

# 10 - Interpersonal relationships

## Interpersonal relationships

© SPMM Course Flavell et al. (1986) noted that children older than 4 years old distinguish appearance from reality and show an ability to discuss objects that have misleading appearances ('it looks like an apple but it is really a ball'). Note that when task demands are reduced, even 15-month old show some signs of ToM. Furthermore, many children with autism and Asperger's syndrome, can pass first order tests albeit at a developmentally later age (average 5.5 years according to Happe et al., 1995)

**Second-order false belief tasks** These tasks relate to the understanding that other people (a second person) can have their own thoughts about another (third) person's state of mind. Second-order tests involve inferring one person's thoughts about another person's mental state e.g. What Jim thinks that Varun thinks. These tests are usually passed by the age of 6 years in typically developing children. Children with autistic spectrum disorders may never pass second-order false belief tasks or pass only by teenagers. Key neural regions for normal ToM are considered to be the amygdala, orbitofrontal cortex, inferior parietal and medial frontal cortex.

**Interpersonal relationships** Following factors influence relationships:

1. Proximity: minimal requirement for most relationships.
2. Exposure refers to reciprocal disclosure - this may enhance the relationship. Females do more self-disclosure than males.
3. Similarity - may increase self-esteem in a relationship as one gets validation for similar interests.
4. Complementarity - not so important initially but increases in importance as a longterm relationship develops.
5. Compatibility is proportional to both similarity and complementarity. Types of love: □ Companionate love: True or conjugal love where intimacy and commitment seen; passion is not high. □ Passionate love: intimate and passionate but not much commitment - obsessive, romantic and infatuated. □ Consummate love: intimacy, passion and commitment all well mixed.