence of the transformation of relationships during this life phase, the assessment of attachment is conceptually and methodologically challenging (Wilson & Wilkinson, 2012). There are two kinds of adolescent assessments that predominate the field including self-report and interview. The most popular kind of assessment and the only one to be discussed however is the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) (Gander et al., 2017). The AAI was developed by Main and Goldwyn from 1985 to 1996 (George, Kaplan, & Main, 1996) and incorporates states of mind with regard to attachment while referencing the internal working attachment model (Mayseless & Scharf, 2007). It was designed to "surprise the unconscious"

(Warmuth & Cummings, 2015, p. 202) and assess the relationships with parents during childhood from a current state of mind (Mayseless & Scharf, 2007). It was initially developed for adults and later extended to include adolescents (Warmuth & Cummings, 2015), and it is considered the “gold standard” for assessing attachment in adolescence (Gander et al., 2017). The central task of the interview is to produce and reflect on memories related to attachment, and to evaluate the discourse in terms of coherence or incoherence with the interviewer (Hesse, 1996). Bakermans-Kranenburg & van IJzendoorn (1993) provide supporting evidence for the reliability and discriminant validity of the AAI. In their study, the AAI classifications were quite reliable over a 2-month period and included similar test-retest reliability for the three main categories, and the classifications were “uninfluenced by non-attachment related autobiographical memory, verbal and performance intelligence, and social desirability”, demonstrating discriminant validity (Bakermans-Kranenburg & van IJzendoorn, 1993, p. 876). For a better understanding of the AAI questions, Hesse (2008) outlines the Brief Précis of the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) Protocol using the work of George, Kaplan, and Main (1996).

Attachment Styles in Adolescents

Main and Goldwyn developed four classifications of attachment in adults and adolescents, including secure-autonomous, dismissing, preoccupied, and unresolved-disorganized (George et al., 1996). It is helpful to note that other terms may be used in the literature for some of these classifications; entangled may be used for preoccupied, and fearful may be used for disorganization. The states of mind identified by the AAI correspond closely to the infant categories in Ainsworth’s Strange Situation (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Hesse (2008) provides an excellent description of the infant attachment categories from the Strange Situation and the adult/adolescent categories from the Adult Attachment Interview. To draw parallels

between infant/child and adolescent/adult categories, Straus (2017) used the descriptive work of Hesse (2008):

<u>Infant/Child</u>	<u>Adolescent/Adult</u>
Secure	Secure/Autonomous
Avoidant	Dismissive
Ambivalent	Preoccupied
Disorganized/Disoriented	Unresolved/Disorganized

Secure. A secure attachment pattern is seen as the most desirable (Shumaker, 2009) and indicates the individual's values regarding attachment relationships and experiences (George et al., 1996). Secure people have a healthy and balanced view of them self and others, and they score low on anxiety and avoidance regarding relationships (Riley, 2011). Adolescents with secure attachment initiate detachment from their parents and the discovery of new relationships with relaxed curiosity (Brisch, 2009). They are balancing between independence and seeking support when needed (Golding et al., 2016). In relationships, secure adolescents will be sensitive and emotionally available (Brisch, 2009), and they will likely have long and stable trust, friendships, and conflict management skills (Straus, 2017). Success can be achieved in life personally and academically for these adolescents (Brisch, 2009). A secure attachment pattern is a developmental advantage in all ways, cognitively, socioemotionally, and physically (Straus, 2017).

Dismissing. Dismissing adolescents tend to score high on avoidance of close relationships but low on related anxiety (Riley, 2011). They tend to be obsessively or compulsively self-reliant and deny their attachment needs, to the point where they can be emotionally unavailable (Riley, 2011). Adolescents with a dismissing attachment want to ignore

their memories of rejection, hurt, or demonstrations of lack of lovability (Golding et al., 2016). They will work hard to keep their fear, anger, disappointment, hurt, and loneliness under control and hidden; striving to appear invincible (Straus, 2017). Dismissing adolescents are poorly equipped to deal with conflict (Golding et al., 2016). They have learned skills to manage such as withdrawing when they are in trouble or responding aggressively without thinking about the social consequences (Brisch, 2009). Dismissing adolescents can appear withdrawn, quiet, self-reliant, independent, happy, settled, and friendly, however they may be relatively isolated as they lack emotional engagement with their peers or with adults (Golding et al., 2016). As a consequence, sustaining romantic relationships is difficult (Straus, 2017).

Preoccupied. Adolescents with a preoccupied classification score high on anxiety within close relationships and low on avoidance of others (Riley, 2011). In contrast to avoidant adolescents, preoccupied adolescents are unable to deny their memories, leaving them feeling angry, dissatisfied, jealous and needy (Golding et al., 2016). Preoccupied adolescents are in a confused state often accusing their family of trying to ‘hold onto’ them (Brisch, 2009); which makes the shift to independence difficult (Golding et al., 2016). They look forward to being away from their family, but the separation is often associated with anxiety and agitation (Brisch, 2009). This results in alternating between aggression and helplessness as they demand their parents’ attention (Golding et al., 2016). Preoccupied adolescents tend to be dependent on others for comfort and will do anything to minimize cognitive, emotional, and physical distance (Straus, 2017). They have learned through experience not to trust people, so they become preoccupied with their relationships rather than being curious about the world around them (Riley, 2011). Due to their desperate need to be close to their primary people, they tend to have volatile and unsatisfying relationships (Straus, 2017).

Disorganized. Adolescents with a disorganized attachment pattern tend to score high on both anxiety and avoidance (Riley, 2011). They are the least trusting, most impaired and dissociative, lacking self-confidence while feeling self-conscious (Straus, 2017). Research suggests that people with disorganized attachments have likely suffered developmental trauma; maltreatment, violence, and abuse that is experienced in a child's early development. As a result, these adolescents tend to be anxious, depressed and hostile (Straus, 2017) and feel unworthy of love (Riley, 2011). The parent is a source of comfort and fear; they tend to develop controlling patterns of behaviours, lack skills in managing relationships or have difficulty regulating emotions (Golding et al., 2016). Disorganized adolescents fluctuate between neediness and withdrawal (Straus, 2017) because they see others as untrustworthy yet want their approval (Riley, 2011). Of all attachment patterns identified, disorganized attachment creates adolescents at most risk. As a consequence of living in a constant state of fear, their nervous system is oversensitized (Straus, 2017). To understand the disorganized classification, an explanation of trauma and attachment will be provided later in this review.

Secure vs. Insecure Attachments in Adolescents

It was demonstrated above that insecurely attached children struggle more psychologically, socially and emotionally than securely attached children, so it should be no surprise that it is the same in adolescents. In the study by Muris, Meesters, Van Melick, & Zwambag (2001), it was found that insecurely attached adolescents reported higher levels of anxiety and depression compared to securely attached adolescents. To support this finding a more recent study by Bender, Somhovd, Pons, Reinholdt-Dunne, & Esbjorn (2015) also found that youth who feel more secure in their relationships with their parents experience lower levels of anxiety than youth who are less securely attached. Dykas et al. (2008) did a study on securely

attached and dismissing adolescents in regard to peer relations and found that secure adolescents were nominated by their classmates as prosocial whereas dismissing adolescents were more likely to be aggressive and shy or withdrawn. Securely attached adolescents were more socially accepted by their peers than were dismissing adolescents, who were perceived as victims of peer aggression (Dykas et al., 2008). In support of this, Shomaker & Furman (2009) conducted a study and found that the quality and representations of parent-adolescent relationships were associated with qualities of adolescents' interactions with a friend.

In a study by Muris, Meesters, Morren, and Moorman (2004) it was found that adolescents who defined themselves as avoidant or ambivalently attached displayed higher levels of anger and hostility than adolescents who classified themselves as securely attached. Roskam et al. (2014) found that attachment deprivation predicted the level of ADHD symptoms in adolescents and that the duration of the attachment deprivation predicted higher levels of ADHD symptoms. Shumaker et al. (2009) presented research supporting the implications of secure and insecure attachments. They demonstrated that securely attached adolescents display higher levels of identity development, self-concept, emotional regulation and problem-solving skills. Insecurely attached adolescents struggled with internalizing and externalizing behaviours such as anxiety, depression, suicide, hostility, and substance abuse (Shumaker et al., 2009). Rogier, Petrocchi, D, aguanno, and Velotti (2017) conducted a study to determine if insecure attachments lead to self-harm behaviours and they found that attachment difficulties and emotion dysregulation were positively associated with self-harm behaviours. In support of this study, Tatnell, Hasking, and Newman (2018) conducted a study on non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI), attachment and emotion regulation in young adults and also concluded that the risk of NSSI may increase as a result of difficulties in attachment relationships and emotion regulation.

Trauma

It is important to understand trauma and how it is connected to attachment security; adolescents with a disorganized attachment pattern may have experienced many adverse childhood traumatic events. There are two types of trauma: type 1, where the external event is a one-time experience and type 2, where the external event or threat is on-going (Marshall, 2014). Both types of trauma may have long-term effects but the focus in this literature review will be on type 2, the repetitive trauma which may be known as developmental trauma in children. Developmental trauma may include physical, sexual, emotional and mental abuse or the regular witnessing of any of these (Marshall, 2014). Trauma can also be a consequence of neglect, abandonment or impairment due to substances, physical illness, mental illness, or incarceration (Grasso, Greene, & Ford, 2013). Unfortunately, developmental trauma is interpersonal; the person that the child is being harmed by is someone that they depend on (Straus, 2017). It is especially detrimental because the primary function of the attachment relationship is to provide safety while the child's development is impaired (Allen, 2001); making disrupted attachments. This is a fundamental outcome of trauma core (Haskell & Randall, 2009).

Regardless of the cause of trauma, it can have devastating effects on the structure and functioning of the growing brain because its development is a result of both internal and external stimuli (Straus, 2017). The brain can be thought of as a triune brain with three different areas including the neocortex, the limbic system, and the reptilian complex (Marshall, 2014). These areas develop from the bottom up and inside to outside (Marshall, 2014). Appendix 3 demonstrates the development of the triune brain with the reptilian brain developing first, the limbic system developing next, and the neocortex developing last.

The reptilian brain is concerned with survival and it is where the fight, flight, freeze mechanism lives (Marshall, 2014). The limbic system is the emotional brain, where our feelings develop (Marshall, 2014). It is the part of the brain most vulnerable to adverse childhood experiences (Straus, 2017) because disturbing emotions and memories are stored in the hippocampus and the amygdala (Taylor, 2010) of the limbic system. The neocortex is the thinking brain and is where logical thinking, reasoning, creativity, recognition of familiar faces, language and abstract thought takes place (Marshall, 2014). Unfortunately, in children who have experienced trauma, the reptilian brain and the thinking brain are unable to work at the same time, resulting in the reptilian brain taking over and leaving the thinking brain inactive which in turn makes it impossible for the child to think and learn (Marshall, 2014).

Other areas of brain development that are impacted by developmental trauma relate to neuronal connections, neurochemistry, and executive functioning (Straus, 2017). Regarding neuronal connections, a child is born with 50% more neurons than they need in later life (Marshall, 2014), and during development some neurons strengthen, and others are eliminated or pruned (Straus, 2017). Experience helps to shape and hardwire these neurons (Straus, 2017) and without regular stimulation such as touch, eye contact, smiles, and nurture those neuronal connections will go away (Marshall, 2014). In addition, mirror neurons are nerve cells in the brain that respond to the behaviour of others and mirroring helps humans to develop the capacity for reciprocal relationships (Marshall, 2014). Children who are experiencing trauma on a regular basis are likely losing these connections and not developing these relational skills.

As for neurochemistry, if a child is chronically stressed and in fear, the production of essential neurotransmitters such as epinephrine, dopamine, and serotonin can be altered and their cortisol level may be persistently elevated (Straus, 2017). Epinephrine, also known as adrenaline,

is critical in helping us fight or flee in the face of danger; people who have experienced trauma will have elevated epinephrine causing them to react more quickly and disproportionately to stimuli as well as take longer to return to baseline (Van Der Kolk, 2014). This constant elevation in epinephrine affects memory, attention, mood, sleep and may have long-term health issues (Van Der Kolk, 2014). Dopamine is associated with the reward system of the brain and traumatized people may have damaged dopamine systems; this can lead to addictions (Mate, 2012) and schizophrenia (Van Der Kolk, 2014). Serotonin in traumatized people tends to be low and results in hyperreactivity and a compromised ability to cope socially because the amount of serotonin impacts the sensitivity of the amygdala (Van Der Kolk, 2014). Cortisol is a stress hormone that provides a response to threat by fighting, flighting or freezing. Unfortunately, people who have experienced trauma often have elevated cortisol levels and live in a state of fight, flight and freeze causing them to be in a constant state of agitation and panic and eventually wreaks havoc on their health (Van Der Kolk, 2014).

Lastly, when the source of fear is the caregiver, the child must remain hyperalert, anxious, and vigilant, and the amygdala becomes hijacked which again shuts down the neocortex (Straus, 2017). When the neocortex is unable to receive or store any new information it consequently delays the development of higher-order executive functions such as problem solving, planning, assessing risk, anticipating consequences, self-reflection, and empathy (Straus, 2017).

It is evident that early childhood experiences influence brain development and attachment security in a positive or negative way. Haskell and Randall (2009) state that “one of the most significant and profound harms associated with abuse, neglect and deprivation is the absence of the opportunity to develop secure attachment” (p 65). The effects of repetitive trauma are often

seen in the classroom as these children may consequently have life-long psychological harms such as affect dysregulation, emotional dysregulation, impulsivity, dissociation, alterations in self-perception and relationships with others, somatization, and alterations in systems of meaning, such as hopelessness (Haskell & Randall, 2009). Unfortunately, many of the parents of children with traumatic experiences have come from trauma themselves (Marshall, 2014), and abuse and neglect are often transgenerational (Haskell & Randall, 2009). Children learn from their caregivers and experiences such as abuse and neglect can break the connections children need to develop to be able to connect with others in the future (Marshall, 2014). Bomber (2009) asserts that a young person with relational traumas and losses may be insecure in relating to themselves, others and the world. So seemingly in the classroom, teachers can begin the reparative process by providing a safe, secure relationship and supporting the students' attachment needs. Nilsson, Holmqvist, and Johnson (2011) conducted a study to analyze if self-reported attachment styles would influence the association between traumatic and adverse life experiences and dissociative symptoms. Their results suggested that a secure self-reported attachment style may be a protective factor against dissociation when individuals experience traumas (Nilsson et al., 2011).

Intergenerational Trauma

Developmental trauma is often influenced by what has been passed down through the generations. For example, children of parents who fought in wars, survived the Holocaust, struggled with psychological issues, or even immigrated to a new country, may pass on their unresolved trauma to subsequent generations. This is known as intergenerational trauma and the effects of it on the Indigenous Peoples of Canada are extensive. Through colonialism, Canada's First Nations experienced historical trauma which resulted in many levels of "disrupted

attachments” including to their land, customs, culture, modes of self-governance, languages, ways of life, and to both communities and individual lives (Haskell & Randall, 2009). Although all of these experiences contributed to disrupted attachments at the individual level, the focus in this literature review will be on attachments between Aboriginal parents and their children because of these disruptions.

As a consequence of colonialism, Aboriginal children were forced into residential school and substance abuse, poverty, and domestic violence became a struggle for many Aboriginal communities (Haskell & Randall, 2009). The separation of children from their parents and the struggles of abuse and poverty resulted in serious developmental traumas and impaired attachment between children and their caregivers (Haskell & Randall, 2009). As a result of trauma and disrupted attachments, there may be struggles with emotional regulation, dissociating, disruptions in relationships with the self and attachments to others, somatization and a sense of loss of meaning, all of which have been found to have impacted Aboriginal Peoples (Haskell & Randall, 2009).

This “historical trauma” is not simply “historical” because traumatic events continue to impact Aboriginal Peoples as a result of abuse and neglect being transgenerational (Haskell & Randall, 2009). Despite this, it may not be too late to try to restore attachments. Haskell and Randall (2009) suggest that connection and experiencing healthy attachment heals trauma. Sam, Ghosh, & Richardson (2015) conducted a study on Canadian Aboriginal adolescents’ resiliency level in relation to their attachment styles and they found that attachment style is related to resilience levels among Aboriginal adolescents, with preoccupied attachment style having the lowest resilience level and secure attachment having the highest. To further support Haskell and Randall’s (2009) assertion around healing trauma through healthy attachment, Sam et al. (2015)

reinforced the importance of understanding and recognizing attachment styles in Aboriginal adolescents as it may foster a collaborative bond.

These studies provide evidence of the beautiful opportunity educators have to help heal trauma in Aboriginal adolescents through understanding the effects of intergenerational trauma while offering and creating healthy and secure relationships. Herman (1997) wrote about three phases of trauma recovery that would be valuable to educators' awareness and supports the importance of relationships when working with traumatized people. Through the phases of safety and stabilization, remembrance and mourning, and reconnection and integration, healing takes place by allowing the person to integrate their story into their life rather than being defined by it (Herman, 1997). She goes on to suggest that healing may be demonstrated by showing readiness to take steps towards empowerment, self-determination, helping others and recreating a new sense of self and future (Herman, 1997). Although educators may not be in a position to guide adolescents of intergenerational trauma through these phases, they certainly can support them by providing a sense of safety, stability and meaningful relationships.

Attachment and the Classroom

Attachment theory has been around since the late 1950's when it was recognized that parents are not the only significant adults with whom children form attachments (Bowlby, 1984). The research supports this in regard to children forming attachments to teachers. Kessner (2000) suggested that teachers may be the only significant non-familial adult in a child's life. There has been a great deal of literature around the importance of caring in the classroom and the student-teacher relationship (Ellerbrook et al., 2015; Murray & Pianta, 2007), yet it seems that attachment theory in relation to the classroom and teachers is in its infancy.

Bergin & Bergin (2009) suggested that attachment has at least two functions pertinent to classrooms: providing a feeling of security which allows children to explore freely and providing a basis for socializing children. It is worth noting that Bergin & Bergin (2009) outline that although it is just as important for secondary students, it is more challenging to develop a secure student-teacher relationship as they spend less time with a single teacher. Riley (2011) argued classroom processes are better explained through attachment theory than the educational theories currently used. He suggested substituting the word “teacher” for “parent” for a new perspective on providing a secure base for students in the classroom (Riley, 2011). Riley (2011) also emphasizes the importance of relationships in the classroom by suggesting that the 3R’s (**R**eading, **wR**iting, and **aR**ithmetic) should not be the foundations of learning and rather they should be “**R**elationships (from the students’ perspective), **R**elationships (from the teacher’s perspective), and the priority given to **R**elationship formation” (p. 1). Cozolino (2014) asserted that attachment is very relevant to teachers because they are next to parents as authority figures and provide nurturance and evaluation. He emphasizes the importance of attachment in the classroom by suggesting that it is absolutely essential, especially for those students who have experienced trauma, socio-emotional challenges, and cultural disconnections (Cozolino, 2014).

Geddes (2006) asserted that close and significant relationships in early childhood influences a student’s response to learning and suggested that considering attachment theory as a factor for students’ difficulties allows for a more holistic view of them as it evaluates parental conflict, family breakdown, inconsistent discipline, hostile and rejecting relationships, abuse, substance misuse, mental illness and death/loss. Delaney (2009) suggested that comprehending attachment supports the teacher in understanding what the underlying need and drive of the student’s behaviours may be. For example, if a student is overly clingy with a teacher it may be

because that student is anxious about holding on to that relationship as experience has taught them that relationships are unstable and unpredictable. To support Delaney (2009) further, Cortazar & Herreros (2010) asserted that attachment theory could help educators to better understand children that present with “disruptive or inappropriate behaviours” because they would understand and consider the students’ attachment histories and how they may be impacted by them. Knowing this would allow educators the opportunity to challenge these students’ attachment beliefs and expectations of others by providing a response different from the one that they expect (Cortazar & Herreros, 2010).

Reading these studies leaves one curious about why attachment theory has not yet made a more significant presence in the educational system. Although the literature presented is just over a decade old it demonstrates the importance and a significant need for the integration of attachment theory in the educational systems. Cortazar & Herreros (2010) suggested that “future studies should address how attachment theory could better inform educators’ practices” and “there is the need to start exploring the next steps in order to better respond to all children’s needs” (p. 200).

Attachment Styles at School & Strategies to Support Them

There is literature available that discusses how students may behave or be impacted at school depending on their attachment pattern. This literature uses the attachment terms first developed by Ainsworth for infants and children. In order to respect the language chosen in the literature reviewed, these terms will remain consistent. However, as mentioned earlier the terms secure, avoidant, ambivalent, and disorganized transfer to the terms developed for adolescents’ attachments: secure, dismissing, preoccupied, and disorganized. In addition, the attachment

pattern behaviours teachers may see in children are likely quite similar to those that teachers would see in adolescents, but in different contexts.

As the author has identified in this literature review, having a secure attachment has many advantages. Geddes (2006) outlined the core outcomes of a secure attachment as having a capacity to tolerate frustration and uncertainty, a sense of self as worthy of affection and respect, a capacity to relate to others with sensitivity and respect, and a sense of personal agency. When considering insecurely attached students it is no wonder that their challenges in school are much bigger as the core outcomes of attachment are not present. In support of this, Geddes (2006) asserts that success in schools can be sabotaged when the student has little capacity to tolerate frustration or uncertainty, is unable to cope with anger around those who are perceived as letting them down, has low self-esteem, is insensitive to the feelings of others, and has an inability to trust adults. The focus of the next section will be on how secure, avoidant, ambivalent, and disorganized attachment patterns are presented in students in school, including helpful strategies to support them.

The Secure Student. The securely attached student is confident and will enjoy the challenges that school provides (Golding et al., 2017). These students have strong self-esteem, feel safe, can concentrate, have the capacity to bear not knowing, are able to manage frustration, anxiety, and disappointment and are willing to take risks and ask for help when needed (Delaney, 2009). They achieve success in school and they gain satisfaction in their achievement (Golding et al., 2017). Duchesne & Larose (2007) conducted a study examining the link between adolescents' attachment and their academic motivation; they found that adolescents with high-quality attachment become more willing to explore their school environment with confidence, which may lead them to develop more positive perceptions of support from their teacher, thus

fostering academic motivation. In relation to this study, Geddes (2006) suggested that students with a secure attachment relate well to teachers and others and are able to explore the world outside of these relationships. They feel reassured that the teacher will be helpful and available, and they know that they can turn to the teacher if they need help (Geddes, 2006).

Case scenario: Annie is 15 years old. She is friendly, independent and enjoys being at school and doing her assignments. She is popular with her peers and teachers and demonstrates confidence when interacting with them. Annie enjoys group activities and is often helping other students. She has a lot of patience and when her classmates get frustrated she often tries to help them calm down. She is constantly talking about her future and tells people that she definitely wants to be a veterinarian. Although Annie's grades are good, her parents check in with teachers monthly to see how she is doing and if there is anything extra she should be doing at home.

The Avoidant Student. A student with an avoidant attachment pattern may be quiet, withdrawn, isolated and obscurely anxious (Golding et al., 2016). They show an apparent indifference to the teacher, avoiding proximity and a relationship with them (Delaney, 2009). These students miscue their needs to teachers (Golding et al., 2016). They are avoidant and demonstrate a need to be autonomous and independent of the teacher; however, this is a defense mechanism (Geddes, 2006). These students deny the need for support and are unwilling to accept help (Delaney, 2009), often resulting in underachievement (Golding et al., 2016). They are limited in communicating and creating opportunities as these would require taking a risk while learning (Delaney, 2009). These students appear to be more focused on activities than on people, however give up quickly if the task is foreign or open-ended (Golding et al., 2016). They may destroy their work before a teacher can comment on it (Delaney, 2009).

Case scenario: Edward is a quiet, independent 16 year-old. He demonstrates to the teacher that he is working hard on his assignments but when it comes to handing them in they are often incomplete or poorly done. Edward will not go to his teacher for help or advice and when the teachers talks to him he is very quick and short in their conversation. He is often heard saying “school is boring and he can’t wait to finish so he can get to work”. Edward seems to have a few friends, but in class he is often disengaged and not interested in interacting with them. He waits for his friends to ask him to hang out and when they do he follows along with what they are doing. Edward is generally compliant and follows the expectations in the class. On occasion he has been known to ‘explode’ with anger but he rejects help and quickly returns to normal. Edward told the teacher on several occasions that he doesn’t need anyone’s help”. The other day the teacher noticed Edward had cuts on his arm and when he saw her looking at them he quickly put on his sweater and went for a drink of water.

Strategies. Use the task to make the relationship between the student and the teacher safe (Geddes, 2006; Delaney, 2009); connect to the task itself rather than trying to build a relationship directly. Begin with tasks that the student enjoys doing (Delaney, 2009), that are clear, structured and can be completed with little help from the teacher so that perceived threat is minimized (Geddes, 2006). Golding et al. (2016) note the importance of nurturing the student’s ability to accept help very slowly and supporting them in coping with the proximity of the adult. This can be done through the presence of other students by having them work in pairs, groups or as mentors (Geddes, 2006). The use of metaphors and stories can be very successful with these students as it feels safer than talking about themselves (Delaney, 2009). It is important to

recognize that some of these students may not react to praise as a motivator because they have no previous experience receiving praise (Delaney, 2009).

The Ambivalent Student. The ambivalent student is highly dependent, preoccupied with relationships (Golding et al., 2016), and their attempts to connect with an adult are fueled by anxiety (Delaney, 2009). They consistently have a high level of anxiety, live in uncertainty (Geddes, 2006) and are in constant need of reassurance (Golding et al., 2016). These students may seem helpless because they want to keep the connection with a key adult (Delaney, 2009). They may underachieve because they struggle to focus and have difficulty attempting a task for fear of losing the teacher's attention (Geddes, 2006). The ambivalent student's constant need for attention can lead to inappropriate boundaries with teachers, as they often want to share personal information, or they may refuse to go out at break times because they want to stay close to the teacher (Golding et al., 2016). Unlike avoidant students, these students find it difficult to concentrate, focus on tasks, and attend to rules and structure of the classroom because they remain hypervigilant to what the teacher is doing (Golding et al., 2016). In addition, they will feel very rejected and can become aggressive if the teacher does not respond or sends them to another staff member (Delaney, 2009).

Case scenario: At 14 years old, Julie is an anxious, loud and disruptive student. She loves being the centre of attention and she is constantly changing friends because she will humiliate or tease them. Julie struggles in school because she does not want to work on anything without her teachers' support. It is really challenging for Julie's teachers because they cannot be with her all of the time, but she will do anything to have their attention as much as possible. Julie is always finding reasons to stay in class during break times to be with the teacher. Her teacher has had to talk with her about boundaries

and the appropriateness of sharing information as Julie will often tell them things about her that are personal. One time, Julie became very upset and demonstrated her feelings by throwing a chair and screaming at the teacher. She then started crying and telling the teacher that her friends are making her want to stay in class because they are mean to her. Unfortunately, the teacher has observed Julie being controlling, bossy and mean to her classmates. Julie's teachers are running out of energy and are at a loss on how to support her.

Strategies. Working with these students' can be very challenging for teachers, as it can be wearing on their patience and emotional energy (Delaney, 2009). Remember this student has not experienced an adult as reliably present so try to reframe the behaviour as anxious, dependent and a need to control the significant adult (Geddes, 2006). It is important to be empathic to the behaviour, while implementing boundaries (Delaney, 2009), providing highly predictable, structured routines, and differentiating tasks into small steps to help encourage independence (Golding et al., 2016). Strategies that may help the ambivalent student make these small steps to independence include, using visuals, using a timer, gradually increasing the duration of independent tasks, providing special transitional objects in place of the teacher, coming back to check on the student or apologizing if it was not possible to do so (Golding et al., 2016), facilitating peer relationships with small group work (Geddes, 2006) and avoiding the temptation to over help (Delaney, 2009).

The Disorganized Student. Disorganized students are the most worrying of all. Out of all of the insecure attached students the disorganized group constitute the smallest percentage (Delaney, 2009). These students may have suffered neglect, violence, and/or abuse (Delaney, 2009), resulting in an absence of trust in adults (Geddes, 2006). Their behaviour is unpredictable

and may be quiet and withdrawn or loud and aggressive (Golding et al., 2016). At school, they may present with severe and challenging behaviours (Geddes, 2006) that may look differently from week to week (Delaney, 2009) for no obvious reason (Golding et al., 2016). These students are frequently afraid and highly anxious (Golding et al., 2016), making them generally difficult to teach and respond to (Delaney, 2009). Their feelings tend to be masked through aggressive or powerful behaviours, such as provoking, bullying, challenging, or controlling others (Golding et al., 2016). Their main focus is on survival (Delaney, 2009) and as a result, they are living in a fight or flight state, rendering it difficult to integrate feelings and thoughts (Geddes, 2006), concentrate, think, attend to tasks, tolerate stress, (Golding et al., 2016) and learn or engage in relationships (Delaney, 2009). The disorganized student can be highly disruptive, compulsive, obsessive, and hypervigilant (Golding et al., 2016), behaviours that may be easily confused with ADHD (Geddes, 2006). These students may be very sensitive to criticism and implied humiliation and they are likely to “know everything already” (Geddes, 2006).

Case scenario: Justin is an angry and volatile 15 year-old who struggles to manage his emotions. Teachers are apprehensive to intervene when Justin is upset because they can be physically attacked. Justin regularly skips school and the teachers have been told he has been hanging out with other adolescents he can relate to that have come from a difficult upbringing. Justin has mentioned to his teachers that his mother is an alcoholic and he never knew his father, but he had heard that he was in jail. Justin said he doesn't care about anything and often he is argumentative and hyperactive but at times he comes to school with a sad demeanor. When the teachers try to engage Justin in school work, at times he is willing and at other times it seems to trigger his reactive behaviours and he will 'explode'. He is very unpredictable, and it seems his behaviours change weekly.

Justin is very controlling with his peers and teachers and he boasts about his behaviours.

He has started to experiment with alcohol and cannabis and the teachers are very concerned about his behaviours becoming even more escalated and out of control.

Strategies. Supporting the disorganized student can be challenging and teachers working with these students can become anxious themselves (Delaney, 2009). It is important for these teachers to have outside or peer support so that they are able to manage their own capacity to think, in turn helping the student (Delaney, 2009). In supporting the disorganized student, it is crucial to provide a safe environment with reliable and predictable routines (Golding et al., 2016). In the event of sudden changes such as different teachers during the day, student eruptions in class, or teachers permanently leaving, it is important to provide warnings, have alternative arrangements, or carefully plan transitions and endings (Delaney, 2009). The goal is to help the student feel contained, emotionally and physically, however, physical containment may need to come first (Geddes, 2006) and may include a ‘safe’ area, activity, or object (Golding et al., 2016).

When fear is triggered, and the fight/flight pattern is engaged, it is an opportunity for the teacher to stop and think, refrain from reacting and communicate some understanding (Geddes, 2006); confrontation is likely to escalate the situation. Although this may be extremely difficult for the teacher; it demonstrates to the student that they are “being held-in-mind and understood” and provides them with ways of responding that they may have never experienced (Geddes, 2006). It is important to be aware of the student’s emotional, social and developmental level of functioning (Golding et al., 2016); they may be at an immature stage of learning which may result in them underachieving (Geddes, 2006). Due to the threat relationships present for the

student, focusing on the task may be valuable. However, it can also trigger reactive behaviours because it may be a reminder of inadequacy (Geddes, 2006).

To summarize this section, Geddes (2006) developed learning triangles (Appendix 4) to visually represent how relationships affect learning in securely and insecurely attached students. The learning triangles are an excellent tool to think about a student's behaviour and their underlying attachment needs. They represent the interactions that take place between the teacher, student and the task. If the student is secure, they will interact with the teacher well, work on their task independently or ask for help when they need it, and the teacher can connect with them directly or through the task. If they are avoidant, they will struggle to connect with the teacher but demonstrate focus on the task and the teacher can use the task as a way to engage with them. If they are ambivalent, they will become hyper focused on their relationship with the teacher to the degree that they ignore the task and the teacher cannot use the task to engage with them. Lastly, the disorganized student struggles to engage with the teacher or the task making it challenging for the teacher to find ways to connect with them.

Challenges & Supports for Educators

Before discussing ways to support students from an attachment perspective, it is important to highlight that teachers need support as well. Unfortunately, there is limited training for teachers' in working with students with emotional and behavioural difficulties (Geddes, 2006) because educational programs are typically designed around curriculum and pedagogy. Teachers face many of the same issues, challenges and dilemmas that counsellors do, yet receive little or no formal training regarding managing themselves and their students in difficult situations (Riley, 2011) and receive no built-in teacher support or supervision (Geddes, 2006).

They are given almost no training in basic communication and empathy skills (Cozolino, 2014); training is focused on learning theory and cognitive processes (Riley, 2011).

In an article by Bergin & Bergin (2009) it was reported that insecurely attached children need attachments to teachers, yet these children are more difficult to like and support, whereas children who have secure attachments are not likely to need other secure adult-child relationships, yet they teachers find it easier to attach them (Bergin & Bergin, 2009).

Unfortunately, and often at no fault of the teachers, these dynamics are backwards. When teachers are faced with difficult student behaviour and the demands of anxious children, they can become demoralized and reactive, responding with rejection, criticism, and punishment (Geddes, 2006).

Supporting students with attachment difficulties can be exhausting and requires a lot of patience and understanding. It is challenging for teachers because students with attachment difficulties have a basic distrust for adults; they often believe in their own badness and struggle with the experience of shame (Golding et al., 2016). It is a lot of work for a teacher to prove and disconfirm a child's expectation that the teacher will be hostile, rejecting, or unresponsive (Bergin & Bergin, 2009).

Riley (2011) asserts that the best way to help students is to help their teachers; in turn, they can meet their students' needs. To support this further, Geddes (2006) suggests that much like students need a secure base, teachers would greatly benefit from having professional support such as strong leadership, a respect for physical comfort such as a well-kept staff room, mutual support and collaboration amongst staff through a regular forum to review difficulties and a common language and framework for understanding student's behaviour. Additional training and knowledge is key in preparing teachers for working with students with attachment difficulties

and by supporting teachers better, they will in turn be more prepared and able to support their students more effectively.

Attachment-Based Supports: What Can Educators Do?

Supporting students with attachment difficulties should come from many different levels; the government, the district, the school, the classroom, and individually through front line educators. The literature confirming the need for the integration of attachment within the education system is extensive; the focus in this literature review will be on what educators can do on their own and within their classroom.

As presented throughout this literature review, first and foremost, teachers need to focus on relationships over everything else. Marshall (2014) suggests that relationships are key to all children, but especially to children who have experienced dysfunctional ones. Teachers have the opportunity to change children's views of relationships (Bergin & Bergin, 2009) and the quality of the teacher-student relationships can encourage learning (Cozolino, 2014). If we could only realize the power of relationship and stability, we would realize that schools really can make a difference" (Bomber, 2009, p. 33).

In building relationships with students, Marshall (2014) suggests using Dr. Dan Hughes' PACE attitude, which suggests **P**layfulness, **A**ccepting, **C**uriosity, and **E**mpathy. At the core of PACE, are approaches to creating, sustaining, and repairing emotional attunement (Straus, 2017). The adult is conveying through PACE that they want to join the adolescent in their life story, even if it is stressful and full of conflict and shame, by showing them that they want to deeply know, accept, and value them (Hughes, 2009). Bergin & Bergin (2009) made six recommendations for how teachers can improve their relationships with students: 1) increasing sensitivity and warm, positive interactions with students, 2) being well prepared for class and

holding high expectations for students, 3) being responsive to students' agendas by providing choice whenever possible, 4) using induction rather than coercive discipline, 5) helping students to be kind, helpful, and accepting of one another, and 6) implementing interventions for specific, difficult relationships. In addition, Earl (2009) discusses the importance of setting up an empathic attachment figure that will support the student in managing all of their interventions. She goes on to say that it is best to use a "light touch" when working with trouble adolescents, by engaging tactfully, delicately and using time and choice (Earl, 2009).

There are many other ways to support students with attachment difficulties. Marshall (2014) provides guiding principles, including understanding the students emotional age over their chronological age, providing structure over the difficulties that these students may be living in, doing time in's, by bringing the student closer to a trusted adult when they are becoming frustrated or dysregulated, rather than doing time out's, and providing less sensory stimulation, such as quiet and peaceful, rather than fast paced and noisy. In secondary schools, Bomber (2009) suggests supporting students with attachment difficulties by setting up a key adult (an emotional secure base), a consistent physical space (a physical secure base), and a team around the child (TAC) prior to them starting as secondary schools are full of transitions. Golding et al. (2016) provides suggestions for supporting the emotional needs of students with attachment difficulties by emphasizing that the "route to independence is dependency" and not to push students to be more independent, to support autonomy with warmth and boundaries, and to connect with students rather than challenge, manage, reward or punish behaviour. "Emotional development thrives on connection not correction" (Golding et al., 2016, p. 129). Golding et al. (2016) goes on to stress that developing support tailored to the emotional needs of the student is

vital before managing the behaviour. In addition to these suggestions, a few programs that were developed to support students with attachment difficulties will be discussed.

Attachment-Based Programs for Educators

There are several attachment-based programs that have been developed over the last fifteen years that could be useful for educators. Groundbreaking literature by Cozolino (2014) on “Attachment-Based Teaching” was developed specifically for educators and focuses on understanding one’s own attachment style and creating an attachment-based classroom. His work was recognized and cited in several other authors work including Ledesma, 2018; Moore, 2017; and Knoester & Parkison, 2017). The ARC (Attachment, Regulation, Competency) Framework was developed by Kinniburgh and Blaustein with the focus of providing trauma-informed services to children and adolescents and it can be implemented in a variety of settings including schools. The Circle of Security (Cooper, Hoffman, and Powell, 2017), and the Connect Program developed by Dr. Moretti and the Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre, were initially developed to support parents. Each of these programs will be explained further with the intention of identifying how they relate to attachment in adolescents and how they could be valuable for educators.

Attachment-Based Teaching. Cozolino (2014) wrote about attachment-based teaching suggesting that emotional regulation, self-esteem, and learning can be supported by building secure attachments first. He suggests that teachers may be the first adults in the lives of some students with the capacity to talk about feelings and that children feel best when they feel connected, appreciated and safe (Cozolino, 2014). The goal of attachment-based teaching is to help children feel protected, cared for, and valued rather than vulnerable, frightened, and unimportant (Cozolino, 2014). By “creating a tribal classroom” a secure base guided by

empathy, attunement, and human sensitivity is also created (Cozolino, 2014). The tribal classroom would focus on 1) time spent together, through socializing, field trips, and projects, 2) familiarity including shared experiences, ongoing communication, and a lack of secrets, 3) affection including compassion, empathy, inclusion, democratic decision making, helping each other accomplish goals, and sharing responsibilities, and 4) a common purpose through a worthy cause, creating cooperation, cohesiveness, trust, and compassion (Cozolino, 2014). There are seven steps in building a tribal classroom (Cozolino, 2014):

- 1) creating an awareness plan,
- 2) embracing your ignorance,
- 3) shuttling – checking in with your body, heart, and history,
- 4) don't freak out – use the three A's instead (attune, absorb, and articulate),
- 5) crisis is communication,
- 6) the gold is in the shadows - looking in yourself and your students can be transformative, and
- 7) practice RESETing – being aware of your reflex to respond, embracing your ignorance to what is going on for your student, recognizing how you feel in your body and emotions, having empathy by attuning, absorbing, and articulating what happened, and learning about the unspoken background relationship that is playing out in the room

Circle of Security. The “Circle of Security” program was originally developed for people working directly with parents, children, or both; however, the authors wrote an article on how this program can be put into practice within preschool classrooms (Cooper et al., 2017). Upon review, this program is transferrable to supporting teachers working with students. This eight-chapter video-based curriculum works equally well for teachers and offers:

- (a) the reciprocal relationship between attachment and exploratory systems,
- (b) secure, insecure, and disorganized attachment
- (c) the need to move from behavioural approaches to seeing problem behaviours as communication regarding attachment needs,
- (d) how to respond sensitively to children's cues that indicate their attachment needs and understand miscues as insecure strategies that children use to hide their needs, and
- (e) ways for adults to manage their own defensiveness around certain attachment needs (Cooper et al., 2017).

Cooper et al. (2017) suggest that children with insecure or disorganized attachments can be triggered if teachers do not understand the importance of attachment and follow the pressure of focusing on academics.

The Connect Program. The Connect Program is a group program that was originally developed for parents or caregivers who are struggling to support teens with significant behaviour problems and/or other mental health issues (Moretti, Obsuth, Craig & Bartolo, 2015), however the author believes this program would be just as valuable to teachers. Moretti et al., (2015) outline the connect program as focusing on “strengthening the building blocks of secure attachment” by helping parents understand their emotional reactions to their teens’, encouraging parents to reflect on the attachment needs associated with their teens’ behaviour and state of mind, and supporting parents in responding to challenging adolescent behaviour with sensitivity yet clear expectations and boundaries.

The hope of the Connect Program is that through parent awareness of themselves they will become more sensitive to recognizing and responding to their teens’ attachment needs and in turn be able to provide more security (Moretti et al., 2015); an outcome that would be of value to

teachers. Kobak, Zajac, Herres & Krauthamer Ewing (2015) evaluated various attachment-based treatment programs and asserted the value of the Connect Program as a useful psychoeducational attachment-based treatment for adolescents. They suggested there should be three components to a successful program: 1) the child's or adult's IWM of the caregiver; 2) emotionally attuned communication; and 3) the caregiver's IWM of the child or adult; all of which the Connect Program addresses (Kobak, Zajac, Herres & Krauthamer Ewing, 2015). Appendix 5 demonstrates an adaptation of Moretti et al.'s (2015) nine-session program to demonstrate how the principles and goals could be used with educators.

The ARC Framework. The ARC Framework focuses on three core domains impacted by exposure to repetitive, interpersonal trauma: attachment, self-regulation, and developmental competencies (Arvidson et al., 2015). In the attachment domain the focus is on the child's caregiving system and focuses on the caregivers: management of affect, attunement, consistent response, and routines and rituals (Arvidson et al., 2015). In the self-regulation domain, the focus is on helping the child learn to identify, modulate, and express their own internal experience (Arvidson et al., 2015). There are three building blocks in the self-regulation domain including affect identification, modulation, and affect expression (Arvidson et al., 2015). The competency domain focuses on helping the child learn to acquire the "foundational skills" for development and includes two building blocks: the building of executive functions and the development of self-development and identity (Arvidson et al., 2015).

After evaluating the three domains and targets within each domain it is clear that educators can implement this framework with their practice. To support this statement, Tweedie, Belanger, Rezazadeh, & Vogel (2017) applied the ARC Framework in a Canadian high school with refugees and they argued that students from refugee backgrounds can significantly benefit

from focusing on rebuilding attachment, self-regulation, and developmental competencies. These students may have been living in or fleeing from insecure conditions of war and trauma which would consequently disrupt or sever attachments, activate survival resources resulting in poor self-regulation, and interfere with their developmental stages and competencies which would impact their executive functioning (Tweedie et al., 2017). Considering that this framework works well with refugees who have experienced adverse childhood events it would seem reasonable that this model would be transferable to any student struggling with attachment difficulties and traumatic experiences.

Assessing Attachment Difficulties in Adolescents

The observation checklist of behaviours for students with attachment difficulties is a useful tool developed by Golding et al. (2016) to evaluate adolescents between 11 and 16 years old. It does not include the disorganized student; however, these students will present these behaviours at a more extreme level, so it is still useful to evaluate them. The chart is a very brief explanation of the assessment tool and should be used as a reference only as it does not include instructions and details. It is important to keep in mind these four groups of questions when interpreting the checklist: “1) What age group would best relate to the behaviours being observed? How would you deal with a child of that age? 2) Does the student feel safe or unsafe? What triggers can you identify that increase feelings of danger or restore feelings of safety? 3) How well is the student fitting in with classroom expectations? Has the student been specifically told about the expectations of the situation? 4) Are there any known triggers for the student being observed? Are there particular situations that seem to lead to habitual behaviours?” (Golding et al., 2016, p. 36). The scoring of this assessment will give you a sense of the student’s attachment style. If the majority of checked boxes are on the right side of the centre column than apply

insecure avoidant styles and strategies and if they are on the left side of the centre column apply insecure ambivalent styles and strategies (Golding et al., 2016). The ultimate goal of the observation checklist would be to inform an action plan which accompanies the assessment (Golding et al., 2016).

Educators Self-Awareness

Self-awareness is “the process of getting in touch with your feelings and behaviours” (Gold & Roth, 1993, p. 141). It is important for achieving professional health as it helps you identify where you are and what your starting point is as well as provides the opportunity to build on your self-concept and self-esteem (Gold & Roth, 1993). Reviewing literature on educators’ self-awareness provides support for the importance of educators understanding their attachment styles. However, based on a review of the literature available, educators’ self-awareness has been an understudied topic.

Richardson and Shupe (2003) wrote about “the importance of teacher self-awareness in working with students with emotional and behavioural disorders”; suggesting that increased self-awareness gives educators an understanding of how students affect them and how they affect their students. They asserted that teachers that take pro-active steps to increasing their self-awareness will build more positive relationships, minimize power struggles, and enhance their effectiveness and job satisfaction (Richardson & Shupe, 2003). Baum and King (2006) wrote about early childhood teacher programs creating a climate of self-awareness. They asserted that teachers make decisions based on reflection, responsibility, ethics, creativity, and caring and that the foundation of good decision making is based on developing a sense of self-awareness (Baum & King, 2006). They suggested that helping preservice teachers “develop an ability to examine and identify the personal characteristics, beliefs, and attitudes that make them who they are and

influence the way they think about teaching and learning; thus, influences their decision-making process” (Baum & King, 2006, p. 217).

Richardson and Shupe (2003) suggested five questions to help teachers become more self-aware: 1) am I taking proactive steps to identify and defuse my own emotional triggers? 2) am I paying attention to what I need to pay attention to? 3) am I using effective strategies to reduce burnout and nurture my own mental health? 4) am I using an appropriate sense of humour to build relationships, diffuse conflict, engage learners, and manage my own stress? 5) do I regularly acknowledge significant ways I (and others) are making a difference in the lives of students? They provide some strategies to support these questions such as taking time outs to evaluate both positive and negative interactions with students before, during and after they occur, when working with a challenging student be aware of the times you are able to verbally encourage them when they do something well, taking time to assess conversations about the classroom and students that were had with colleagues and friends, evaluate how often you laugh when you teach, when you use humour and if you and your students enjoy being there, and identify ways you made a difference that day (Richardson & Shupe, 2003).

Baum and King (2006) also suggest ways to encourage preservice teachers to develop self-awareness during their training program. First, an essential and guiding component of the program should be focused on creating an emotionally and intellectually safe environment with comfort and trust in the instructors so that students can examine their own beliefs and opinions (Baum & King, 2006). Next, they suggest that students should be taught with the whole student in mind including understanding their developmental characteristics and needs, understanding each individual student, and helping them explore their cultural and social values and beliefs such as race, ethnicity, religion, social class, gender and sexual orientation (Baum & King,

2006). Lastly, they suggest that preservice teachers need to have the opportunity to examine their pedagogy and beliefs about teaching and learning by modelling behaviours of self-awareness to them, providing them frequent and varied opportunities to learn about themselves, and implementing assessments that allow students the opportunity to develop a realistic view of themselves (Baum & King, 2006).

Only a couple of articles were found that were relevant and fitting to the topic of educators' self-awareness. Although the research is limited in this area it provides good evidence that the understanding educators have of themselves will essentially influence the way they teach and relate to their students. It also provides evidence for the value in helping teachers understand their attachment styles.

Educators Attachment Styles and Influences

Educators attachment styles should be considered and understood just as well as students' attachment styles. The ground-breaking work of Riley (2011) provides fundamental information regarding educators' attachment styles. He suggests that once teachers, school leaders, and teacher educators understand their own attachment patterns and know themselves first, they can then observe classroom and staffroom dynamics, be more aware of why plans went astray, and most importantly, be better prepared to deal effectively with novel situations that arise (Riley, 2011). In support of this, Cozolino (2014) discussed the importance of teachers taking time to learn about themselves, their own journeys, and broken places and changing old beliefs and identities so that they can support and guide their students' journeys.

Straus (2017) discusses attachment patterns in therapists that could pertain to teachers as well. She asserts that self-awareness helps us identify triggers and determine how to support our clients' specific attachment styles (Straus, 2017). In a study on attachment styles in counsellors

in training, the participants agreed that life with caregivers affects the way they interact with friends and clients in the present and that understanding their patterns of attachment motivated them to try to improve their counselling skills and abilities in order to become more competent and effective counsellors (Rogers, Snow, Reysen, Winburn, & Mazahreh, 2015).

Bartholomew (1990) developed a model of attachment that depicts an individual's internal working model of them self and others in regard to dependence and avoidance. This model demonstrates that a individual's level of a dependence and avoidance depends on their attachment pattern: a secure individual has low dependence and low avoidance, a preoccupied individual has high dependence and low avoidance, a dismissing individual has low dependence and high avoidance, and a fearful individual has high dependence and high avoidance. Riley (2011) refers to Bartholomew's (1990) model of adult attachment as a way to reveal important information about teachers', students', and school leaders' positive and negative behaviours in regard to building and maintaining relationships. He suggests that by applying this model, the perceptions of relationships and behaviours can be linked to the anxiety and avoidance of relationships (Riley, 2011); this includes teachers as their position is focused on relating to students.

Similarly, Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) demonstrate in their two-dimensional model (Appendix 6) that levels of anxiety and avoidance are related to the attachment pattern in the adult (secure, preoccupied, dismissing, and disorganized). This attachment pattern can in turn influence how teachers relate to their students. A discussion of potential characteristics of these attachment styles in teachers follows. There is limited research available on teachers' attachment styles because much of the research related to educators has been on how best to support students in practical and pedagogical ways. However, Straus' (2017) research on therapists' attachment

styles is applicable to teachers as they are in the position to develop relationships with their students in similar ways that counsellors do; essentially her work demonstrates the relationship dynamics that occur between adolescents and adults in the helping profession. Future research on teachers' attachment styles and their influences on their students would be very beneficial.

The Secure Teacher. Teachers with a secure pattern of attachment are mainly focused on understanding their students. If disappointed by a student it disconfirms their inner working model and they see it as strange rather than normal (Riley, 2011). These teachers use this experience to shape and improve their own practice to benefit the students, as they seek to have their inner working model confirmed (Riley, 2011). The secure teacher does not see rejection as a threat but rather as students positively moving towards independence and as a challenge to maintain the relationship (Riley, 2011). Similarly, securely attached therapists may have an immediate advantage in treating dysregulated teens as they tend to be more open, receptive, collaborative, and may handle ruptures in the relationship more easily (Straus, 2017). However, it is important to keep in mind that even if the therapist is securely attached their strategies for managing stress will be challenged when working with traumatized adolescents (Straus, 2017).

Case scenario: Anna loves teaching and she is good at her job. She enjoys building relationships with her students and works hard to develop security and trust with them. When one of the students becomes upset with Anna she does not take it personally but rather as an opportunity to make necessary changes to support their needs. One day one of Anna's students told her "I don't need your help just leave me alone". Anna was concerned for the student and was curious about what was going on for her. She offered her compassion, support and options to help them calm down and provided her with

space and time as needed. She followed up with the student shortly after in a very calm and sensitive way.

The Dismissing Teacher. Teachers with a dismissing pattern remain distant emotionally, symbolically, and even physically from their students (Riley, 2011). They may dislike teaching large numbers of students as it forces them to be close and interact with them (Riley, 2011). Their anxiety may increase when their students try to be close emotionally to them resulting in the teacher creating more distance (Riley, 2011). The dismissing teacher may be more disciplinary, rule bound and rigid, as the students try to attach to them (Riley, 2011).

Case scenario: Bill provides a very strict and structured environment for his students. He believes that students are in school to learn and their focus should be on their studies. Bill becomes very uncomfortable when his students want to engage with him about things other than school. One of Bill's student started talking to Bill about their life, including their family, friends and career goals. They told Bill that they enjoy having him as a teacher. After that Bill wondered why this student was always trying to connect with him and he became more distant. He avoided checking in on him and told himself that he is a good student and likely he didn't need help. Eventually the student stopped coming to Bill unless he needed help.

The Preoccupied Teacher. The preoccupied teacher may be more attracted to teaching than the other pattern types because they have more control in relationships with their students (Riley, 2011). By having control, however, they may appear to be inconsistent in their treatment of students by overvaluing some and devaluing others. They may feel separation anxiety if students they see as special become upset and reject them (Riley, 2011). When stressful, ambiguous situations arise, the preoccupied teacher is emotionally vulnerable (Riley, 2011). In

addition, Straus (2017) suggested that a preoccupied therapist could be more focused on having their clients comfortable and happy than be challenged as they are likely to take ruptures personally.

Case scenario: Mary was never really sure what she wanted to do with her life until she had to do some volunteer work hours for school. She had a friend that worked in a high school that offered her to come into her classroom for her volunteer hours. She always liked kids, so she decided to do it. Once she was there she could not believe how nice it was for her to connect with the kids, especially the ones that liked her. She enjoyed these connections so much she decided to become a teacher herself. Later, in her own classroom she started to feel stressed and anxious when the kids became upset with her as she was sure she had done something wrong to make them unhappy. During these times she would feel scared that certain kids would never forgive her, so she worked harder to make them happy. Other kids started to notice this and were upset. It was difficult for Mary because she wanted to have control in these situations but often she became emotional and could not hide it.

The Fearful Teacher. Fearful teachers seek and avoid proximity, and this results in them being in a heightened state of attachment arousal most of the time (Riley, 2011). These teachers are more vulnerable to the expectations of others which may influence them feeling unworthy and less able (Riley, 2011). When students reject a fearful teacher, it confirms a teacher's belief and fear about themselves, that they are not worthy of affection (Riley, 2011). Supporting the disorganized teacher may lessen their feelings of inadequacy, create a professional secure base and provide the opportunity for a corrective emotional experience (Riley, 2011).

Case scenario: As a teacher, Jim was very inconsistent in his interactions with his students. Some days he would demonstrate care, compassion and connection, and other days he would be cold and distant. Jim's students never knew what to expect and felt nervous to ask questions or for help. One day one of Jim's students told Jim that they thought Jim was a poor teacher. Jim became very defensive because this confirmed everything that Jim already believed about himself. Jim's mother always told him he didn't deserve her love and he truly believed this. Jim decided to meet with his principal and explain to him that he will be leaving teaching because he was not doing the job well. Jim's principal believed in Jim and suggested that they meet once per week for a half hour to discuss the class, Jim's feelings and ways that he could support Jim.

Understanding Your Own Attachment Pattern

Straus (2017) suggests that it can be useful to take some time to think about your particular attachment histories and styles. However, understanding one's own attachment can be difficult and should be evaluated with caution as it may trigger feelings and past experiences that are normally avoided. It is important to understand that exploring one's own attachment pattern is not intended to marginalize, diagnose, or label a person, rather, the real purpose is self-awareness and self-reflection (Straus, 2017)

Assessing attachment can be complex and can be performed using interview questions or self-report questionnaires. Cozolino (2014) suggests teachers should consider asking themselves the following questions: "What's my attachment style? Do I sometimes rely on others for help or always try to be self-sufficient? What do I do when I'm feeling insecure in relationships? Withdraw, share my feelings, or do whatever I can to make the other person accept me? Do I have people who listen to and take care of me, or am I everyone else's caretaker?" (p. 59).

Reflecting on the behaviour patterns in relationships allows the teacher to recognize how they relate to others, and consequently, how they connect to their students (Cozolino, 2014). Straus (2017) suggests two different methods for exploring one's own attachment style that could be useful for teachers, including Siegel and Hartzell's (2003) Adaptation of the AAI and Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) Relationship Questionnaire. Appendix 7 demonstrates an adapted version of Bartholomew and Horowitz's (1991) Relationship Questionnaire. Levine and Heller (2012) designed a questionnaire to measure one's own attachment style in relation to intimate relationships. Although it is focused on attachment in intimate relationships the author believes it would be a valuable measurement for understanding one's own attachment in general. Supporting this, Levine and Heller (2012) state that "knowing your specific attachment profile will help you understand yourself better and guide you in your interactions with others" (p. 40).

Summary

The purpose of this project is to address the void of attachment in education and to fill a training gap by providing educators a one-day workshop to learn about attachment theory, attachment in adolescents and understanding their own attachment styles. The literature review has supported this purpose by providing in depth information on attachment theory, including attachment in adolescents within and outside the school setting, attachment in teachers and information to support understanding one's own attachment. Detailed information regarding the four attachment classifications have been provided regarding attachment patterns in infants and children, adolescents, students, and teachers. Both the infant and adolescent/adult terminology for attachment patterns was used interchangeably including secure, avoidant/dismissing, ambivalent/preoccupied, and disorganized.

Learning about attachment is beneficial in helping teachers understand student classroom behaviour and how and why a teacher responds in the way they do. Riley (2011) reinforces this statement by asserting that when all other factors are accounted for, applying attachment theory to the classroom and staffroom relationships helps explain classroom behaviours by teachers, students, and school leaders. Educators are taught about teaching academics, supporting special needs, and managing classroom behaviours and social skills, but rarely are they taught about the influences and consequences of attachment patterns. Riley (2011) asserts that understanding the self and others by evaluating one's relational history would be useful and essential pre-service learning because it increases the chances of forming and sustaining nurturing relationships that both the students and educators; "a true dyadic benefit" (p. 64).

With all of the supporting evidence presented, it is difficult to understand how attachment continues to be vastly unintegrated into the education system. This project is a starting point that will hopefully be extended further by inspiring educators to expand their knowledge about this issue and potentially becoming a consideration at the district, university and provincial levels. This literature review has been presented to support the author's project "Relationships Over Rules: Educating Adolescents Through an Attachment Lens", a workshop for teachers.

Chapter 3: Project Description

The purpose of this chapter is to provide a better understanding regarding the intention of the workshop, including who it is designed for, the goals of the workshop, triggers that may arise, confidentiality, and the structure of the workshop.

Target Audience

Although it is aimed towards teachers, the workshop would be beneficial for all educators working in the school system, including administrators, counsellors, school psychologists, and education assistants. It is focused on working with adolescents however, there is information on attachment styles in children, along with support strategies that can be implemented for both children and adolescents. The information on attachment patterns in teachers is limited therefore research on attachment patterns in counsellors is provided as a framework for educators. Understanding one's own attachment style would be valuable to all professionals working with children, adolescents, or for helping people in general.

Workshop Goals

There are three primary goals that are focused on in this workshop. The first goal is to provide educators with an in-depth understanding of attachment patterns in adolescents and how they can influence students. As Moretti et al. (2015) stated "behaviour is communication" but if we don't understand where that behaviour is coming from it is difficult to understand what students' are communicating. The second goal is to help educators gain awareness and understanding of their own attachment patterns and how they can influence the ways they relate to their students both positively or negatively. It is important to highlight that the purpose of creating awareness of one's own attachment pattern is for the educators' personal gain to better understand their relationships to their students. Participants will adapt to a learning style that best

meets their needs and although some might decide to share examples from their own lives, this is not meant to be a therapy group and respectful boundaries will be established. The personal sharing of information will be kindly discouraged to protect all participants of the workshop. The third goal is to provide supports and strategies for educators working with students with attachment difficulties by making the theoretical applicable. Many of the workshop participants may have a general understanding of the strategies, however, there are several resources provided and participants will be encouraged to seek out these resources for further, more detailed information.

Talking About Attachment: Introspection, Triggers & Safety

It is likely that there will be a lot of introspection during the workshop as one of the goals is to gain awareness around one's own attachment pattern. Introspection is defined as, observation or examination of one's own mental and emotional state, mental processes, etc.; the act of looking within oneself (Introspection, n.d.). Attachment patterns are related to one's own experiences and histories; it is important to understand that through introspection difficult memories, thoughts, feelings, or triggers may come up for participants. The workshop is developed to be interactive, and in gaining insight in one's attachment style, participants need not share personal stories or thoughts regarding attachment patterns and histories. In fact, it is discouraged, and boundaries will be established to provide a desired level of safety and comfort. It is important that participants take care of themselves during and after the workshop and take breaks and decline participation as needed. Participants are encouraged to provide the presenter with ongoing feedback throughout the process. The facilitator will make every effort to ensure the participant is aware of further supports available.

Confidentiality

Although this is a workshop and not group therapy, it is important for the facilitator to discuss the importance of confidentiality. Participants may inadvertently share information about themselves and it is important that their privacy is respected. Unfortunately, the facilitator cannot guarantee confidentiality and it is important to share that with participants. In the event that a participant shares personal, sensitive information the facilitator will gently guide them back to the topic. A list of local support services will be made available to all participants. In addition, participants need to be informed that they are not allowed to share personal information about students or other people during or after the workshop. If they want to discuss professional experiences and situations, they need to ensure there is no detailed or descriptive information that would allow that student to be identified. To support this, the BC Teachers Federation code of ethics outlines that “the member respects the confidential nature of information concerning students and may give it only to authorized persons or agencies directly concerned with their welfare” (BCTF Code of Ethics, n.d). Many of the participants will know each other making the privacy of students difficult so it is best practice that participants avoid discussion around specific cases and individuals.

Structure of the Workshop

This is a one-day workshop and includes small breaks and a 45-minute lunch break. At the beginning of the workshop, goals, safety, confidentiality, and group expectations will be discussed. Participants will be encouraged to ask questions and explore their learning to the depths of their comfort. As best as possible, the facilitator will ensure safety of all participants. The workshop will include individual activities, break-out sessions, video clips, case scenarios, and suggested resources including books, articles and websites.

Summary

This chapter briefly described the target audience, goals, safety, confidentiality and structure of the workshop. The workshop will be provided during professional development opportunities offered through school districts. Chapter 4 provides a detailed description of the workshop including powerpoint slides, handouts and individual and group activities. The main topics in the workshop include The BC Curriculum Core Competencies, attachment theory, attachment and adolescents, trauma, intergenerational trauma, student and educator attachment styles, and understanding one's own attachment pattern.

Chapter 4: An Attachment Based Workshop for Educators

This attachment-based workshop is created with the desire of increasing educators' knowledge and self-awareness around attachment patterns in their students and themselves. The workshop includes a power point presentation with activities and discussion opportunities integrated throughout the program. It has been designed with the intention of providing educators with a foundational knowledge of attachment theory and its influences in the educational system. More specifically, the main goal of this workshop is to help educators recognize that it is not only their students but also themselves that come into the classroom with specific attachment patterns. Attachment patterns influence how people interact and behave and will effectively influence educators in their interactions with students. The importance of knowing this is vast as it not only helps educators understand themselves and their students; it also allows for growth and opportunity to change the dynamics of the classroom. It is hoped that educators will leave this workshop with a better understanding of attachment theory, of themselves and with some strategies that will be useful in their practice.

The power point presentation covers: Attachment Theory, Attachment & Children, Attachment & Adolescents, Trauma & Attachment, Attachment in Schools, Educator's Attachment Patterns and Understanding Your Own Attachment. The activities and handouts provided are in the same order as the power point presentation for ease of use. The material provided is intended to be used for a one-day workshop but can be modified to accommodate shorter or longer workshops. The suggested length of time of the group discussions and activities are provided with the instructions and the handouts directly follow the activity instructions.

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Relationships over Rules: Educating Adolescents Through an Attachment Lens



By Katrina Infanta

"In the psychological life of the developing young human being – and for many grown-ups too, if we're honest about it, attachment is what matters the most" (Neufeld & Mate, 2013, p. 18).

Nuts & Bolts of the Workshop

- Schedule & breaktimes
- Bathrooms
- Food and drinks
- Group expectations

Group Expectations

1. Confidentiality:
 - a) Due to the sensitive nature of this topic, please be cautious about sharing personal stories of yourself or people you may know.
 - b) If you want to discuss professional experiences and situations please ensure there is no detailed or descriptive information that would allow that student or person to be identified.
 - c) If participants inadvertently share information about themselves, it is important that their privacy is respected. Please keep all information shared in this workshop confidential.

Group Expectations continued

2. Safety:

- a) At any point, if a participant is uncomfortable, they are invited to take breaks or decline participation.
- b) In the event that a participant is experiencing negative reactions, it is strongly encouraged that they discuss it with the facilitator before leaving. The facilitator will make every effort to ensure the participant is safe and aware of further supports available.

Workshop Goals

- 1. To provide educators with an in-depth understanding of attachment patterns in adolescents and how they can influence the adolescent as a student.
- 2. To help educators gain awareness and understanding of their own attachment patterns and how they can influence the ways they relate to their students both positively or negatively.
- 3. To provide supports and strategies for educators working with students with attachment difficulties.

Warm-up Activities

- Introductions - Tell the group three things about yourself.
- Nobody can talk, arrange yourselves in order by your birthdays (month and day).
- Name one skill that you would like to develop.

The BC Curriculum Core Competencies

The Ministry of Education in British Columbia created a new curriculum that includes three core competencies:

- 1) **Communication:** encompasses the set of abilities that students use to impart and exchange information, experiences and ideas, to explore the world around them, and to understand and effectively engage in the use of digital media.
- 2) **Thinking:** encompasses the knowledge, skills and processes we associate with intellectual development. It is through the competency as thinkers that students take subject-specific concepts and content and transform them into a new understanding.
- 3) **Personal & Social:** encompasses the set of abilities that relate to students' identity in the world, both as individuals and as members of their community and society.

*Keep these core competencies in mind as we will revisit them later on and discuss how understanding attachment is important in relation to them.

PART 1: ATTACHMENT THEORY

Attachment

- is "a deep and enduring affectionate bond that connects one person to another across time and space" (Ainsworth 1973; Bowlby, 1969)
- is a survival mechanism as infants are unable to care for themselves (Riley, 2011).
- starts from birth and continues throughout the lifespan, and
- is unconscious.



Attachment Theory

- John Bowlby initially developed it in the late 1950's suggesting that:
 - children are deeply affected by the separation from and attitudes of their parents (Marshall, 2014)
 - this affects how they relate to themselves, others, and their psychological well-being and ability to be self-reflective (Taylor, 2010)
- Mary Ainsworth expanded on Bowlby's work agreeing and suggesting that:
 - the quality of early attachment relationships influence the reliance and security felt by the infant towards the attachment figure (Ainsworth et al., 1978)

Bowlby (1988): How Attachment Works

- The child:
- attaches to the '**attachment figure**' – often the 'mother-figure'.
 - has an '**attachment behavioural system**' – a control system within the central nervous system which functions to maintain closeness to the attachment figure.
 - will use 'attachment behaviors' – **proximity seeking**, **separation anxiety**, and **separation protest** – to keep attachment figure close.
 - has an interest and ability in exploring that is determined by their security with their attachment figure - their '**secure base**'.
 - begins to develop mental representations of their mother and of them self through their interactions – forming the **internal working model**.

Bowlby: The Internal Working Model (IWM)

- An internal working model:
- is a mental representation of our relationship with our primary caregiver that becomes a template for future relationships.
 - provides a foundation of core beliefs about oneself and others (Taylor, 2010).
 - determines the attachment quality (Geddes, 2006).
 - has three important components (Bergin & Bergin, 2009):
 - seeing others as trustworthy
 - seeing the self as valuable
 - seeing the self as effective when interacting with others.

Bowlby: The Internal Working Model (IWM) continued

The IWM of a child whose attachment behaviours were accepted may see:

- themselves as lovable, worthy, and effective;
- others as being available, loving, interested and responsive (Taylor, 2010).

The IWM of a child who received inconsistent or blocked responses to their attachment behaviours may see:

- themselves as uninteresting, unvalued, ineffective, unworthy and unwanted;
- others as neglectful, rejecting, unresponsive and hostile (Taylor, 2010).

The Still Face Experiment

Dr. Edward Tronick (1975) demonstrates the impact of a mother's response on an infant, providing evidence of how a child develops their internal working model:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=apzXG6bZht0>

- Imagine a child growing up with a parent who has a flat affect and little engagement with them all of the time?
- Or a parent that is inconsistent in their responses, at times not responsive and engaged and at other times overly responsive and engaged?
- Keep these in mind as we learn about the attachment patterns.

Harlow's Rhesus Monkey Experiment

Harry Harlow (1958) conducted a study on mother-infant attachment using rhesus monkeys. He examined the monkey's behaviours in relation to feeding or comfort behaviour from a wire surrogate mother and a cloth surrogate mother.

- Harlow's study demonstrates the importance of comfort and safety. For example, the infant monkeys do not prioritize the mother that feeds them but rather the cloth monkey.
- Harlow looked at the effects of maternal deprivation.
- His study intrigued Ainsworth as it laid the groundwork for her study.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3Xe7tuR4VE>

The Strange Situation

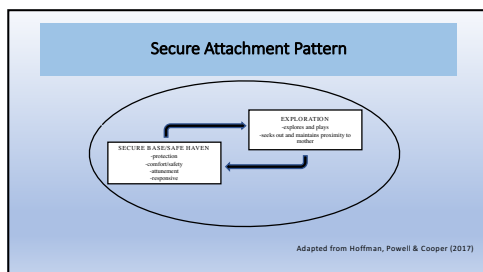
- In 1963, Ainsworth did a study on infant attachment called the Strange Situation:
- Mother and infant were put in a playroom where they were joined by a stranger.
 - Two separations followed:
 - 1) mother left infant in the room with the stranger and then returned
 - 2) mother and stranger left the room together and stranger returned first.
 - Ainsworth observed behaviour's at each separation and re-introduction.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QTsewNrHUHU>

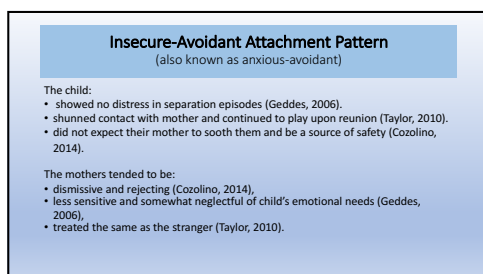
The Strange Situation continued

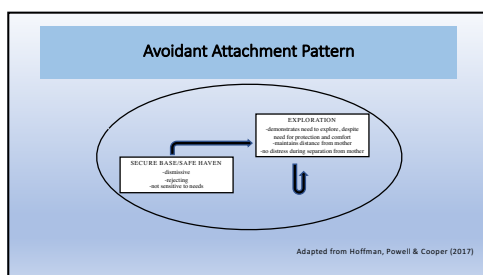
- From the study Ainsworth developed three categories of infant attachment patterns (or styles):
- Secure
 - Insecure-Avoidant
 - Insecure-Ambivalent
- In 1986, Main & Soloman developed and integrated another attachment pattern and integrated it into the Strange Situation classification system.
- Insecure-Disorganized

Secure Attachment Pattern

- The child:
- cried during the separation from their mother, but were easily soothed upon reunion (Taylor, 2010).
 - actively sought and maintained proximity to their mother, and their mother was responsive (Taylor, 2010).
 - appeared to have internalized their mother as a source of comfort
 - was quick to return to exploration and play (Cozolino, 2014).







Insecure-Ambivalent Attachment Pattern

(also known as resistant-ambivalent or anxious-resistant)

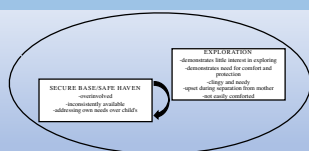
The child:

- became very upset when their mother left the room and was not easily comforted on her return (Taylor, 2010).
- seemed ambivalent about their reunion, resisting contact and comfort but also demonstrated proximity seeking behaviour (Taylor, 2010).
- was clingy and engaged in less environmental exploration (Cozolino, 2014).

The mother:

- tended to be overinvolved or inconsistently available (Cozolino, 2014).
- responded to the baby to meet their own needs (Geddes, 2006).

Ambivalent Attachment Pattern



Adapted from Hoffman, Powell & Cooper (2017)

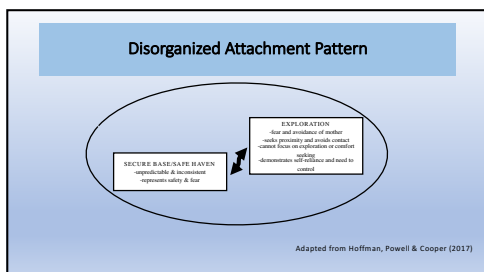
Insecure-Disorganized Attachment Pattern

The child:

- upon reunion, showed signs of fear and avoidance while approaching the caregiver (Duschinsky, 2015).
- had an inability to cope with stress and anxiety.
- demonstrated very confused, disorganized and often contradictory attachment behaviours: proximity seeking followed by avoidance, approaching with their head averted, looking away while being held (Marshall, 2014; Geddes, 2006).

The mother:

- often suffered from unresolved grief or trauma (Cozolino, 2014).
- represents both safety and fear (Taylor, 2010).



Activity 1: Building Vocabulary

- Individually or in pairs, match the words to their appropriate definitions.
- After we will go through them together as a group.

Attachment Patterns in Children

The attachment pattern of a child will determine how they cope and manage in the world, psychologically, socially, and emotionally.

Secure Attachment Patterns in Children

- protective
- a sense of security and love which enables them to build relationships, connect with the world around them, feel safe, and develop and function in a healthy way (Marshall, 2014).
- higher levels of self-conscious emotions in general (Muris et al., 2014).
- secure children have the best outcomes (Bergin & Bergin, 2009).

Insecure Attachment Patterns in Children (Marshall, 2014)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A poor sense of identity • Hypervigilance • Under or over-reaction to pain • Friendship difficulties • Inappropriate sexualized behaviour • Memory and organizational difficulties • Mistrust in relationships • Lack of empathy • Over familiarity with strangers • Dissociation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Little or no response to rewards and sanctions • A heightened sense of justice • Lying and/or stealing • Difficulties with eye contact and touch • Lack of cause-and-effect • An inability to cope with change or transition • Poor attention and listening skills • Erratic progression in learning • Easily overexcited |
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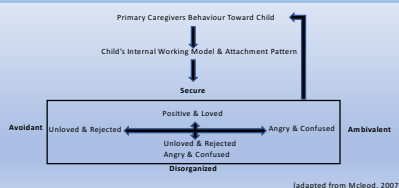
Insecure Attachment Patterns in Children continued

- risk for later emotional and developmental difficulties (Golding et al., 2016).
- higher levels of shame and maladaptive types of guilt (Muris et al., 2014).
- less confidence and greater uncertainty when challenged (Sroufe, 1983).

Attachment Patterns & The Internal Working Model

- The internal working model is directly linked to attachment patterns:
- The 'blueprint' of how one relates to them self, others, and the world will determine how they form bonds and connections with others.
 - An individual's internal working model (Bowlby, 1982) and their attachment style (Riley, 2009) are largely determined by the age of three years.
- However, attachment patterns can change throughout life as a result of experience (Riley, 2009).**
- Pace, Zavattinni & D'Alessio (2012) found that a stable and nurturing environment provided adopted children the opportunity to build positive representations of attachment relationships and revise their IWM's from insecure to secure.

Attachment Patterns & The Internal Working Model Diagram



Group Discussion 1

- Break out into random groups.
- Write down **Positive Behaviours & Negative Behaviours** as headings with space underneath each of them.
- Discuss in your group teacher behaviours that can impact the internal working models either positively or negatively.
- Discuss as a whole group after.

PART 2: ATTACHMENT THEORY & ADOLESCENTS

Attachment & Adolescents

Adolescents are going through significant transformations psychologically, physiologically, chemically, and hormonally.

Their attachment systems are changing too as they are:

- consolidating their internal working model into a single overarching representational model (Dykas et al., 2008),
- developing mixed strategies for approaching attachment relationships (Golding et al., 2016),
- evolving from receiving care to being a caregiver (Allen, 2008),
- separating from their parents, and
- their social relationships and experiences are constantly changing.

Adolescent Attachment Classification System

Main & Goldwyn used different terminology from the infant/child classifications however, they correspond to each other (Ainsworth et al., 1978):

<u>Infant/Child</u>	<u>Adolescent/Adult</u>
Secure	Secure/Autonomous
Avoidant	Dismissive
Ambivalent	Preoccupied
Disorganized/Disoriented	Unresolved/Disorganized

(Hesse, 2008 as cited in Straus, 2017)

Two-dimensional Model of Attachment

(Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991)

- This model is useful for adolescents and adults.
- It demonstrates the attachment patterns in relation to the level of anxiety and avoidance towards relationships.

Take a minute to think of a cartoon character that may fit into each of these attachment classifications.

Cartoon Characters

Secure: Low anxiety/Low avoidance 	Preoccupied: High anxiety/Low avoidance
Dismissing: Low anxiety/High avoidance 	Disorganized: High anxiety/High avoidance

Secure Attachment Pattern in Adolescents

- Most desirable attachment pattern (Shumaker, 2009).
- Healthy and balanced view of them self and others.
- Low on anxiety and avoidance regarding relationships (Riley, 2011).
- Sensitive and emotionally available in relationships and can detach from parents and discover new relationships (Brisch, 2009).
- Balance between independence and seeking support (Golding et al., 2016).
- Long and stable trust, healthy friendships and effective conflict management skills (Straus, 2017).
- Personal and academic success (Brisch, 2009).
- A developmental advantage in all ways: cognitively, socioemotionally, and physically (Straus, 2017).

Dismissing Attachment Pattern in Adolescents

- High on avoidance of close relationships but low on related anxiety (Riley, 2011).
- Obsessively or compulsively self-reliant, deny attachment needs (Riley, 2011).
- Ignores memories of rejection, hurt, or lack of lovability (Golding et al., 2016).
- Works to keep fear, anger, disappointment, hurt, and loneliness under control and hidden; strives to appear invincible (Straus, 2017).
- Poorly equipped to deal with conflict (Golding et al., 2016), withdraws or responds aggressively without thinking about social consequences (Brisch, 2009).
- Appears withdrawn, quiet, self-reliant, independent, happy, settled, and friendly, however may be relatively isolated (Golding et al., 2016).
- Sustaining romantic relationships may be difficult (Straus, 2017).

Preoccupied Attachment Pattern in Adolescents

- High on anxiety of close relationships and low on avoidance (Riley, 2011).
- Unable to deny their memories, leaving them feeling angry, dissatisfied, jealous and needy (Golding et al., 2016).
- Confused, often looking forward to being away from family but separation is associated with anxiety and agitation (Brisch, 2009).
- Shift to independence is difficult (Golding et al., 2016).
- Alternates between aggression and helplessness (Golding et al., 2016).
- Dependent on others for comfort and will do anything to minimize cognitive, emotional, and physical distance (Straus, 2017).
- Preoccupied with their relationships rather than being curious about the world around them (Riley, 2011).
- May have volatile and unsatisfying relationships (Straus, 2017).

Disorganized Attachment Pattern in Adolescents

- Adolescents at most risk: least trusting, most impaired and dissociative.
- Lacks self-confidence and feels self-conscious, anxious, depressed, hostile (Straus, 2017) and unworthy of love (Riley, 2011).
- High on both anxiety and avoidance (Riley, 2011).
- May have suffered developmental trauma.
- The parent is likely a source of comfort and fear.
- Tends to develop controlling patterns of behaviours, lacks skills in managing relationships or difficulty regulating emotions (Golding et al., 2016).
- May see others as untrustworthy yet wants their approval (Riley, 2011), fluctuating between neediness and withdrawal (Straus, 2017).
- Lives in a constant state of fear resulting in an over-sensitized nervous system (Straus, 2017).

Secure vs. Insecure Attachment Patterns in Adolescents

Securely attached adolescents:

- lower levels of anxiety (Bender et al., 2015).
- more socially accepted by their peers (Dykas et al., 2008).
- higher levels of identity development, self-concept, emotional regulation and problem-solving skills (Shumaker et al., 2009).

Insecurely attached adolescents:

- higher levels of anxiety and depression (Muris et al., 2001).
- perceived as victims of peer aggression (Dykas et al., 2008).
- higher levels of anger and hostility (avoidant and ambivalent) (Muris et al., 2004).
- internalizing and externalizing behaviours such as anxiety, depression, suicide, hostility, and substance abuse (Shumaker et al., 2009).
- positively associated with self-harm behaviours (Rogier et al., 2017).
- deprivation and duration = higher levels of ADHD symptoms based (Roskam et al., 2014).

Trauma

➤ Adolescents who have experienced many adverse childhood traumatic events will have a disorganized attachment pattern.

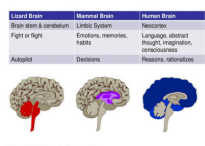
➤ Repetitive trauma results in developmental trauma in children.

➤ Developmental trauma:

- physical, sexual, emotional and mental abuse or the regular witnessing of any of these (Marshall, 2014).
- neglect, abandonment or impairment due to substances, physical illness, mental illness, or incarceration (Grasso, Greene, & Ford, 2013).
- is likely interpersonal; the person harming the child is someone they depend on (Straus, 2017).

Developmental Trauma & The Brain

Triune Brain Theory



- Brain development is a result of both internal and external stimuli (Straus, 2017).
- Trauma can have devastating effects on the structure and functioning of a growing brain.
- The Triune brain develops from the bottom up and inside to outside (Marshall, 2014).
- With trauma the reptilian brain takes over and the thinking brain is inactive making it impossible to think and learn (Marshall, 2014).
- The limbic system is the most vulnerable to adverse childhood experiences (Straus, 2017) -disturbing emotions and memories are stored in the hippocampus and amygdala (Taylor, 2010).

Developmental Trauma & The Brain continued

Other areas of brain development impacted:

- **Neurons:** Experience shapes and hardwires them (Straus, 2017), without regular stimulation (ex. touch) they will go away (Marshall, 2014).
- **Mirror neurons:** Nerve cells that respond to behaviour of others and helps humans develop the capacity for reciprocal relationships (Marshall, 2014).
- **Neurochemistry:** chronic stress and fear alters the production of essential neurotransmitters (epinephrine, dopamine, and serotonin) and cortisol levels are persistently elevated (Straus, 2017).
- **Executive function:** child is hyperalert, anxious, and vigilant; amygdala becomes hijacked and shuts down the neocortex delaying the development of higher-order executive functions: problem solving, planning, assessing risk, anticipating consequences, self-reflection, and empathy (Straus, 2017).

Flipping Your Lid (Dr. Dan Siegel)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gm9CI174Oxw>

Children who have experienced trauma "flip their lid" more easily because their reptilian brain is consistently active and their emotional brain is vulnerable. Often these children never had someone attune to their needs and emotions. Understanding how the brain works provides educators the opportunity to manage their own lids from flipping as well as helps them understand why some students struggle to:

- regulate their emotions and bodies,
- attune,
- communicate,
- modulate their fears,
- respond flexibly, and
- have insight, morality, empathy and intuition.

(Siegel & Bryson, 2011)

Activity 2: Understanding the Brain

Colour and label the different areas of the Triune Brain and note their functions.

Trauma & Attachment

- "One of the most significant and profound harms associated with abuse, neglect and deprivation is the absence of the opportunity to develop secure attachment" (Haskell & Randall, 2009, p.65).
- A young person with relational traumas and losses may be insecure in relating to themselves, others and the world (Bomber, 2009).
- Trauma may result in life-long psychological harms including alterations in self-perception and relationships with others (Haskell & Randall, 2009).

Intergenerational Trauma

- Developmental trauma is often influenced by what has been passed down through the generations
 - For example - children of parents who fought in wars, survived the Holocaust, struggled with psychological issues, or even immigrated to a new country
- This is known as intergenerational trauma and the effects of it on the Indigenous Peoples of Canada are extensive.

Intergenerational Trauma continued

- Through colonialism, Canada's First Nations experienced historical trauma which resulted in many levels of "disrupted attachments":
 - to their land,
 - customs,
 - culture,
 - modes of self-governance,
 - languages,
 - ways of life, and
 - to both communities and individual lives.
- "Historical trauma" is not simply "historical" – the result of abuse and neglect is transgenerational and continue to impact Aboriginal Peoples. (Haskell & Randall, 2009)

Intergenerational Trauma continued

As a result of Colonialism:

- aboriginal children were forced into residential school.
- substance abuse, poverty, and domestic violence became a struggle for many Aboriginal communities.
- serious developmental traumas and impaired attachment between children and their caregivers occurred.
- struggles with emotional regulation, dissociating, disruptions in relationships with the self and attachments to others, somatization, and a sense of loss of meaning impacted the Indigenous Peoples.

(Haskell & Randall, 2009).

Healing Intergenerational Trauma

- Haskell and Randall (2009) suggest that connection and experiencing healthy attachment heals trauma.
- Sam, Ghosh, & Richardson (2015) found that attachment style is related to resilience levels among Aboriginal adolescents and reinforced the importance of understanding and recognizing attachment styles in Aboriginal adolescents as it may foster a collaborative bond.
- Herman (1997) wrote about three phases of trauma recovery that would be valuable to educators' awareness:
 1. safety and stabilization,
 2. remembrance and mourning, and
 3. reconnection and integration.
- Healing from trauma may be demonstrated by showing readiness to take steps towards empowerment, self-determination, helping others and recreating a new sense of self and future (Herman, 1997).
- Although educators may not be in a position to guide adolescents of intergenerational trauma through healing, they certainly can support them by providing a sense of safety, stability and meaningful relationships.

Attachment & The Classroom

- Parents are not the only significant adults with whom children form attachments (Bowlby, 1984).
- Teacher's may be the only significant adult in a child's life that is not family (Kessner, 2000).
- Teachers are next to parents as authority figures and provide nurturance and evaluation (Cozolino, 2014).
- If you substitute the word "teacher" for "parent" it can offer a new perspective on providing a secure base for students in the classroom (Riley, 2011).

Attachment & The Classroom continued

Geddes (2006) asserted that attachment theory:

- allows for a more holistic view of students difficulties: parental conflict, family breakdown, inconsistent discipline, hostile and rejecting relationships, abuse, substance misuse, mental illness and death/loss.
- demonstrates that close and significant relationships influence a student's response to learning.

Comprehending attachment allows the teacher to understand what the underlying need and drive of the student's behaviours may be (Delaney, 2009).

Attachment in the classroom is **absolutely essential** - especially for trauma, socio-emotional challenges, and cultural disconnections (Cozolino, 2014).

Attachment & The Classroom continued

➤ Attachment has at least two functions pertinent to classrooms:

- providing a feeling of security which allows children to explore freely, and
- providing a basis for socializing children (Bergin & Bergin, 2009).

➤ The 3R's - Reading, wRiting, and aRithmetic - should be :

- "Relationships (from the students' perspective),
- Relationships (from the teacher's perspective), and
- the priority given to Relationship formation" (Riley, 2011, p. 1).

Activity 3: Student Attachment Patterns & Strategies

- Handout Geddes (2006) Learning Triangles and the attachment pattern and strategies.
- Sort the student attachment patterns and strategies provided under the correct attachment pattern.
- Go over them together.

The Secure Student

- Confident, enjoys the challenges that school provides, achieves success in school and gains satisfaction in their achievement (Golding et al., 2017).
- Strong self-esteem, feels safe, can concentrate, has the capacity to bear not knowing, able to manage frustration, anxiety, and disappointment and willing to take risks and ask for help when needed (Delaney, 2009).
- Explores school with confidence, leading to positive perceptions of support from teachers and fostering academic motivation (Duchesne & Larose, 2007).
- Relates well to teachers and others, able to explore the world outside of these relationships and feels reassured that the teacher will be helpful and available (Geddes, 2006).

The Avoidant Student

- Golding et al. (2016):
- Quiet, withdrawn, isolated and obscurely anxious.
 - Appearing to be more focused on activities than on people.
 - Misuses their needs to teachers, demonstrating autonomy and independence.
 - May give up quickly if the task is foreign or open-ended.
 - Behaviours may result in underachievement.
- Delaney (2009):
- Avoids proximity and a relationship with teachers, showing an apparent indifference to them.
 - Denies the need for support and unwilling to accept help.
 - Limited in communicating and creating opportunities as these would require taking a risk while learning.
 - May destroy their work before a teacher can comment on it.

The Avoidant Student: Strategies

- Use the task to make the relationship between the student and the teacher safe (Geddes, 2006; Delaney, 2009).
- Begin with clear, structured and independent tasks (Geddes, 2006) that the student enjoys doing (Delaney, 2009).
- Through the presence of other students in pairs, groups or as mentors (Geddes, 2006) nurture the student's ability to accept help slowly and cope with the proximity of the adult (Golding et al., 2016).
- The use of metaphors and stories can be very successful with these students as it feels safer than talking about themselves (Delaney, 2009).
- Praise may not be a motivator because they have no previous experience receiving it (Delaney, 2009).

The Ambivalent Student

Geddes (2006):

- Consistently have a high level of anxiety and live in uncertainty.
- May underachieve

Golding et al. (2016):

- Highly dependent, preoccupied with relationships and in constant need of reassurance.
- Constant need for attention can lead to inappropriate boundaries with teachers: sharing personal information or refusing to go out at break times to stay close to the teacher.
- Difficult to concentrate, focus on tasks, and attend to rules and structure of the classroom.

Delaney (2009):

- Hypervigilant to what the teacher is doing, so they may seem helpless
- If the teacher does not respond they will feel very rejected and can become aggressive.
- Working with these students' can be wearing on a teachers patience and emotional energy.

The Ambivalent Student: Strategies

➤ Try to reframe the behaviour as anxious, dependent and a need to control the significant adult (Geddes, 2006).

➤ Be empathic to the behaviour, while implementing boundaries (Delaney, 2009).

➤ To help these students make small steps to independence:

- provide highly predictable, structured routines, and differentiating tasks into small steps,
- use visuals,
- Use a timer,
- gradually increase the duration of independent tasks,
- provide special transitional objects in place of the teacher,
- come back to check on the student or apologizing if it was not possible to do so,
- facilitate peer relationships with small group work, and
- avoid the temptation to overhelp.

(Compiled from the work of Golding et al., 2016; Geddes, 2006; Delaney, 2009)

The Disorganized Student

➤ Absence of trust in adults due to neglect, violence, and/or abuse (Delaney, 2009).

➤ Frequently afraid, highly anxious (Golding et al., 2016), living in a fight or flight state (Geddes, 2006) and focused on survival (Delaney, 2009).

➤ Difficulty integrating feelings and thoughts (Geddes, 2006), concentrating, thinking, attending to tasks, tolerating stress, (Golding et al., 2016) and learning or engaging in relationships (Delaney, 2009).

➤ Severe and challenging behaviours that change from week to week (Delaney, 2009):

- highly disruptive, compulsive, obsessive, and hypervigilant, masking their feelings through provoking, bullying, challenging, or controlling others (Golding et al., 2016).
- may be easily confused with ADHD (Geddes, 2006).

➤ May be very sensitive to criticism and implied humiliation and are likely to "know everything already" (Geddes, 2006).

The Disorganized Student: Strategies

- Teachers can become anxious themselves – outside or peer support should be available to help manage their own capacity to think (Delaney, 2009).
- Provide a safe environment, reliable and predictable routines (Golding et al., 2016), warnings, alternative arrangements, and planned transitions and endings (Delaney, 2009).
- Help the student feel emotionally and physically contained – physical containment should come first such as a safe area, activity, or object (Golding et al., 2016).
- Be aware of emotional, social and developmental level of functioning (Golding et al., 2016).
- Focus on the task, however, reactive behaviours may be triggered due to feelings of inadequacy (Geddes, 2006).
- When fear is triggered and the fight/flight pattern is engaged (Geddes, 2006):
 - Stop and think,
 - Refrain from reacting, and
 - Communicate some understanding.

Activity 4: Student Case Scenarios

- Hand out case scenarios and observation checklist.
- Break out into four groups.
- Identify as a group what the attachment pattern is in your case scenario.
- Refer to the observation checklist handout designed by Golding et al. (2016) if needed.
- Share your group's findings.

PART 3: ATTACHMENT THEORY & EDUCATORS

Supporting Students with Attachment Difficulties

The responsibility of supporting students with attachment difficulties should come from many different levels:

- the government,
- the district,
- the school,
- the classroom, and
- individually through all front line educators.

However, the supports provided here will be for front line educators.

Relationships Over Rules

First and foremost, research suggests teachers need to focus on relationships over everything else:

- Relationships are key to all children, but especially to children who have experienced dysfunctional ones (Marshall, 2014).
- Teachers have the opportunity to change children's views of relationships (Bergin & Bergin, 2009).
- The quality of the teacher-student relationships can encourage learning (Cozolino, 2014).
- The power of relationship and stability allows schools to really make a difference (Bomber, 2009).

Building Relationships

➤ Dr. Dan Hughes' PACE attitude is useful for building relationships (Marshall, 2014).

➤ **PACE** - Playfulness, Accepting, Curiosity, and Empathy.

➤ Through PACE the adult conveys:

- that they want to join the adolescent in their life story,
- even if it is stressful and full of conflict and shame,
- by showing them that they want to deeply know, accept, and value them (Hughes, 2009).

Building Relationships continued

➤ Bergin & Bergin (2009) made six recommendations for how teachers can improve their relationships with students:

- 1) increase sensitivity and warm, positive interactions with students,
- 2) be well prepared for class and hold high expectations for students,
- 3) be responsive to students' agendas by providing choice whenever possible,
- 4) use induction rather than coercive discipline,
- 5) help students to be kind, helpful, and accepting of one another, and
- 6) implement interventions for specific, difficult relationships.

Other Attachment-Based Supports

Marshall (2014) provides guiding principles to supporting students with attachment difficulties:

- understand the students emotional age over their chronological age,
- provide structure over the chaos that these students may be living in,
- do time in's rather than time out's - bring the student closer to a trusted adult when they are becoming frustrated or dysregulated, and
- provide less sensory stimulation, such as quiet and peaceful, rather than fast paced and noisy.

Other Attachment-Based Supports continued

Golding et al. (2016) provides suggestions for supporting students with attachment difficulties:

- do not push students to be more independent, the "route to independence is dependency",
- support autonomy with warmth and boundaries,
- connect with students rather than challenge, manage, reward or punish behaviour, "connect rather than correct", and
- develop support tailored to the emotional needs of the student before managing their behaviour.

Attachment-Based Programs

- Attachment-Based Teaching (Cozolino, 2014): developed for educators, focusing on understanding own attachment and creating an attachment-based classroom.
- The ARC (Attachment, Regulation, Competency) Framework (Kinniburgh & Blaustein): developed to provide trauma-informed services to children and adolescents. It can be implemented in a variety of settings including schools.
- The Circle of Security (Cooper, Hoffman, and Powell, 2017): developed for parents but the authors wrote an article on the value in implementing the program for preschool teachers. It would be useful for all educators.
- The Connect Program: developed by Dr. Moretti and the Maples Adolescent Treatment Centre to support parents but would be very useful for educators.

Challenges for Educators

- Supporting students with attachment difficulties can be exhausting and requires a lot of patience and understanding.
- A lot of work for a teacher to prove and disconfirm a child's expectation that the teacher will be hostile, rejecting, or unresponsive (Bergin & Bergin, 2009).
- When faced with difficult student behaviour, teachers can become demoralized, reactive, and respond with rejection, criticism, and punishment (Geddes, 2006).

Challenges for Educators continued

- Teachers face many of the same issues that counsellors do, yet:
- receive little or no formal training for managing themselves and their students in difficult situations (Riley, 2011),
 - have no built in teacher support or supervision (Geddes, 2006),
 - are given almost no training in basic communication and empathy skills (Cozolino, 2014) and
 - their training is focused on learning theory and cognitive processes (Riley, 2011).

Supports for Educators

- The best way to help students is to help their teachers; in turn, they can meet their students' needs (Riley, 2011).
- Teachers would greatly benefit from having a 'secure base' (Geddes, 2006):
 - professional support such as strong leadership,
 - a respect for physical comfort such as a well-kept staff room,
 - mutual support and collaboration amongst staff through a regular forum to review difficulties, and
 - a common language and framework for understanding student's behaviour.

Group Discussion 2

How could teacher's attachment styles influence their relationships and interactions with students?

Educators Self- Awareness

- Self-awareness:
 - is "the process of getting in touch with your feelings and behaviours" (p. 141),
 - helps you identify where you are and what your starting point is,
 - provides the opportunity to build on your self-concept and self-esteem. (Gold & Roth, 1993)
- Baum and King (2006) suggested that teachers make decisions based on reflection, responsibility, ethics, creativity, and caring and good decision making is based on developing a sense of self-awareness.
- Increased self-awareness gives educators an understanding of how students affect them and how they affect their students (Richard & Shupe, 2003).

Educators Self- Awareness continued

Richardson and Shupe (2003) suggested five questions to help teachers become more self-aware:

- 1) am I taking proactive steps to identify and defuse my own emotional triggers?
- 2) am I paying attention to what I need to pay attention to?
- 3) am I using effective strategies to reduce burnout and nurture my own mental health?
- 4) am I using an appropriate sense of humour to build relationships, diffuse conflict, engage learners, and manage my own stress?
- 5) do I regularly acknowledge significant ways I (and others) are making a difference in the lives of students?

Taking pro-active steps to increase self-awareness will:

- build more positive relationships,
- minimize power struggles, and
- enhance effectiveness and job satisfaction (Richardson & Shupe, 2003).

Educators Self- Awareness continued

➤ Self-awareness will essentially influence the way educators teach and relate to their students.

➤ Developing self-awareness is valuable and provides evidence of the importance in learning about one's attachment style.

Educators Attachment Styles & Influences

➤ To support and guide their students' journeys teachers need to take time to (Cozolino, 2014):

- learn about themselves,
- understand their own journeys, and broken places; and
- change old beliefs and identities.

➤ Educators attachment styles should be considered and understood just as well as students' attachment styles.

Educators Attachment Styles & Influences continued

- Once educators understand their own attachment patterns and know themselves first, they can then (Riley, 2011):
 - observe classroom and staffroom dynamics,
 - be more aware of why plans went astray, and
 - be better prepared to deal effectively with novel situations that arise.
- Riley (2011) provides fundamental information available regarding educators' attachment styles: secure, dismissing, preoccupied, and disorganized.
- Straus (2017) discusses attachment patterns in therapists that could pertain to teachers, asserting that self-awareness helps us:
 - identify triggers, and
 - determine how to support our clients specific attachment styles.

The Secure Teacher

- The secure teacher (Riley, 2011):
 - focuses on understanding their students,
 - sees it as strange if disappointed by a student as it disconfirms IWM,
 - uses experience to shape and improve their practice to benefit the students,
 - does not see rejection as a threat but as students positively moving towards independence and as a challenge to maintain the relationship.
- Securely attached therapists' strategies for managing stress will still be challenged, but they tend to (Straus, 2017):
 - be more open, receptive, and collaborative and
 - handle ruptures in the relationship more easily.

The Dismissing Teacher

(Riley, 2011)

- The dismissing teacher:
 - remains distant emotionally, symbolically, and even physically from their students,
 - may dislike teaching large numbers of students as it forces them to be close and interact with them,
 - creates distance when their students try to be close emotionally to them due to high avoidance of relationships,
 - may be more disciplinary, rule bound and rigid, as the students try to attach to them.

The Preoccupied Teacher

- The preoccupied teacher (Riley, 2011):
 - may be more attracted to teaching because they have more control in relationships with their students,
 - may be inconsistent in their treatment of students by overvaluing some and devaluing others, due to having control,
 - may feel separation anxiety if students seen as special become upset and reject them,
 - is emotionally vulnerable when stressful, ambiguous situations arise.
- A preoccupied therapist is likely to take ruptures personally and be more focused on their clients being comfortable and happy than challenged (Straus, 2017).

The Fearful Teacher (Riley, 2011)

- The fearful teacher:
 - seeks and avoids proximity and has a heightened state of attachment arousal most of the time,
 - is more vulnerable to the expectations of others and feeling unworthy and less able,
 - has their beliefs and fears confirmed when students reject them (such as they are not worthy of affection).
- Supporting the disorganized teacher:
 - may lessen their feelings of inadequacy,
 - creates a professional secure base, and
 - provides the opportunity for a corrective emotional experience.

Activity 5: Teacher Case Scenarios

- Hand out case scenarios.
- With a partner read all of the case scenarios and label each of them with the attachment pattern you believe fits that teacher.
- Go over together as a group.

Understanding Your Own Attachment Pattern

➤ Straus (2017):

- It is useful to take time to think about your particular attachment histories and styles.
- It is important to understand that it is not intended to marginalize, diagnose, or label a person, rather, create self-awareness and self-reflection.

➤ Understanding one's own attachment:

- can be complex and difficult,
- should be evaluated with caution as it may trigger feelings and past experiences that are likely normally avoided, and
- can be performed using interview questions or self-report questionnaires.

Understanding Your Own Attachment Pattern continued (Cozolino, 2014)

Teachers should consider asking themselves the following questions:

- What's my attachment style?
- Do I sometimes rely on others for help or always try to be self-sufficient?
- What do I do when I'm feeling insecure in relationships? Withdraw, share my feelings, or do whatever I can to make the other person accept me?
- Do I have people who listen to and take care of me, or am I everyone else's caretaker?

This allows the teacher to recognize how they relate to others, and consequently, how they connect to their students.

Assessing Your Own Attachment Pattern

Straus (2017) suggested two methods for exploring one's own attachment style that would be useful for teachers:

- Adaptation of Siegel and Hartzell's (2003) Adaptation of the AAI
- much longer and more detailed
- Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) Relationship Questionnaire (RQ)
- a quick two part questionnaire

Assessing Your Own Attachment Pattern continued

Levine & Heller (2012) asserted that "knowing your specific attachment profile will help you understand yourself better and guide you in your interactions with others" (p. 40).

- They designed a questionnaire to measure one's own attachment style in relation to intimate relationships:
 - It is based on the Experience in Close Relationship (ECR) questionnaire developed by Brennan, Clark & Shaver (1998).
 - Although it is focused on attachment in intimate relationships it is a valuable measurement for understanding one's own attachment in general.

Activity 6: What is Your Attachment Pattern?

- On a blank paper write down what attachment style you relate to.
- Hand out Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991) Relationship Questionnaire (RQ) (1991).
- Take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire.
- Write a journal entry about how your attachment style relates to your teaching.
- Process your experience and thoughts about this activity.

Other Resources on Assessing Your Own Attachment Pattern

- These websites have excellent information including an attachment assessment to help one understand their own attachment style:
 - <https://www.psychalive.org/what-is-your-attachment-style/>
 - <http://www.web-research-design.net/cgi-bin/crq/crq.pl>
- The attachment questionnaire by Levine & Heller (2012) is excellent and can be found on the internet at: <http://www.fartherbooks.net/wp-content/uploads/2012/02/Attached.pdf>
- There is also a link to Dan Siegel and Lisa Firestone's website which offers an online workshop designed to help understand your attachment:
 - <https://ecourse.psychalive.org/making-sense-of-your-life-ecourse-dan-siegel-lisa-firestone/>

What Does This Mean For You?

- "Attachment styles are stable but plastic" (Levine & Heller, 2012, p. 40).
- We should not be ashamed of our attachment pattern – it is not a choice, it is who we are, and it is how we developed.
- Self-awareness and self-reflection of your attachment pattern can help you understand:
 - yourself better,
 - how you relate to people,
 - triggers and behaviors that may come up from others behaviors, and
 - positive changes that can be made in how you relate to people.

Activity 7: BC Core Curriculum Competencies & Attachment Theory

- Look at the sheet of BC Curriculum Core Competencies.
- Based on what you have learned, how are these competencies important when considering students with healthy attachments or attachment difficulties?
- Discuss as a group!

Summary

- Learning about attachment is beneficial in helping teachers understand student classroom behaviour and how and why a teacher responds in the way they do.
 - Riley (2011) asserts that applying attachment theory to the classroom and staffroom relationships helps explain classroom behaviours by teachers, students, and school leaders (Riley, 2011).
- Educators are taught about teaching academics, supporting special needs, and managing classroom behaviours and social skills, but rarely are they taught about the influences and consequences of attachment patterns.
- With all of the supporting evidence presented, it is difficult to understand how attachment continues to be vastly unintegrated into the education system.

Activity 8: Personal Action Plan

- Use the paper provided and on your own record ways that you can positively influence attachment supports in your school.
- I welcome you to share your strategies with the group if you are comfortable.
- When you are finished, put your strategies in the envelope provided and take it with you as a reminder of ways you can integrate attachment support in to your school.

Thoughts & Questions?



Resources



More Resources

Internationally

- Association for Training on Trauma and Attachment in Children – ATTACH
- International Attachment Network
- Attachment Parenting International
- The Neufeld Institute
- Circle of Security Network/International

Nationally

- Attachment Association of Canada
- Attachment Parenting Canada Association
- Attachment and Trauma Treatment Centre for Healing - ATTCH
- Crisis & Trauma Resource Institute

Provincially

- Adaptive Families Association of BC
- Connect Parent Group

Locally

- UBC as Institute of EC (Attachment and Play Therapy course)
- Northern Attachment Network – Prince George
- SFU (minor or post graduate diploma in Counselling and Human Development)
- UBC (post graduate diploma in Guidance Studies)
- UNBC (two elective courses offered in counselling)
- VUW (one course on human development)

Workshop Evaluation

- Handout workshop evaluation.
- Rate the statements from 0 (not at all) to 5 (very helpful).
- Provide any written comments.
- Put in envelope provided.

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Overview of the Workshop & Warm-up Activities

Objective: To inform participants about the nuts and bolts of the workshop including the schedule, breaktimes, location of bathrooms, food and drinks, and group expectations.

Material: Food and drinks if provided, slides 2-6.

Suggested Time on Activity: 10 minutes

Instructions: Provide participants the appropriate details regarding washrooms, the schedule and breaktimes and food and drinks (slide 2). Each workshop will be different so have this organized before the workshop begins. Explain the importance of understanding confidentiality and safety and go over the goals (slides 3-5/script below). Follow with the warm up activities (slide 6).

The following script can be used if desired:

Throughout the workshop participants may be thinking of or relating the material to themselves, their current or past students, or people they may know. It is important that everything discussed in this workshop remains confidential. In addition, it is recommended that participants are cautious about sharing personal stories of themselves or people they may know, including past or present students. If you choose to share information, ensure there is nothing that would allow other people to be identified. Attachment is related to one's own experiences and relationships, and difficult memories, thoughts, feelings, or triggers may come up, so safety is a priority. Please feel free to take a break or participate as you find helpful, and if you are experiencing negative reactions please discuss this with the facilitator prior to leaving. The goals of this workshop are to help educators: understand attachment patterns in adolescents and how they influence students; gain awareness and understanding of their own attachment patterns and how they are influenced positively or negatively when relating to their students; and learn supports and strategies for working with students with attachment difficulties.

Group Discussion 1

Objective: To help participants understand the link between educators' behaviours and the internal working models of students.

Materials: Chart paper and markers.

Suggested Time on Activity: 15 minutes

Instructions: Break out into groups. Each group will be given a piece of chart paper. Write these headings with space underneath each of them: **Positive Behaviours & Negative Behaviours**. In your groups discuss and write down teacher behaviors that can impact each of these internal working models either positively or negatively. Discuss as a group.

For example:

Positive Behaviours:

- asking questions to get to know and build relationships with each student
- being calm and patient when frustrated
- recognizing behaviour as communication
- being curious about a student's involvement in activities, assignments and situations
- demonstrating care, compassion and problems solving skills to students
- modelling consistency and predictability in behaviours and expectations

Negative Behaviours:

- using sarcasm, embarrassing or calling students out
- being neglectful or dismissing of the students' emotional needs
- being strict and inflexible in routines and activities
- ignoring and rejecting students by demonstrating distance or anger when interacting with them
- demonstrating inconsistency and unpredictability leaving students' unsure of expectations

Activity 1: Building Vocabulary

Objective: To help participants expand their vocabulary related to attachment.

Materials: Vocabulary worksheet, pencil/pen for writing.

Suggested Time on Activity: 15 minutes

Instructions: Hand out the vocabulary worksheet and have participants match the vocabulary words to their appropriate definitions. They can work individually or in pairs. After everyone is finished go through the definitions together as a group.

Activity 1: Vocabulary Worksheet

_____ : a negative emotion experienced when separated from an attachment figure.

_____ : the person received unpredictable responses from their attachment figure, often resulting in the attachment figure being a source of comfort and fear. They are highly anxious and avoidant of relationships as they may have experienced trauma. They may struggle with negative feelings such as low confidence, inability to trust, dissociation, and being unworthy of love.

_____ : an unconscious, survival mechanism that involves a deep and enduring affectionate bond between two people, typically a child and a parent.

_____ : mental representations of the self and others developed through interactions with the primary caregiver.

_____ : the primary caregiver in a child's life who is consistent, stable and secure, often the mother-figure.

_____ : the most desirable attachment pattern where the person feels safe, loved and comforted by their attachment figure. They tend to have a healthy view of themselves and others and are able to develop healthy relationships and explore the world independently.

_____ : protest behaviours such as crying that an infant may use when their attachment figure is leaving in an effort to have them return.

_____ : the person received dismissive and rejecting responses from their attachment figure. They are very independent and avoid relationships even though they want to connect. As an adult this attachment pattern is called dismissing.

_____ : the sensitive and responsive atmosphere and relationship that the attachment figure creates for the child allowing them to turn to their attachment figure as a safe haven when needed

_____ : the person received inconsistent affection and availability from their attachment figure. They do not avoid relationships, but they are very anxious about them and tend to be clingy. As an adult this attachment pattern is called preoccupied.

_____ : positive or negative attachment behaviours an infant may use to be close to the attachment figure.

_____ : a control system within the central nervous system which functions to maintain closeness to the attachment figure.

Activity 1: Vocabulary Worksheet

Attachment Behavioural System

Disorganized Attachment Pattern

Internal Working Model

Attachment Figure

Separation Anxiety

Proximity Seeking

Secure Attachment Pattern

Attachment

Secure Base

Avoidant Attachment Pattern

Separation Protest

Ambivalent Attachment Pattern

Activity 1: Vocabulary Worksheet (Key)

Separation Anxiety: a negative emotion experienced when separated from an attachment figure.

Disorganized Attachment Pattern: the person received unpredictable responses from their attachment figure, often resulting in the attachment figure being a source of comfort and fear. They are highly anxious and avoidant of relationships as they may have experienced trauma. They may struggle with negative feelings such as low confidence, inability to trust, dissociation, and being unworthy of love.

Attachment: an unconscious, survival mechanism that involves a deep and enduring affectionate bond between two people, typically a child and a parent.

Internal Working Model: mental representations of the self and others developed through interactions with the primary caregiver.

Attachment Figure: the primary caregiver in a child's life who is consistent, stable and secure, often the mother-figure.

Secure Attachment Pattern: the most desirable attachment pattern where the person feels safe, loved and comforted by their attachment figure. They tend to have a healthy view of themselves and others and are able to develop healthy relationships and explore the world independently.

Separation Protest: protest behaviours such as crying that an infant may use when their attachment figure is leaving in an effort to have them return.

Avoidant Attachment Pattern: the person received dismissive and rejecting responses from their attachment figure. They are very independent and avoid relationships even though they want to connect. As an adult this attachment pattern is called dismissing.

Secure Base: the sensitive and responsive atmosphere and relationship that the attachment figure creates for the child allowing them to turn to their attachment figure as a safe haven when needed

Ambivalent Attachment Pattern: the person received inconsistent affection and availability from their attachment figure. They do not avoid relationships, but they are very anxious about them and tend to be clingy. As an adult this attachment pattern is called preoccupied.

Proximity Seeking: positive or negative attachment behaviours an infant may use to be close to the attachment figure.

Attachment Behavioural System: a control system within the central nervous system which functions to maintain closeness to the attachment figure.

Activity 2: Understanding the Brain

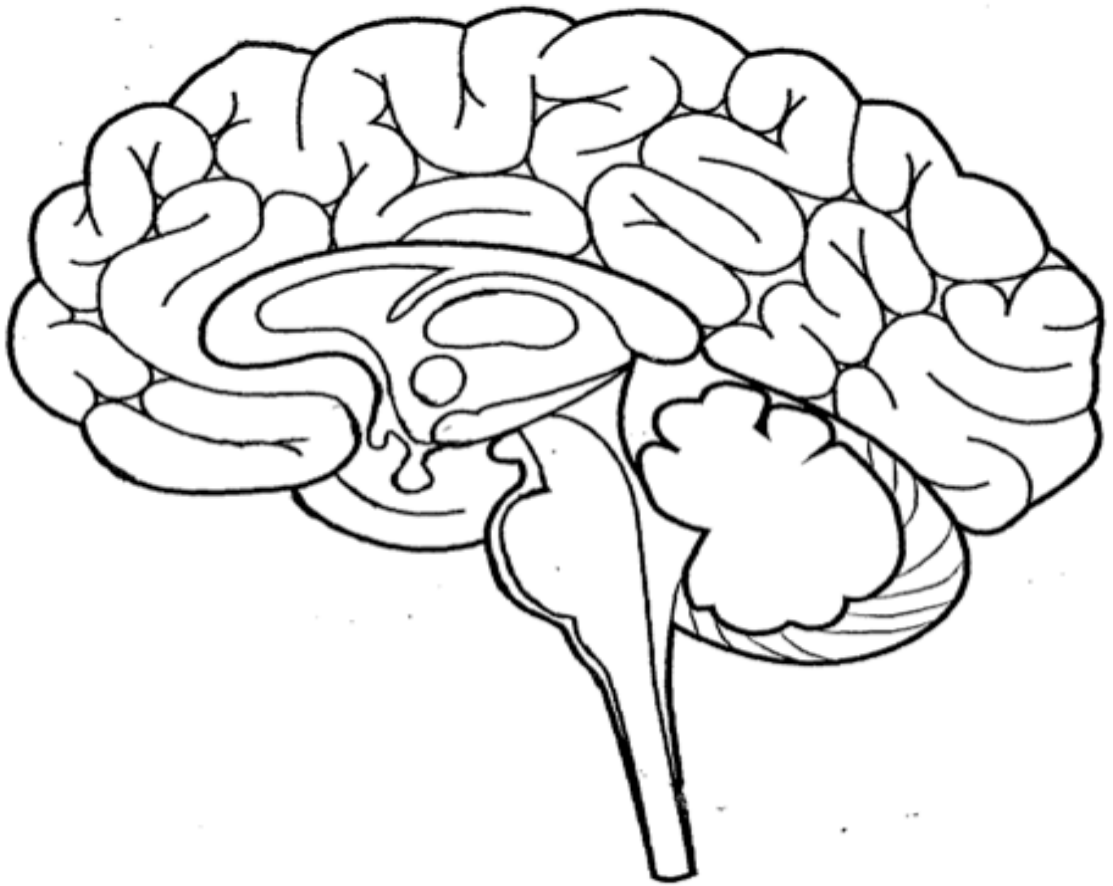
Objective: To help participants understand the functions of different parts of the brain and how trauma affects these areas.

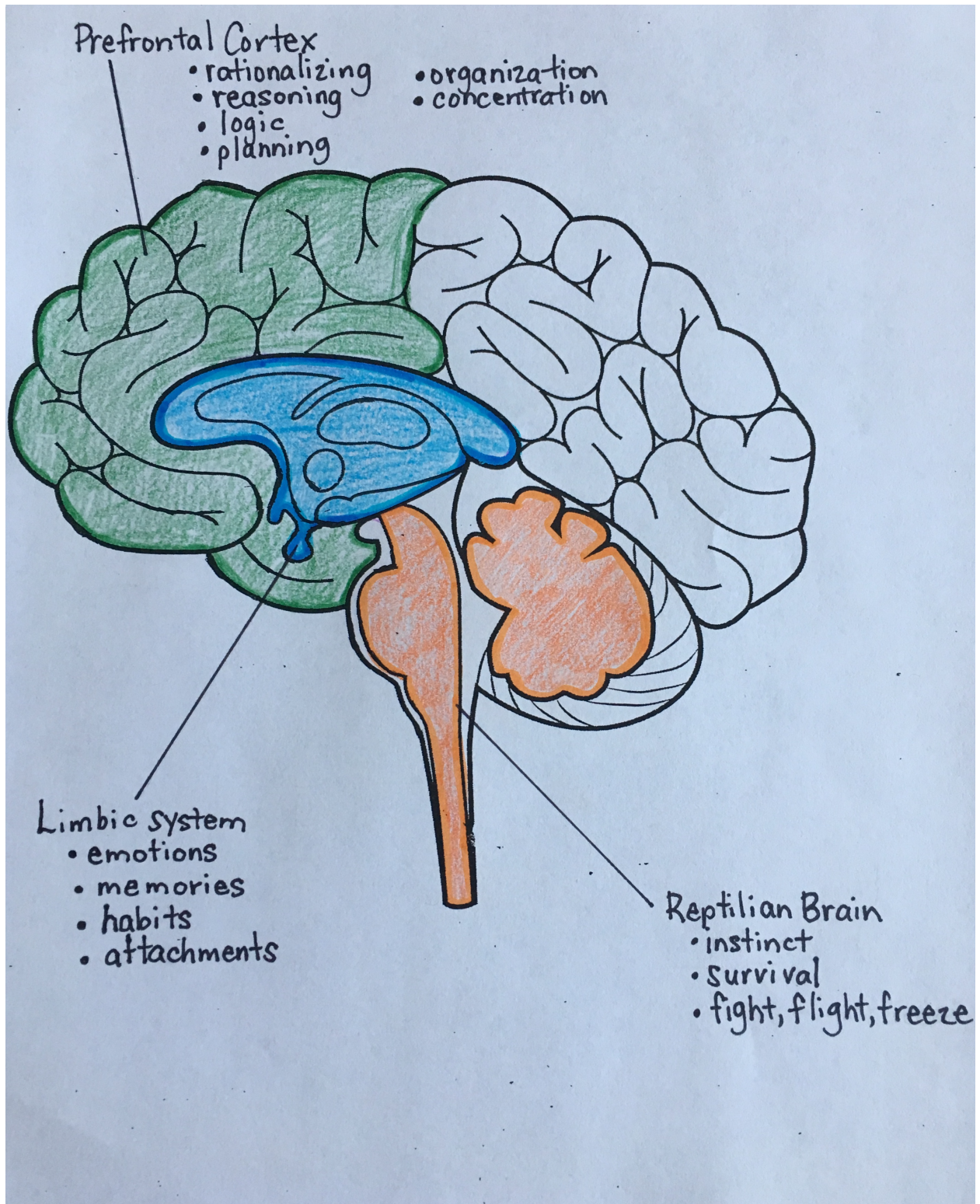
Materials: Hand out picture of the brain, markers/pencil crayons, powerpoint slides 38-41.

Suggested Time on Activity: 25 minutes

Instructions: Colour, label and note the functions of the three different areas of the Triune Brain- 1) Reptilian Brain 2) Limbic System 3) Prefrontal Cortex. Show the key to the participants after they are finished. Ask participants to consider the brain function of their students when they are engaging with them or difficult situations arise. Reinforce that the key piece of information regarding the brain is that a students' thinking brain (prefrontal cortex) becomes inactive when their emotions are high (limbic system), or their fight/flight survival instinct (reptilian brain) is activated. The best thing an educator can do in these moments is provide safety and stability by helping the student calm down rather than continuing to discuss the issue or reason with student. This is also a great activity to do with students, so they understand how their brain works.

*Participants may ask about the functions of the other parts of the brain. The top middle area is the parietal lobe and manages touch, taste, and body awareness, and the top back area is the occipital lobe and manages vision.

Activity 2: Understanding the Brain

Activity 2: Understanding the Brain (Key)

Activity 3: Student Attachment Patterns & Strategies

Objective: To reinforce participants learning about student attachment patterns and strategies by having them evaluate and sort them in a group.

Materials: Geddes (2006) Learning Triangles sheet (Appendix 4), the student attachment patterns and strategies.

Suggested Time on Activity: 15-30 minutes (depends on short or long version)

Instructions: Consider how many groups you may have before starting so that you can have the appropriate amount of materials ready. Decide if you will do the short or long version and cut out the pattern characteristics and strategies based on the version chosen (*see below)

Instructions:

- 1) Divide participants into groups and write each attachment pattern (Secure, Avoidant, Ambivalent, Disorganized) on a piece of paper as headings.
- 2) Handout the student attachment patterns and strategies without their appropriate labels so participants do not know what attachment pattern corresponds to the behaviours and strategies.
- 3) Ask the participants to place the attachment pattern characteristics and strategies under each heading. Refer to power point presentation to see if they are placed correctly.
- 4) Handout “The Learning Triangles” sheet (Geddes, 2006) to have as a reference.

*For a short version of the activity keep each attachment pattern information on one piece of paper and do the same for the strategies information.

*For a long version, cut up all of the attachment pattern characteristics and strategies and mix them up.

Activity 3: Student Attachment Patterns & Strategies

The Secure Student

- Confident and will enjoy the challenges that school provides.
- A strong self-esteem, feels safe, can concentrate, and has the capacity to bear not knowing.
- Is able to manage frustration, anxiety, and disappointment and willing to take risks and ask for help when needed.
- Willing to explore their school environment with confidence, which may lead them to develop more positive perceptions of support from their teacher, thus fostering academic motivation.
- Relates well to teachers and others and is able to explore the world outside of these relationships.
- Feels reassured that the teacher will be helpful and available and knows they can turn to the teacher if they need help.

The Avoidant Student

- Quiet, withdrawn, isolated and obscurely anxious.
- Show an apparent indifference to the teacher, avoiding proximity and a relationship.
- Miscues needs to teachers, avoidant, autonomous and independent of the teacher; however, this is a defense mechanism.
- Deny the need for support and are unwilling to accept help.
- Often underachieve as they are limited in communicating and creating opportunities as these would require taking a risk while learning.
- More focused on activities than on people, however give up quickly if the task is foreign or open-ended.
- May destroy their work before a teacher can comment on it.

The Avoidant Student Strategies

- Connect to the task itself rather than trying to build a relationship directly.
- Use tasks that the student enjoys doing, that are clear, structured and can be completed with little help from the teacher to make the relationship between the student and the teacher safe.
- Nurture the student's ability to accept help very slowly and support them in coping with the proximity of the adult through the presence of other students by having them work in pairs, groups or as mentors.
- Use of metaphors and stories can be very successful with these students as it feels safer than talking about themselves.
- Praise may not be a motivator because they have no previous experience receiving praise.

The Ambivalent Student

- Highly dependent, anxious, lives in uncertainty, preoccupied with relationships, in constant need of reassurance. and attempts to connect with an adult are fueled by anxiety.
- May seem helpless because they want to keep the connection with a key adult.
- Struggle to focus and attempt a task for fear of losing the teacher's attention may result in underachievement.
- Constant need for attention can lead to inappropriate boundaries with teachers, ex. sharing personal information or refusing to go out at break times to stay close to the teacher.
- Difficulty concentrating, focusing on tasks, and attending to rules and structure of the classroom because they remain hypervigilant to what the teacher is doing.
- Will feel very rejected and can become aggressive if teacher does not respond or sends them to another staff member.

The Ambivalent Student Strategies

- Working with these students' can be challenging.
- This student has not experienced an adult as reliably present so try to:
 - think of the behaviour as anxious, dependent and a need to control the significant adult,
 - be empathic to the behaviour, while implementing boundaries, and
 - provide highly predictable, structured routines, and differentiating tasks into small steps.
- To support small steps to independence, try to:
 - use visuals and a timer, gradually increase the duration of independent tasks, provide special transitional objects (rocks, crystals, stuffies) in place of the teacher, check on the student or apologize if it was not possible to do so, facilitate peer relationships with small group work, and avoid the temptation to over help.

The Disorganized Student

- The most complex students of all.
- Constitute the smallest percentage out of all of the insecure attached students.
- May have suffered neglect, violence, and/or abuse.
- Likely an absence of trust in adults.
- Behaviour is unpredictable and may be quiet and withdrawn or loud and aggressive and that may look differently from week to week for no obvious reason.
- Behaviours may include being highly disruptive, compulsive, obsessive, and hypervigilant, all of which may be easily confused with ADHD.
- These students are frequently afraid and highly anxious.
- Their feelings tend to be masked through aggressive or powerful behaviours, such as provoking, bullying, challenging, or controlling others.
- Their main focus is on survival as they are living in a fight or flight state, making it difficult to:
 - integrate feelings and thoughts,
 - concentrate,
 - think,
 - attend to tasks,
 - tolerate stress, and
 - learn or engage in relationships
- May be very sensitive to criticism and implied humiliation and they are likely to present as knowing everything already.

The Disorganized Student Strategies

- Can be challenging and teachers working with these students can become anxious themselves.
- Teachers should have outside or peer support so that they are able to better manage these relationships.
- Provide a safe environment with reliable and predictable routines.
- Provide warnings, have alternative arrangements, or carefully plan transitions and endings

In the event of sudden changes:

- Help the student feel contained, emotionally and physically, however, physical containment may need to come first and may include a 'safe' area, activity, or object.
- When fear is triggered, and the fight/flight pattern is engaged:
 - take the opportunity to stop and think, refrain from reacting and communicate some understanding.
 - demonstrate to the student that they are "being held-in-mind and understood" which provides them with ways of responding that they may have never experienced.
- Confrontation is likely to escalate the situation.
- Be aware of the student's emotional, social and developmental level of; they may be at an immature stage of learning which may result in them underachieving.
- Focusing on the task may be valuable as relationships may pose a threat, however, it can also trigger reactive behaviours because it may be a reminder of inadequacy.

Activity 4: Student Case Scenarios

Objective: To reinforce understanding and recognition of student attachment patterns.

Materials: Handouts of student attachment patterns without labels on them.

Suggested Time on Activity: 30 minutes

Instructions: Have participants break out into four groups (dependent on the number of participants). Ask the participants to read over the case scenario and discuss and decide what that student's attachment pattern is. After the groups will share their case scenario and the attachment pattern of that student.

Activity 4: Student Case Scenarios

Secure Pattern

Annie is 15 years old. She is friendly, independent and enjoys being at school and doing her assignments. She is popular with her peers and teachers and demonstrates confidence when interacting with them. Annie enjoys group activities and is often helping other students. She has a lot of patience and when her classmates get frustrated, she often tries to help them calm down. She is constantly talking about her future and tells people that she definitely wants to be a veterinarian. Although Annie's grades are good, her parents check in with teachers monthly to see how she is doing and if there is anything extra she should be doing at home.

Avoidant Pattern

Edward is a quiet, independent 16 year-old. He demonstrates to the teacher that he is working hard on his assignments but when it comes to handing them in, they are often incomplete or poorly done. Edward will not go to his teacher for help or advice and when the teacher talks to him he is very quick and short in their conversation. He is often heard saying "school is boring, and he can't wait to finish so he can get to work". Edward seems to have a few friends, but in class he is often disengaged and not interested in interacting with them. He waits for his friends to ask him to hang out and when they do, he follows along with what they are doing. Edward is generally compliant and follows the expectations in the class. On occasion he has been known to 'explode' with anger, but he rejects help and quickly returns to normal. Edward told the teacher on several occasions that he doesn't need anyone's help". The other day the teacher noticed Edward had cuts on his arm and when he saw her looking at them, he quickly put on his sweater and went for a drink of water.

Ambivalent Pattern

At 14 years old, Julie is an anxious, loud and disruptive student. She loves being the centre of attention and she is constantly changing friends because she will humiliate or tease them. Julie struggles in school because she does not want to work on anything without her teachers' support. It is really challenging for Julie's teachers because they cannot be with her all of the time, but she will do anything to have their attention as much as possible. Julie is always finding reasons to stay in class during break times to be with the teacher. Her teacher has had to talk with her about boundaries and the appropriateness of sharing information as Julie will often tell them things about her that are personal. One time, Julie became very upset and demonstrated her feelings by throwing a chair and screaming at the teacher. She then started crying and telling the teacher that her friends are making her want to stay in class because they are mean to her. Unfortunately, the teacher has observed Julie being controlling, bossy and mean to her classmates. Julie's teachers are running out of energy and are at a loss on how to support her.

Disorganized Pattern

Justin is an angry and volatile 15 year-old who struggles to manage his emotions. Teachers are apprehensive to intervene when Justin is upset because they can be physically attacked. Justin regularly skips school and the teachers have been told he has been hanging out with other adolescents he can relate to that have come from a difficult upbringing. Justin has mentioned to his teachers that his mother is an alcoholic and he never knew his father, but he had heard that he was in jail. Justin said he doesn't care about anything and often he is argumentative and hyperactive but at times he comes to school with a sad demeanor. When the teachers try to engage Justin in school work, at times he is willing and at other times it seems to trigger his reactive behaviours and he will 'explode'. He is very unpredictable, and it seems his behaviours changes weekly. Justin is very controlling with his peers and teachers and he boasts about his behaviours. He has started to experiment with alcohol and cannabis and the teachers are very concerned about his behaviours becoming even more escalated and out of control.

Group Discussion 2

Objective: To have participants begin thinking about their own attachment patterns and how they interact with their students as a consequence of their attachment pattern.

Materials: No materials needed.

Suggested Time on Activity: 15 minutes

Instructions: As a group discuss “How could teachers’ attachment styles influence their relationships and interactions with students?”

Provided are some **prompting questions** to guide the discussion if needed:

- How do people develop their attachment styles?
- How does one’s attachment style influence how they will relate to others?
- Considering teachers and students spend a lot of time together do you think this influences their relationships and interactions with each other?
- In what ways can a student’s attachment pattern affect their teacher?
- What are some things a student can do to calm or trigger a teacher’s attachment pattern?
- How do teachers typically expect a student to respond or engage with them?
- Give some examples of how a teacher’s attachment style may influence their interactions with their students?

Activity 5: Teacher Case Scenarios

Objective: To reinforce understanding and recognition of teacher attachment patterns.

Materials: Handouts of teacher attachment patterns without labels on them, small prizes.

Suggested Time on Activity: 40 minutes

Instructions: Divide the participants into four groups. Each group will work on one teacher case scenario by creating a 5-minute role play to present to the rest of the group. Ask the participants to write down what teacher attachment pattern is being presented in each role play. Discuss it as a group after and handout a small prize to each participant that got the correct attachment pattern for all of the role plays.

Activity 5: Teacher Case Scenarios

The Secure Teacher

Anna loves teaching, and she is good at her job. She enjoys building relationships with her students and works hard to develop security and trust with them. When one of the students becomes upset with Anna, she does not take it personally but rather as an opportunity to make necessary changes to support their needs. One day one of Anna's students told her "I don't need your help, just leave me alone". Anna was concerned for the student and was curious about what was going on for her. She offered her compassion, support and options to help them calm down and provided her with space and time as needed. She followed up with the student shortly after in a very calm and sensitive way.

The Dismissing Teacher

Bill provides a very strict and structured environment for his students. He believes that students are in school to learn and their focus should be on their studies. Bill becomes very uncomfortable when his students want to engage with him about things other than school. One of Bill's students started talking to Bill about their life, including their family, friends and career goals. They told Bill that they enjoy having him as a teacher. After that Bill wondered why this student was always trying to connect with him and he became more distant. He avoided checking in on him and told himself that he is a good student and likely he didn't need help. Eventually the student stopped coming to Bill unless he needed help.

The Preoccupied Teacher

Mary was never really sure what she wanted to do with her life until she had to do some volunteer work hours for school. She had a friend that worked in a high school and offered her to come into her classroom for her volunteer hours. She always liked kids, so she decided to do it. Once she was there, she could not believe how nice it was for her to connect with the kids, especially the ones that liked her. She enjoyed these connections so much she decided to become a teacher herself. Later, in her own classroom she started to feel stressed and anxious when the kids became upset with her as she was sure she had done something wrong to make them unhappy. During these times she would feel scared that certain kids would never forgive her, so she worked harder to make them happy. Other kids started to notice this and were upset. It was difficult for Mary because she wanted to have control in these situations but often, she became emotional and could not hide it.

The Disorganized Teacher

As a teacher, Jim was very inconsistent in his interactions with his students. Some days he would demonstrate care, compassion and connection, and other days he would be cold and distant. Jim's students never knew what to expect and felt nervous to ask questions or for help. One day one of Jim's students told Jim that they thought Jim was a poor teacher. Jim became very defensive because this confirmed everything that Jim already believed about himself. Jim's mother always told him he didn't deserve her love and he truly believed this. Jim decided to meet with his principal and explain to him that he will be leaving teaching because he was not doing the job well. Jim's principal believed in Jim and suggested that they meet once per week for a half hour to discuss the class, Jim's feelings and ways that he could support Jim.

Activity 6: What is Your Attachment Pattern?

Objective: To help participants develop self-awareness about their attachment pattern.

Materials: Handout of the adapted “Relationships Questionnaire” by Bartholomew and Horowitz (RQ) (1991), pencil/pen for writing, lined paper.

Suggested Time on Activity: 20 minutes

Instructions: Have participants write on a lined piece of paper what they believe their attachment pattern is. Handout “The Relationship Questionnaire” by Bartholomew and Horowitz (1991). Provide participants a few minutes to complete the questionnaire and after have them write a journal entry on the lined paper about how their attachment style relates to their teaching. Process the experience with participants by offering them to share if they are comfortable.

Provided are some **process questions** to guide the discussion:

- How was this experience for you?
- What feelings were coming up for you while doing the questionnaire?
- If you could have guessed your attachment pattern prior to the questionnaire what would it have been?
- How were your results the same as you expected or different?
- How did you feel about your results?
- What are some things you learned about yourself from this process?
- What are some ways you agree or disagree with your results?
- What would you like to do with this information?
- If you were to make any changes going forward what would they be?

Activity 6: What is Your Attachment Pattern?
The Relationships Questionnaire (RQ)
(adapted from Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991)

The Relationship Questionnaire can be used as a general guide to understand how a person is in close relationships, romantic relationships, or specific relationships.

Following are descriptions of four general relationship styles that people often report. **CIRCLE** the letter corresponding to the style that best describes you or is closest to the way you generally are in your close relationships.

- Secure** It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.
- Dismissive** I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.
- Preoccupied** I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.
- Fearful** I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.

Often people will not fit into one category, therefore, by rating each of the relationship styles on a continuous scale you are able to see how you rate in each of categories and in what order. Rate each of the following relationship styles according to the extent to which you think each description corresponds to your general relationship style.

	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat Agree			Strongly Agree	
Secure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Dismissive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Preoccupied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Fearful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Activity 7: BC Core Curriculum Competencies & Attachment Theory

Objective: To connect the importance of understanding attachment patterns in students in relation to the BC Core Competencies that educators are guided by in their practice.

Materials: Handout of the “BC Core Curriculum Competencies & Attachment Theory” worksheet, pencil/pen for writing.

Suggested Time on Activity: 20 minutes

Instructions: Review the BC Core Curriculum Competencies as a group. Either individually, in partners, or in groups have the participants write down how the three core competencies: Communication, Thinking, and Personal and Social, relate to students with secure and insecure attachment patterns. Discuss as a group.

Activity 7: BC Core Curriculum Competencies & Attachment Theory

Communication -encompasses the set of abilities that students use to impart and exchange information, experiences and ideas, to explore the world around them, and to understand and effectively engage in the use of digital media. It includes four interrelated facets:

- 1) Connect and engage with others (to share and develop ideas)
- 2) Acquire, interpret and present information (includes inquiries)
- 3) Collaborate to plan, carry out, and review constructions and activities
- 4) Explain/recount and reflect on experiences and accomplishments

How this relates to attachment patterns:

Thinking - encompasses the knowledge, skills and processes we associate with intellectual development. It is through the competency as thinkers that students take subject-specific concepts and content and transform them into a new understanding. Thinking competence includes specific thinking skills as well as habits of mind, and metacognitive awareness. There are two thinking competencies:

- 1) creative thinking, which includes novelty and value; generating ideas; and developing ideas
- 2) critical thinking, which includes, analyze and critique; question and investigate; and develop and design.

How this relates to Attachment Patterns:

Personal and Social - encompasses the set of abilities that relate to students' identity in the world, both as individuals and as members of their community and society. Personal and social competency encompasses the abilities students need to thrive as individuals, to understand and care about themselves and others, and to find and achieve their purposes in the world. It includes three interrelated competencies that relate to the broad areas of Social Emotional Learning (SEL):

- 1) positive personal and cultural identity, which begins with families and includes, relationships and cultural contexts; personal values and choices; and personal strengths and abilities
- 2) personal awareness and responsibility, which describe and illustrate students' development and include, self-determination, self-regulation, and well-being
- 3) social responsibility, which includes, contributing to community and caring for the environment, solving problems in peaceful ways, valuing diversity, and building relationships

How this relates to attachment patterns:

Activity 7: BC Core Curriculum Competencies & Attachment Theory (Key)

Communication -encompasses the set of abilities that students use to impart and exchange information, experiences and ideas, to explore the world around them, and to understand and effectively engage in the use of digital media. It includes four interrelated facets:

- 5) Connect and engage with others (to share and develop ideas)
- 6) Acquire, interpret and present information (includes inquiries)
- 7) Collaborate to plan, carry out, and review constructions and activities
- 8) Explain/recount and reflect on experiences and accomplishments

How this relates to attachment patterns:

Attachment patterns impact a student's:

- ability and comfort to explore the world around them – specifically secure students will be able to do this independently and confidently whereas insecure students will struggle.
- ability to connect with others – specifically avoidant students fear and avoid connection, ambivalent students have high anxiety around connections and will focus on them, disorganized students have high anxiety and fear around connections.
- self-esteem making recounting and reflecting on experiences and activities challenging
- executive function making it challenging to collaborate, organize, plan and carry out activities

Thinking - encompasses the knowledge, skills and processes we associate with intellectual development. It is through the competency as thinkers that students take subject-specific concepts and content and transform them into a new understanding. Thinking competence includes specific thinking skills as well as habits of mind, and metacognitive awareness. There are two thinking competencies:

- 3) creative thinking, which includes novelty and value; generating ideas; and developing ideas
- 4) critical thinking, which includes, analyze and critique; question and investigate; and develop and design.

How this relates to Attachment Patterns:

Insecurely attached students' may be living in their emotional brain leaving their thinking brain shut down. The thinking brain (prefrontal cortex) is where reasoning, logic, decision-making, problem-solving, planning, organization, attention, and self-regulation happens. In order to be a creative and critical thinker the prefrontal cortex needs to be functioning.

Personal and Social - encompasses the set of abilities that relate to students' identity in the world, both as individuals and as members of their community and society. Personal and social competency encompasses the abilities students need to thrive as individuals, to understand and care about themselves and others, and to find and achieve their purposes in the world. It includes three interrelated competencies that relate to the broad areas of Social Emotional Learning (SEL):

- 1) positive personal and cultural identity, which begins with families and includes, relationships and cultural contexts; personal values and choices; and personal strengths and abilities
- 2) personal awareness and responsibility, which describe and illustrate students' development and include, self-determination, self-regulation, and well-being
- 3) social responsibility, which includes, contributing to community and caring for the environment, solving problems in peaceful ways, valuing diversity, and building relationships

How this relates to attachment patterns:

Insecurely attached students have difficulty exploring the world around them which would impact their exploration and understanding of themselves and their identity. They did not have a primary caregiver that was consistently loving so they struggle with: an understanding of healthy relationships, building relationships, problem solving, self-regulation, and confidence.

Activity 8: Personal Action Plan

Objective: To have participants consider how they can positively influence attachment supports in their school.

Materials: Lined paper, pencil/pen for writing, envelopes.

Suggested Time on Activity: 10 minutes

Instructions: Have participants write down ways they can or would like to positively influence attachment supports in their schools. Welcome participants to share their ideas. After have participants put their ideas in an envelope to take with them as a gift.

Workshop Evaluation

Objective: To obtain feedback from participants about the workshop.

Materials: Handout of “Workshop Evaluation”, letter sized envelope.

Suggested Time on Activity: 5 minutes

Instructions: Handout the workshop evaluation. Tell participants it is voluntary, but their feedback is greatly appreciated. Explain the rating system, 1 (not at all) to 5 (very helpful). Ask participants to put it in the envelope provided before leaving.

Workshop Evaluation
Relationships over Rules: Educating Adolescents Through an Attachment Lens

1. I found the workshop informative and useful:

1 (not at all) 2 (not very much) 3 (somewhat) 4 (helpful) 5 (very helpful)

2. I found the workshop engaging and enjoyable:

1 (not at all) 2 (not very much) 3 (somewhat) 4 (helpful) 5 (very helpful)

3. I found the speaker presented the information well:

1 (not at all) 2 (not very much) 3 (somewhat) 4 (helpful) 5 (very helpful)

4. The information and concepts presented will be helpful to me in my work:

1 (not at all) 2 (not very much) 3 (somewhat) 4 (helpful) 5 (very helpful)

5. Overall, I would rate this workshop:

1 (not at all) 2 (not very much) 3 (somewhat) 4 (helpful) 5 (very helpful)

6. I found the presenter was knowledgeable:

1 (not at all) 2 (not very much) 3 (somewhat) 4 (helpful) 5 (very helpful)

7. Before I began the workshop on attachment I knew:

8. Now I know:

9. What do you wish was different or there was more of?

10. Comments:

Appendix 1 Resources

Internationally:

Association for Training on Trauma and Attachment in Children – ATTACH

International Attachment Network

Attachment Parenting International

The Neufeld Institute

Circle of Security Network/International

Nationally:

Attachment Association of Canada

Attachment Parenting Canada Association

Attachment and Trauma Treatment Centre for Healing - ATTCH

Crisis & Trauma Resource Institute

Provincially:

Adoptive Families Association of BC

Connect Parent Group

Locally:

Justice Institute of BC (Attachment and Play Therapy course)

Northern Attachment Network – Prince George

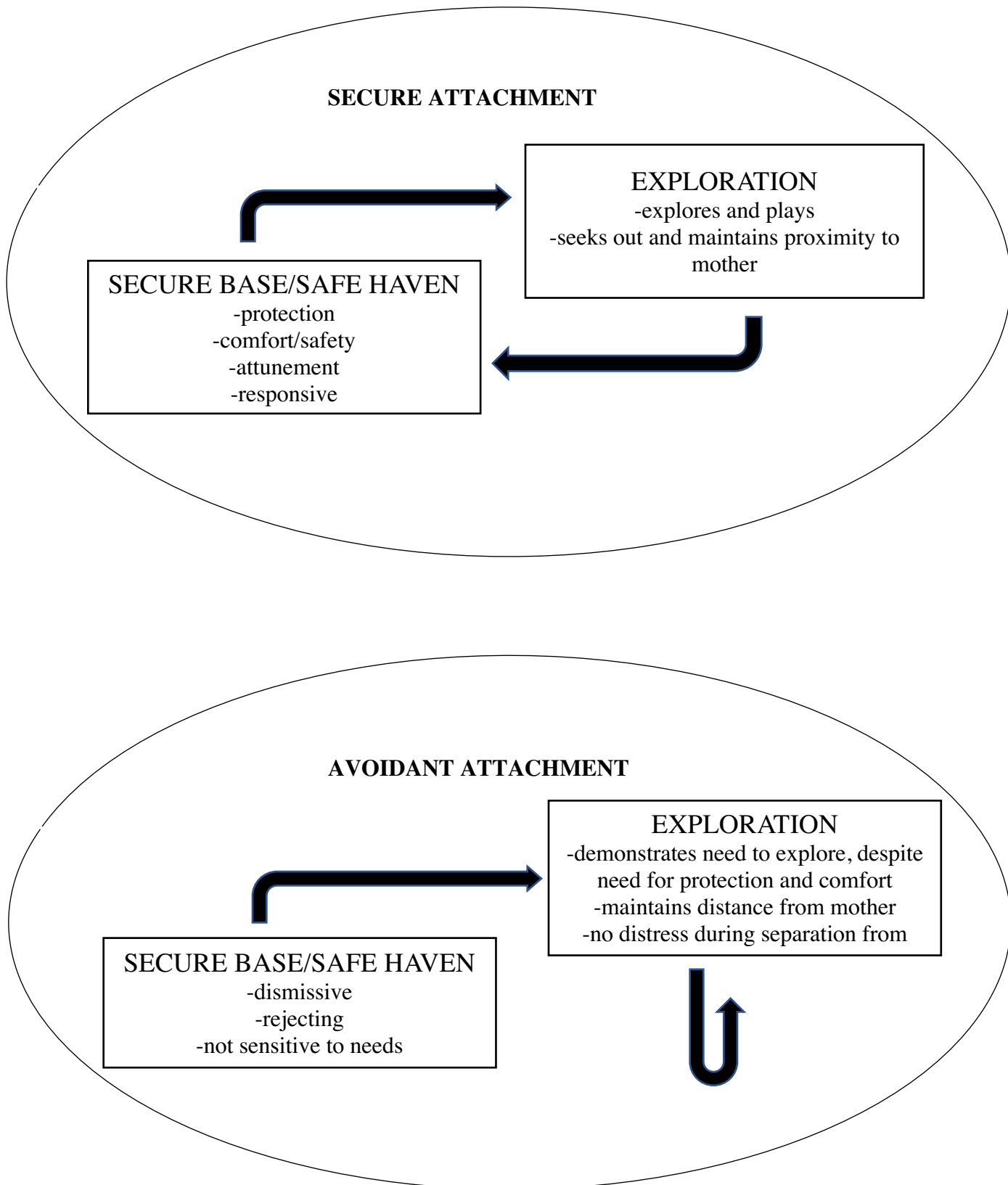
SFU (minor or post-graduate diploma in Counselling and Human Development)

UBC (post-graduate diploma in Guidance Studies)

UNBC (two elective courses offered in counselling)

VIU (one course on human development)

Appendix 2
Circle of Security: A Depiction of Attachment
(adapted from Hoffman, Cooper, Powell, 2017)



AMBIVALENT ATTACHMENT**SECURE BASE/SAFE HAVEN**

- overinvolved
- inconsistently available
- addressing own needs over child's

EXPLORATION

- demonstrates little interest in exploring
- demonstrates need for comfort and protection
- clingy and needy

DISORGANIZED ATTACHMENT**SECURE BASE/SAFE HAVEN**

- unpredictable & inconsistent
- represents safety & fear

EXPLORATION

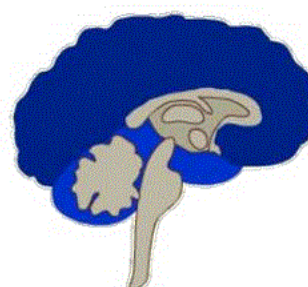
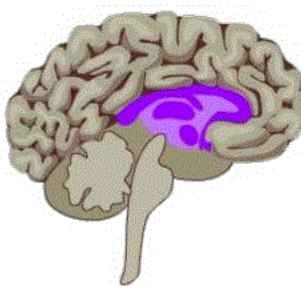
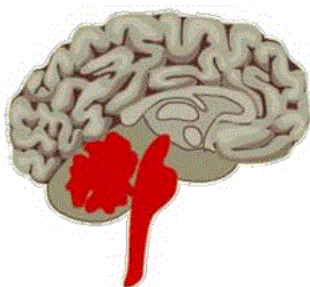
- fear and avoidance of mother
- seeks proximity and avoids contact
- cannot focus on exploration or comfort seeking
- demonstrates self-reliance and need

Appendix 3 Triune Brain Theory

(Retrieved from: <https://move-with-me.com/self-regulation/self-regulation-skills-for-preschoolers/>)

Triune Brain Theory

Lizard Brain	Mammal Brain	Human Brain
Brain stem & cerebellum	Limbic System	Neocortex
Fight or flight	Emotions, memories, habits	Language, abstract thought, imagination, consciousness
Autopilot	Decisions	Reasons, rationalizes

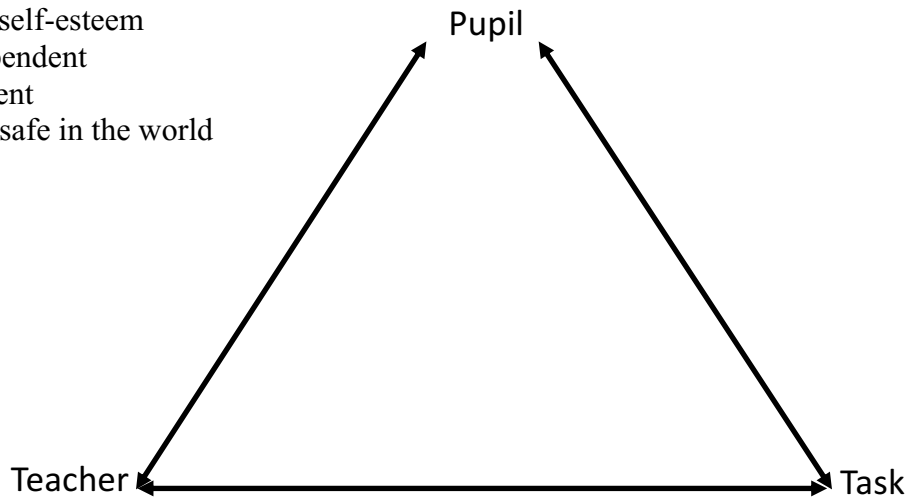


The Triune Brain in Evolution, Paul MacLean, 1960

Appendix 4
The Learning Triangle between Student, Teacher and Task
(adapted from Geddes, 2006)

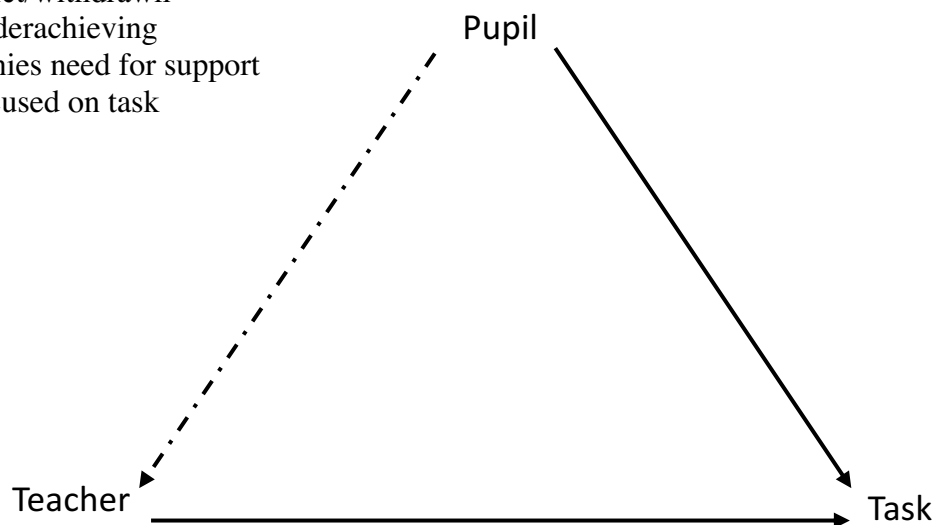
Secure Attachment

- confident
- achieving
- high-self-esteem
- independent
- resilient
- feels safe in the world



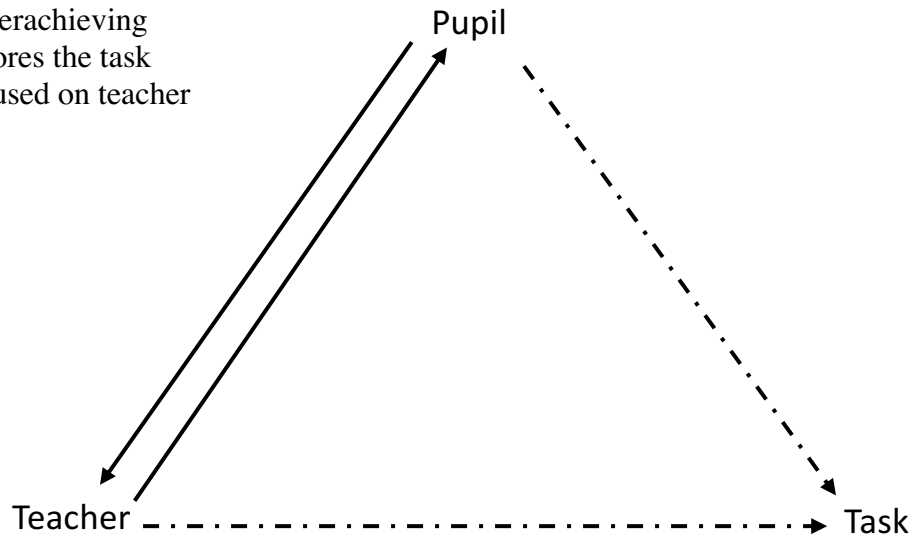
Avoidant Attachment

- demonstrates autonomy
- uncomfortable with teacher
- quiet/withdrawn
- underachieving
- denies need for support
- focused on task

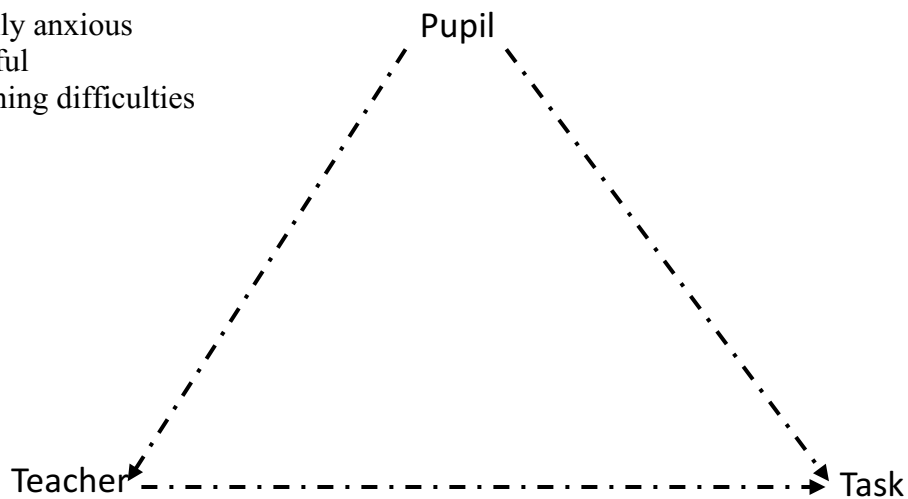


Ambivalent Attachment

- dependent
- highly anxious
- seeks attention
- underachieving
- ignores the task
- focused on teacher

**Disorganized Attachment**

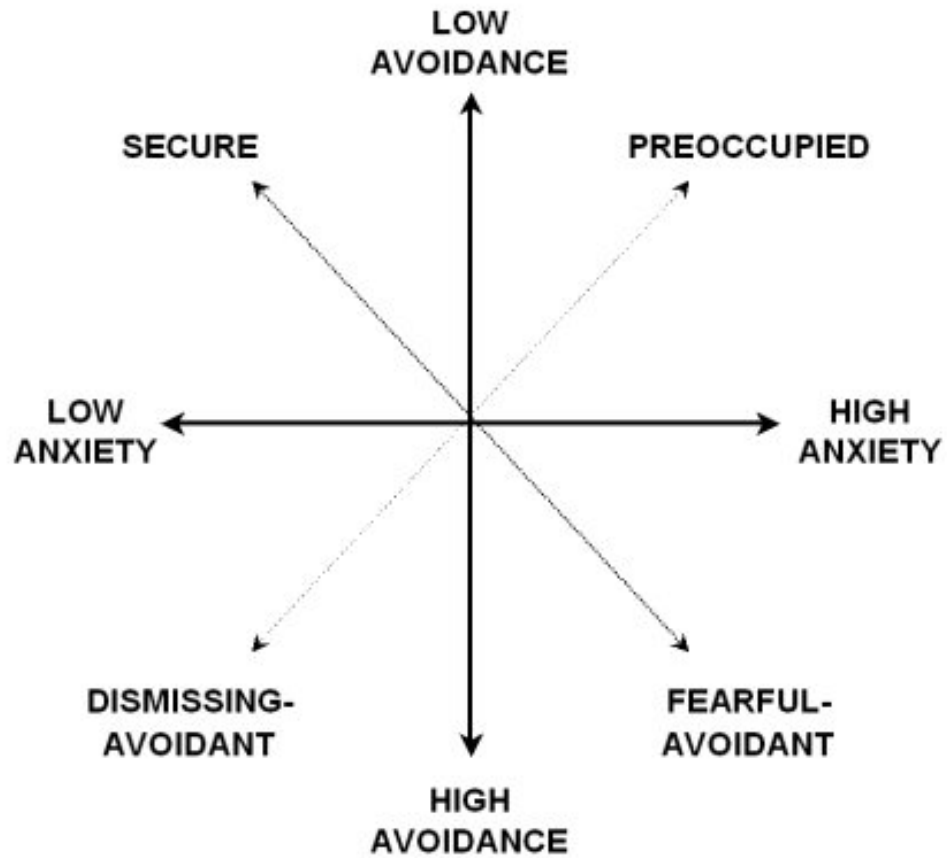
- reactive/controlling
- ignores task and teacher
- aggressive
- highly anxious
- fearful
- learning difficulties



Appendix 5
Connect Principles and Goals for Educators
(adapted from Moretti et al., 2015)

	Principle	Key learning goals and skills
1	<i>All behaviour has meaning</i>	Behaviour is a form of communication about attachment. Step back and consider alternate meanings of the behaviour.
2	<i>Attachment is for life</i>	Identify attachment needs. Recognize your student's behaviour as expressions of attachment needs.
3	<i>Conflict is part of attachment</i>	Conflict is a normal part of relationships. Learn to step back, manage affect and be present when facing conflict.
4	<i>Autonomy includes connection</i>	Teens strive for autonomy yet need connection. Accept and support their autonomy with structure and safety.
5	<i>Empathy – The heartbeat of attachment</i>	Empathy: is not about solving a problem, does not condone problem behaviour, and is a skill that takes time to practice and develop.
6	<i>Balancing everybody's needs.</i>	Acknowledge our own attachment needs. Acknowledge our student's attachment needs. Accept that our students cannot meet our attachment needs.
7	<i>Growth and change are part of relationships.</i>	Seeing ourselves and the way others see us can promote or impede change. Understand our own story and how it can get in the way of change can allow for growth and change.
8	<i>Celebrating attachment</i>	Celebrate attachment and joy in our relationships. Avoiding conflict is not enough.
9	<i>Two steps forward, one step back: Staying on course</i>	The meaning we attach to setbacks helps us decide how to respond to them. Setbacks provide opportunities to repair, reconcile and strengthen our relationships.

Appendix 6
Two-dimensional Model of Attachment
(Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991)



Appendix 7
The Relationships Questionnaire (RQ)
(adapted from Bartholomew and Horowitz, 1991)

The Relationship Questionnaire can be used as a general guide to understand how a person is in close relationships, romantic relationships, or specific relationships.

Following are descriptions of four general relationship styles that people often report. **CIRCLE** the letter corresponding to the style that best describes you or is closest to the way you generally are in your close relationships.

- Secure** It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.
- Dismissive** I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.
- Preoccupied** I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.
- Fearful** I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It is very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.

Often people will not fit into one category, therefore, by rating each of the relationship styles on a continuous scale you are able to see how you rate in each of categories and in what order. Rate each of the following relationship styles according to the extent to which you think each description corresponds to your general relationship style.

	Strongly Disagree		Somewhat Agree			Strongly Agree	
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Dismissive	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Preoccupied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Fearful	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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