

07 - Bowlby believed that attachment is innate and

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© SPMM Course 2. Attachment theory Bowlby's views: According to Bowlby, attachment begins in infancy and lasts throughout a lifetime. A newborn baby immediately needs someone to take care of them. This person may be a parent, a sibling, or a nanny, but whoever it is, there will be a bond formed between them. Bowlby believed that this primary caregiver is the one that will most shape the child's personality and character. The primary caregiver is usually the mother (but need not always be), and strong bonds are formed within minutes of giving birth. It is important for the new parents and baby to be alone together right after the birth to establish a strong bond. If there are too many individuals in the room right after birth, the natural process of attachment can be disrupted and this can have long-term effects on the relationship between the child and parents (Klaus, Kennell, & Klaus, 1995). The attachment formation needs caregiver's presence in early stages; no difference is made if motherly care is provided late after 30m especially and not in early stages. Attachment behaviour is more evident when distress is present. According to Bowlby, the strong innate tendency to attach to one adult female is seen - this is called monotropy. This attachment is qualitatively different from later attachments made. But it is shown that multiple attachments are the rule rather than the exception. Around 18m, 87% infants have multiple attachments; 50% primarily attached to the mother, 18% to father and the rest to equally both. Attachment process itself is more important than who the attachment figure is. Bowlby believed that attachment is innate and adaptive. We are all born with an inherited need to form attachments, and this is to help us survive. In his terms, the newborn infant is helpless and relies on its mother/caregiver for food, warmth, etc. and hence the attachment behaviour is essentially adaptive. Attachment behaviour peaks between 12-18 months but various phases are notable during development.

1. Preattachment phase (birth to 8 or 12 weeks), babies orient to their mothers,
2. Indiscriminate attachment (attachment in making - 8 to 12 weeks to 6 months): Allows strangers to handle, infants become attached to one or more persons in the environment
3. Clear-cut attachment (6 through 24 months): Preferential attachment, separation anxiety, object permanence, stranger anxiety. At the later part, weakened stranger anxiety; other attachment figures may also present.
4. After 25 months, the mother figure is seen as independent. Harlow's experiments: These experiments established the importance of contact comfort as basic as the need for food in developing mother-infant bonding. Harlow separated rhesus monkeys

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