

Exercise

Experiences of caregiving influence the child's view of both their attachment figure and themselves. On the basis of experiences of early relationships, individuals develop internal working models that act as 'templates' for their expectations of future relationships. Howe et al. (1999) developed a typology of different attachment styles to describe the ways in which children feel about themselves:

1. Self (loved, effective, autonomous and competent) + other people (available, cooperative and dependable) = secure attachment patterns.
2. Self (unloved but self-reliant) + other people (rejecting and intrusive) = avoidant attachment patterns.
3. Self (low value, ineffective and dependent) + other people (neglecting, insensitive, unpredictable and unreliable) = ambivalent attachment patterns.
4. Self (confused and bad) + other people (frightening and unavailable) = disorganised attachment patterns (p25).

In your small group, consider the following:

1. Select from the following words those you think best describe the way neglected children and young people you have encountered view themselves, their carers and the wider world:
 - **Me – can't describe feelings, can't voice fears, uncared for, unrecognised, unappreciated, unsure, powerless, alone, empty, undefined, anxious, ineffective**
 - **Carers – unavailable, conditional, inconsistent, insensitive, untrustworthy, angry, drained, frightened, frightening, hostile, fragile, rejecting**
 - **The world – to be controlled, unfair, unpredictable, to be avoided, confusing, contradictory, overwhelming, frightening, incomprehensible.**
2. Are there other words or phrases which you would add?
3. What kind of behaviour would you expect to see in children who hold such models of themselves and others?
4. What experiences can help children to move towards more healthy internal working models of relationships?

further

Neglect and attachment

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