Intergenerational Transmission of Attachment & Parenting Styles

A Workshop Facilitated by
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Explicit in attachment theory has been the notion that an individual’s pattern of attachment depends largely on the experiences with the attachment figure in early childhood. Measures of infant and adult internal representations of attachment, have refined this assertion by testing the hypothesis that…

“…Adults’ current perspective on their own childhood relationship history, is predictive of their own child’s attachment to them.” (Zeanah & Emde, 1994)

Furthermore “Because… children tend unwittingly to identify with parents and therefore adopt when they become parents, the same patterns of behaviour that they themselves have experienced during their own childhood. Patterns of interaction are transmitted more or less faithfully from one generation to the next.” (Bowlby, 1969, p. 323).

NB: This was largely an experiential and interactive workshop. It sought to:

- Briefly discuss the above, drawing on the work of M. Steele’s (1991)
- research on Intergenerational Patterns of Attachment.
- Debate the possible affects of separation from one’s parents, on the ability to form and sustain future meaningful relationships and on parenting in general – with clinical case examples, including the convenor’s work with Hackney Social Services ‘Community Intervention Team’ (C.I.T).
- Invite the workshop delegates to share own experiences of separation, whether personal or professional.

Consider where do we go from here? - The need for funded research and a preventative approach.

References:


