

Understanding and Enhancing Attachment

Helping Missionaries Build Secure
Relationships

Information based on work by and thanks to:

Dr. Stan Tatkin, *Wired for Love*, developer
of PACT therapy
Dr. Dan Siegel and his work with
Interpersonal Neurobiology
Dr. Diane Poole Heller, developer of Dynai
Attachment Repatterning Experience
Dr. Dan Hughes, developer of Attachment
Focused Family Therapy

Introduce Yourself

Name and how you're involved with missionaries.

My Goal

To support secure attachment by helping missionaries identify their attachment tendencies and to move them towards secure functioning.

You can gain...

- An understanding of the significance of attachment.
- Knowledge of the types of attachment.
- Awareness of the characteristics of each type.
- A template for promoting secure functioning and building blocks of connection to enhance secure attachment.







What is attachment

Way and wiring we all have to connect with ourselves, with God and with others.

The emotional bond that typically forms between infant and caregiver...then becomes the engine of subsequent emotional, social and cognitive development. (It) stimulates the growth of enduring neural pathways that will sculpt enduring patterns of response... (Psychology Today, All About Attachment)

Benefits of Secure Attachment

- Greater wellbeing and satisfaction for everyone.
- More productive, positive and resilient.
- Easier to get along with with less conflict.
- More flexible and creative.
- Able to see and value other's experience and perspective.
- Able to be present, to know and be known.



It is not good for man to be alone.

Genesis 2:18

What do you do in your life that isn't touched by relationship?

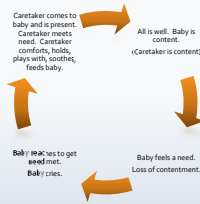
**We All Have an Attachment
Story**

85%

30%

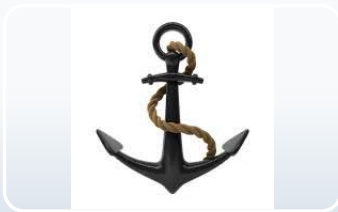


How we get secure attachment



Foundation for Secure Attachment

This cycle happens thousands of times through infancy and wires up I'm good and world is good. It is safe and good for me.



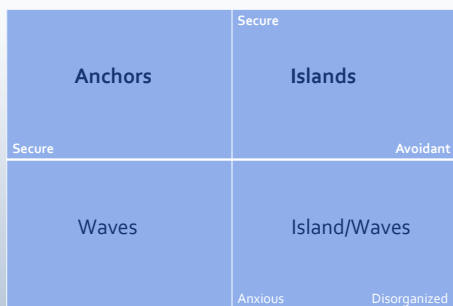
The Anchor

Secure Attachment

Anchor Characteristics

- High feelers, high dealers.
- Friendly voice, face and gestures.
- Unflappable, consistent, relaxed (but not checked out), comfortable in own skin.
- Easy to recover from upset.
- Playful, present, high empathy.
- Fluid with togetherness and aloneness, able to self regulate and co-regulate.
- Expect to be loved and feel lovable.
- Relationship first, easy to get along with, accept bids for repair easily.
- Integrated emotion and cognition.
- Have made sense of their story.

Attachment Adaptations



Four Adaptations

- Secure –
 - Anchor --Two person system – I can hold onto myself and you at the same time.
- Insecure – One person system – I can hold onto myself, you or neither, but it's difficult to hold onto myself and you at the same time.
 - Wave – anxious, anxious-ambivalent, preoccupied, angry-resistant
 - Island – avoidant, dismissing
 - Wave/Island – disorganized, type D, fearful, unresolved

Earned Attachment or Earned Security

- 1. Make sense of your attachment experiences.
- 2. Understand your attachment style and tendencies.
- 3. Understand your significant other's attachment style.
- 4. Learn to read and support loved one's attachment style. Interpret responses from an attachment lens.
- 5. Function from a secure style.

How we got these adaptations



**Your Attachment Adaptation
is OK!!!**



Waves
Anxious/Ambivalent Adaptation

Wave Characteristics

- Higher feelers, lower dealers
- Dialed up vocals, facial expression and gesturing.
- Can be excessively verbal re: self, unfiltered and tangential.
- May over depend on emotions and right brain.
- Have inconsistent care-giving (received inconsistent care-giving), appear pressured, concerned, upset. Can be preoccupied.
- Not as easily soothed from upset. Experience deep disappointment.
- Not as good with aloneness. Transitions to aloneness may be hard.
- Depend on others for soothing (not as good at self regulation).
- Anticipate rejection (real or perceived). Anticipate "getting dropped"
- Over focused on relationship and other. Not as good at self-care. May be intrusive.
- Fears being needy, a burden, too much, unlovable, abandoned.
- My complaint is that I'm overwhelmed



Islands
Avoidant Adaptation

Island Characteristics

- Lower feelers, higher dealers.
- Dialed down vocals, facial expression and gesturing.
- Go away and handle upset on own. Overwhelmed by emotion. May check out or numb out.
- Less integration with cognitive and emotional. Greater dependence on cognitive or left brain.
- Less verbal regarding self. May seem filtered, guarded or secretive.
- Good with aloneness. Togetherness feels like pressure. May close their eyes when talking to you.
- Are auto regulators. Wouldn't cross their mind to go to someone else to help them feel better.
- May think they can do it better themselves.
- May tend to focus on things, rather than people or relationships.
- Hard to discern or know their needs or feelings.
- May feel demanded of in close relationships.
- Cold anger – passive aggressive.
- Fears blame, failure, inadequacy, and loss of self.

What to Give Waves -- RAFT

- Reassurance! (lots and lots)
- Affection
- Feelings
- Time-limited separations

Helping Waves Grow-- REGS

- Regulation
- Enhance emotional happiness
- Gentle reach
- Short and simple

What to Give Islands -- TABS

- Transition time
- Acceptance
- Breaks
- Slow emotional expansion

Helping Islands Grow-- VEST

- Voice
- Emotional Bandwidth
- Self-- Awareness
- Turn towards

Building Blocks of Connection

- Reaching
- Eye gazing
- Shining Face
- Melting Hug -- Hug and Hold to Relax
- PACE
- Hellos and Goodbyes
- Supportive Transitions
- Morning and Evening Routines



Building Blocks of Connection

The Reach

Playful Exercise: Reaching for Others

Experiment with reaching for others

1. Reaching for God.
2. Reaching for coworker/ friend.
3. Reaching for parent/ child.
4. Reaching for your spouse.
5. Reaching in your community.

Building Blocks of Connection

Eye Gazing/ Shining Face

Playful Exercise: Eye Gazing/ Shining Face



Building Blocks of Connection

Melting Hug

Keeping PACE together

- Playful
- Accepting
- Curious
- Empathetic



Building Blocks of Connection

Hellos and Goodbyes



Building Blocks of Connection

Morning and Evening Routines



Building Blocks of Connection

Managing Transitions – Big and Small

Take aways

- What has been something meaningful or helpful that you want to remember?
- What is something you want to apply?
- What is something you want to share with someone else?

Application

Discuss in groups of 3 or 4 how you might apply what you've learned. Consider any of these contexts.

- Individuals
- Couples
- Families
- Teams
- Host Country
- Transitions

Resources for you

- Stan Tatkin, *Wired for Love, We Do*, PACT.com
- Diane Poole Heller, dianepooleheller.com
- Howwelove.com, *How We Love*
- *Loving with the Brain in Mind*, Mona DeKoven Fishbane
- Dr. Dan Siegel, www.drdansiegel.com/about/interperson
