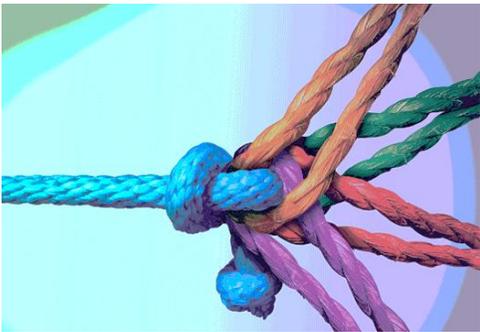




## FIVE WAYS TO WELLBEING: ATTACHMENT

November 2020



To consider...

“There is no doubt that it is around the family and the home that all the greatest virtues, the most dominating virtues of human, are created, strengthened and maintained” **Winston S. Churchill**

In the 1920's a Psychologist called John Bowlby realised a link between relationships at an early age and future behaviour. He called his theory 'attachment theory'. He discovered that the way in which parents responded to their children at an early age affected the child's development and could contribute to positive or negative behavioural issues, educational achievement and future relationships.

Bowlby's studies in childhood development and temperament led him to the conclusion that a strong attachment to a caregiver provides a necessary sense of security and foundation. Children with strong attachment are more confident, self-assured, experimental and able to form meaningful and secure relationships of their own. This is mostly explained by these children having a strong sense of being supported, or backed up and feeling more secure to explore. Children with less secure attachment are more anxious, erratic, unpredictable and less able to form secure relationships.

Researchers believe this pattern of attachment, assessed as early as one year, is more important than temperament, IQ, social class, and parenting style to a person's development. Attachment research now links this theory to adult relationships. It has been found that adults in a supportive, intimate relationship have increased self-esteem, and those whose relationships are more distant sometimes suffer increased anxiety and a loss of self-worth. Adult attachment insecurity is linked with a host of problems, from sleep disturbances, depression and anxiety, to a decreased concern with moral injustice.



# School Staff

In the main, children with weak attachment tend to try to cope by using a variety of strategies; being over-anxious to please, acting out their chaotic feelings, or becoming very withdrawn. They may shift between strategies with startling rapidity or act in one way with some people and very differently with others, leading to confusion in staff. Some behaviours of particular concern to school staff are:



- **Disruptive behaviour.** They may be trying to control things, acting out their fear of you or the class, avoiding showing that work is difficult, trying to get you to send them out of the class or home.
- **Difficulties coping with change.** Their strong urge to control things will make any change difficult – tasks, teachers, venues etc.
- **Ignoring instructions.** Their ability to process and remember your words is limited. Anxiety and hypervigilance will further reduce these skills.
- **In trouble at break time.** Unstructured times with no adult to guide them will cause anxiety to

rise, especially in large crowds.

- **Refusal to be helped.** This may not fit with their sense of worth, their need for control or their mistrust of adults.
- **Lying, stealing, fighting or hurting other children.** Their conscience development is likely to be at a much younger stage than their chronological age. Such behaviour may also reflect their need for control.
- **“Explosions” around certain work.** It is clear when subjects such as maths and spelling are wrong. Fear of failure or heightened anxiety may cause the child to lose control.
- **Disrespect to teachers.** Children may react with defiance and attitude when they feel disrespected or criticised. This is an effort to save face but their underlying feelings may be panic and fear of rejection.



## What can schools do?

- ✓ Provide calm, structured supervision for these children as much as possible. Try to take control of the atmosphere of the class; you set the tone, not them.
- ✓ Support teachers who are dealing with them, giving them a place to let out their feelings!
- ✓ Remember teaching, not punishing - these children are often lacking skills, not disobeying. They need a different chance at the rules because they have had a different chance in life.
- ✓ Try to establish a strong relationship with the child – make time, keep your promises.
- ✓ Give small amounts of attention frequently to let the child know you are attending to them during lessons.
- ✓ Try to show that you're listening when the child is explaining to you – validate their feelings even when the story makes no sense to you.
- ✓ Have a scheme that allows the child some space when they need to cool down – they may need a person or an activity to help them achieve this – try physical exercise to burn off feelings
- ✓ Explain changes in routine or staffing.

# Parents & Carers

There is a lot of evidence now that child-parent has a massive impact on child development, at whatever age the child is. This means that making sure that your relationships with your children, and with your partner are strong and dependable can still result in changes of behaviour and result in a more confident and secure people. The decisions that you are making every day about how you are relating to your children will still be having significant impacts on their behaviour and on their future lives, decisions and ultimately will affect their future relationships with their own children and spouses.



## 5 Tips to Strengthen Parent-Child Attachment

### **Foster a healthy relationship.**

There are generally accepted to be four elements of a healthy relationship: playfulness, acceptance, curiosity, and empathy. When you spend time with your child and are interested in their thoughts, actions, and desires, this shows your child that they are interesting and valuable. Secure attachment is reinforced, and the child learns you are dependable and trustworthy.

### **Provide structure.**

Establish daily routines, clear rules, and consistent expectations for behaviour. This structure plays an important role in children's behaviour. When you respond to your child's behaviour in a consistent way, they will respond more consistently as well. You will spend less time correcting the chaos and more time engaging in positive interactions and learning.

### **Implement time-in instead of time-out.**

When a child makes a mistake, instead of putting your child in "time-out" try "time-in" instead, where the child stays close to their parent, is encouraged to express their feelings to their parent, and is given a chance to calm down. This strategy brings the child to the parent. If a child is isolated and left to 'think about what they've done' they may not have the capacity to resolve the situation. Time-in shows empathy for the child and helps your child develop self-reflective problem-solving strategies



## A prayer...



Lord, help my children protect their family ties, trust each other, hope for the best for each other, and persevere in building each other together in love and truth (1 Corinthians 13:4-8). In Jesus' name, Amen.

# Students

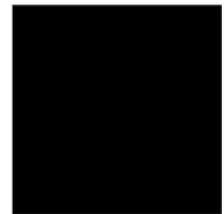
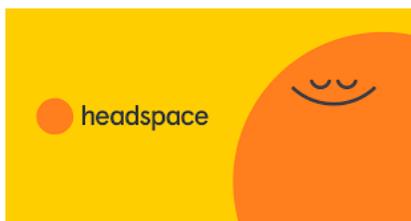
Sometimes you may feel far away from your family. Everyone may seem busy and it may feel as though you don't get as much time with parents, carers, brothers or sisters as you would like. This may leave you feeling a little bit lonely. You don't need to be physically alone or cut off to feel lonely. You might be surrounded by other people. But it can feel like you're on your own or that no one understands how you feel. Loneliness can make us feel down. It can also have effects on our body and make us gain weight and struggle to concentrate. This is due to an increase in cortisol, the hormone released by our body when we are stressed. If you feel like this, you can get help.

## Some things to think about...

If you're feeling lonely, you could:



- Make every effort to connect with your friends and your family. Organise more time with friends outside of school and suggest movie nights or games nights with family.
- Talk to an adult you trust
- Join a club or group where you can meet new people - this could be a sports team, music class or book club.
- Get advice about building confidence and self-esteem - this can help you feel confident when you meet new people and focus on stuff you like about yourself. Click on the link to find some advice.



# Supporting learning and wellbeing together



## Connect

Connect with others to support special needs...

<https://chatterpack.net/pages/send-information-a-z-directory>

Connect with STEM support for primary and secondary students...

<https://www.stem.org.uk/home-learning>

Connect with the world of educational practice informed by research...

<https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/covid-19-resources/support-resources-to-share-with-parents/>



## Take notice

Consider how to notice a genius in the home...

<https://www.potentialplusuk.org/index.php/introducing-potential-plus-uk/>

Consider how to notice anxiety in learners...

<https://www.anxiety.org/causes-and-symptoms-of-anxiety-in-children>

Consider how to notice anxiety and depression in teenagers...

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/worried-about-your-teenager/>



## Keep learning

Learn about how to keep your child safe on line...

<https://www.thinkuknow.co.uk/>

Learn how to support teenagers to develop positive study skills...

<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/learning-at-home/homework-study-skills/how-to-help-your-teen-develop-good-study-habits>

Learn the math's methods often used today...

<https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/learning-at-home/homework-study-skills/9-new-math-problems-and-methods>



## Be active

Put your energy into organising the learning environment...

<https://www.theschoolrun.com/home-education-step-by-step>

Be active in using outdoor spaces for learning...

<https://www.ltl.org.uk/parents/>

Fitness for learners who don't like sports...

<https://kidshealth.org/en/parents/hate-sports.html>



## Give

Giving rhythms and routines for young children...

<https://www.edsurge.com/news/2020-03-17-how-to-keep-school-rhythm-and-routines-for-young-children-at-home>

Give yourself a study break...

<https://www.topuniversities.com/blog/how-have-productive-study-break>

Give yourself, and your child, the opportunity to be still...

<https://positivepsychology.com/mindfulness-for-children-kids-activities/>