How we develop attachment?

Emotional Development

What was Your first attachment relationship?

THINK

The first special relationship we experience develops between parent and child

It is believed that this relationship will influence the development of our future relationships.
What is Attachment?

Attachment is a strong, long-lasting emotional connection.

- A close emotional bond that is “person-specific” and is enduring across time.

How do you know an infant is attached to someone?

Infants show their attachment through proximity-seeking behaviors, meaning infants like to be near those we are attached.
Harry Harlow (1959) “The Monkey Love experiments”

- Harlow evaluated whether feeding or contact comfort was more important to infant attachment.
- The young animals were “raised” by two kinds of surrogate monkey mother machines.
- One mother was made of soft terry cloth, the other made of wire mesh.

“Monkey Love Experiments”

- Harlow’s research showed that the need for affection created a stronger bond between mother and infant than did physical needs (food).
The effects of emotional deprivation

Harlow’s work suggested that the development of a child’s love for their caregiver was emotional rather than physiological.

Harlow showed that the development of attachment was closely associated with critical periods in early life. It is difficult or impossible to compensate for the loss of initial emotional security.

Further experiments on abusive conditions showed that no matter how abusive the “Iron Maidens” were, the baby monkeys always came back and displayed affection towards them. Even in the face of abuse, the need for love was overwhelming.

What does this mean for humans?
Monkeys raised without their mothers were socially maladjusted the rest of their lives.

- "When confronted with fear, they displayed autistic and institutionalized behaviors—throwing themselves on the floor, clutched themselves, rocked back and forth, and screamed in terror."

They were incapable of having sexual relations and they were also unable to parent their offspring, either abusing or neglecting them.

"Not even in our most devious dreams could we have designed a surrogate as evil as these real monkey mothers were."
Based on how the infant reacts to separation from the caregiver and the reunion by using a procedure known as the Strange Situation.

Ainsworth (1993) and others have identified 4 basic types of attachment relationships:
- Secure Attachment
- Insecure/Resistant
- Insecure/Avoidant
- Insecure/Disorganized

The Quality of Attachment

Secure attachment:
- These infants use the caregiver, usually the mother, as a secure base from which to explore the environment.
- This group seems to say “I missed you terribly, but now that you’re back, I’m okay.”

0-60% of American children have secure attachment relationships (Kail, 2007).
A secure attachment relationship is likely to develop when parents respond to their infant’s needs reliably and sensitively.

Securely attached infants appear to grow up to be better adjusted and more socially skilled than insecurely attached children.

Insecure Attachments

A relationship that is unstable or unpredictable, characterized by the infant’s fear, anxiety, anger or indifference toward the caregiver.
Researchers have found links between attachment styles and relationship patterns in adolescence and adulthood.