

**Attachment Styles and Their Impact on Children's Mental
Health and Resiliency During a Pandemic**

By

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Abstract

Children with insecure attachment patterns will have more difficulties regulating their emotions due to their parents' inconsistent emotional availability, making them more susceptible to stress, anxiety, and other mental health challenges. Children's mental health can be impacted by stressful experiences like the Covid-19 pandemic, which can be affected by their parents' worry and anxiety. This capstone aims to review studies on whether forming a close connection between parents and their children could provide an opportunity for them to master emotional regulation while dealing with the stress generated by the Covid-19 pandemic and lower the risk of mental health problems. The research reviews will be used to create a workshop that can be useful to counselors and caregivers on effectively working with children who may be insecurely attached as a result of the pandemic, including children who are struggling with emotional regulation. The proposal described in chapter 3 outlines various approaches to assist parents in creating a secure bond with their children and, as a result, support them to learn co-regulation and self-regulation during stressful life events.

Keywords: attachment theory, attachment styles, attachment in adulthood, co-regulation, positive parenting, pandemic, secure attachment, resiliency

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Chapter One: Introduction to the Study

With the new coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, millions of individuals worldwide are being affected by a lack of emotional, social, and physical connection (Johnson, 2020). Parents are a crucial element of their children's lives since they may offer resilience-related components that can help children cope with mental health issues in high-stress situations (Liang, 2021). Children will benefit from positive parenting by receiving affection and emotional support during this time. In this regard, parenting requires encouraging a child's emotional, intellectual, physical, and social growth from infancy to adulthood through positive connections and secure relationships (Johnson, 2020).

The following capstone seeks to investigate the effect of the parent-child secure bond and its impact on children's ability to develop self-regulation and resiliency. This paper will further discuss the effects of secure attachment and children's resiliency and coping mechanisms in the emergence of stressful life events like pandemics. According to Levine and Heller (2010), "Our attachment system is the mechanism in our brain responsible for tracking and monitoring the safety and availability of our attachment figures" (p. 64). This literature review will look for evidence in the current research that suggests this connection exists. Children with secure attachment have fewer mental health challenges and higher resiliency. This capstone will provide a theoretical framework, define keywords or phrases, and review recent literature on attachment styles and their impact on children's resiliency and mental health.

The goal of my capstone will be to review literature that studied the quality of parent-child connection and adaptability in children who are going through a stressful life event like a pandemic and that such a relationship can be impacted by having to learn more iterative parenting abilities, thereby influencing children's well-being. The paper will also review some

mental health challenges that children experience due to insecure attachment and provide therapy approaches to help parents, therapists, and educators.

Background to the Research Problem

Attachment security affects individuals throughout their entire life. According to Bowlby (as cited in Wallen, 2015), "attachment theory is based on the notion that intimate attachments to other human beings are the hub around which a person's life revolves, not only when the individual is an infant or a toddler, but throughout his adolescence and his years of maturity as well, and on into old age" (p. 442). This description suggests that if you had an insecure attachment as a child, you might achieve attachment security if you benefit from a secure attachment later.

Caregivers who are caring and emotionally sensitive to their children's needs assist them in building a positive self-image; however, if children feel rejected, an image of self as undeserving of love and being untrustworthy may be developed.

Considering the significance of early interactions and experiences in the growth of emotional regulation ability in children, caregiver connections may be a significant predictor of the start of emotion regulation difficulties and later childhood anxiety (Thompson 2001). It is possible, for example, that children with parents who provide inconsistent emotional presence, as can be seen in insecure attachment styles, will develop more inconsistent emotion regulation skills than children with parents who are easily accessible to comfort their children when they're upset, as shown in certain attachment relationships (Cassidy, 1994).

Children and adolescents modify their feelings and reactions in response to parents' psychological reactions, regardless of age or gender. They are more prone than adults to be affected by the stress, anxiety, and worry of those around them. They would exhibit higher

negative feelings and behavior problems than usual (Liang et al., 2021). These behaviors might include anxiety, depression, relational difficulties, and internalizing or externalizing disorder. If accessing a trustworthy attachment figure is not possible, the individual's ability to cope with stress or anxiety is reduced, triggering biological pathways that promote the emergence of mental diseases (Wedekind et al., 2013).

Early attachment experiences described as insecure may be linked to alcoholism and anxiety. Wedekind et al. (2013) aimed to determine a link between attachment types and stress, anxiety management, disordered personality styles, and negative life experiences in youth. They concluded that insecure attachment is linked to increased anxiety, more robust cognitive avoidance to manage stress, and higher levels of significant personality type characteristics pointing toward the disordered side.

Researchers increasingly agree that emotional neglect plays a central role in developing psychological difficulties like anxiety disorders (Schimmenti, 2015). When a parent purposefully or mistakenly ignores indicators that children need comfort or care, this is known as parental psychological abuse. Schimmenti (2015) added a continuous developmental route linking parenting neglect and abuse to the formation of insecure attachment patterns and anxiety symptoms in life. Early-life events, like those that activate dynamic systems, such as parental care and attachment, train response to stress. Poor parental involvement, lack of warmth, and detached parent-child connections are linked to a much greater risk of depression and anxiety in adults (Bussone et al., 2020). Identifying the beginning of significant depression requires implementing a stress model regarding traumatic life experiences and connecting with personal susceptibilities, such as insecure attachment style (Bifulco et al., 2019). Attachment models emerge in childhood based on children's relationships with their caretakers. As a result, an

"internal working model" of interactions occurs. Insecure attachment style influences how people interact with one another and their social and cognitive characteristics. As a result, it includes a wide range of psychological vulnerabilities, such as cognitive development marked by despair, low levels of self, low social support, and poor relationship satisfaction. In the face of extreme stresses, these variables reduce resiliency. Their study found that insecure attachment is a predictor of depression, and some insecure attachment patterns are strongly represented in those who suffer from depression. In addition, the participants who self-reported depression showed more traumatic life situations and an insecure attachment style. The study has limitations, including its cross-sectional structure, making it impossible to establish direction due to the temporal sequence of risk factors and depression, and the sample's racial diversity, limiting generalizability. Moreover, instead of a professional interview, a symptom scale is an imperfect diagnostic of depression (Bifulco et al., 2019).

Adults may interpret unknown and unexpected events like the COVID-19 global pandemic and the quarantine period as dangerous and stressful, leading to unpleasant feelings like anxiety. As a result, when caregivers displayed more extraordinary negative emotions after isolation, young people were significantly impacted and may be at greater risk for mental dysfunction (Dalton et al., 2020). Recent research on the effects of significant events or abrupt global health crises on children's mental health has found parents' fear and anxiety impact children's mental wellbeing (Liang et al., 2021).

Caregivers may experience strange and unexpected events like the COVID-19 pandemic as frightening and challenging, leading to unpleasant feelings like anxiety (Dalton et al., 2020). As a result, when parents express more negative emotions, children and adolescents are more likely to be impacted and at higher risk of experiencing mental instability. Furthermore,

children are undergoing significant changes in their routine and social safety, which are expected to build resiliency during stressful times. Parents' concern with COVID-19's consequences may impair their capacity to identify and respond appropriately to their children's indications or distress. Children are highly conscious of their parent's feelings and emotions. Parents' confusing and unexpected behaviors are seen as a threat by children, which can cause anxiousness (Dalton et al., 2020).

The presence and accessibility of the primary caregiver are critical in establishing secure attachment. It has been proposed that the primary caregiver's contingent sensitivity and reflection of the child's emotions and the infants temperamental would lead to a fundamental basic emotion regulation strategy. As a result, an insecure attachment style in children increases the chance of failing to obtain proper emotion regulation abilities for managing stressful events (Esbjorn et al., 2012).

Recent research on the psychological influence of COVID19, people's attachment types regulated stress responsiveness, insecurely attached individuals had a lower ability to manage their emotions than secure persons (Moccia et al., 2020). Furthermore, empirical research has shown that positive parental involvement helps lower children's fear of a crisis (Pfefferbaum et al., 2015). Liang (2021) added that it could be assumed that, under the impact of the COVID19 pandemic, parents will experience various levels of negative emotions depending on their attachment style. Especially parents with secure attachments display the least negative emotions, and parents with insecure attachments show the most significant adverse feelings (Liang, 2021). Insecure attachment may increase brain susceptibility to depression significantly since attachment relations influence a person's perceptions and expectations about one another and their cognitive assessments of interpersonal situations (Lee & Hankin, 2009).

The COVID-19 pandemic has put an individual's physical and mental health and wellbeing at risk, including panic disorder, anxiety, and depression. According to a new study from China, anxiety and depression are the most frequently reported symptoms of the COVID-19 outbreak. The research linked the COVID-19 pandemic to behavioral issues, including greater clinging to caregivers and irritation, indicators of insecure attachment. (Qiu et al., 2020).

Even though younger children appear to be less susceptible to COVID-19 than adults, early indications from places affected by the pandemic in China show that children and teens have been psychologically disturbed, displaying problematic behaviors, as detailed below (Jiao et al., 2020). This research from China used a questionnaire that parents/caregivers filled out. All explored the fear of talking about pandemic and relatives' well-being, lousy sleep, nightmares, poor eating, bodily distress, anxiety, lack of concentration, clinginess, and separation. This study indicated that the younger population (3-6 years) were more prone than older children to develop symptoms such as emotional neediness and worry of illness spreading to close relatives. Lack of attention and restless questioning were more common in children aged 6 to 18. The most significant mental disorders shown by children of all ages were clenching, poor concentration, and irritation. Children living in highly epidemic regions have more excellent rates of stress, worry, and other emotional distress (Jiao et al., 2020).

Purpose Statement

Presently literature observing the effects of attachment style has not focused on global events, such as pandemics. As the world is dealing with an unprecedented pandemic, this capstone will review research on whether parents' secure bond with their children can support them to regulate their emotions while facing all the stresses caused by Covid-19 and reduce the chance of mental health challenges.

- How can caregivers and therapists support children to build resiliency when it comes to stressful events in life like the pandemic?
- How can families recover and heal from the negative impacts of pandemics based on attachment theory?
- Would parents who are insecurely attached to their children during the pandemic be able to reconnect with their children?

In chapter three, I will propose a workshop based on secure attachment and positive parenting to support parents with young children to raise children to be more resilient and learn how to self-regulate and co-regulate with their children.

Theoretical Framework

The literature reviews in this Capstone will be viewed through an attachment theory lens. Attachment is a lifespan developmental theory that explains how childhood relationship experiences affect our emotional and physical health not just in the early years but throughout our lives. These attachment events lead to the development of we and others and the expression of the four diverse attachment theories, which frequently contribute to regulating emotion in times of difficulty (Mallinckrodt et al., 1995).

Attachment theory believes our early relational encounters with primary caregivers lead to the formation of typical patterns of connecting to others, particularly in times of pain and stress, and how we learn to regulate emotions (Wallin, 2015).

Positionality Statement

My interest in attachment theory and positive parenting is two-fold: I am both a mother and a preschool teacher. As a preschool teacher with over twenty years of experience, I have observed many parenting styles. Watching children during drop-offs and pick-ups often

demonstrates why some children have a tough time saying goodbye. These children can often not regulate their nervous systems during stressful events. I have also noticed that some children tend to control their emotions more quickly and settle down, while others have more self-regulating challenges. I have also seen that the transition period highly impacts some children. Previously, confident children now have difficulty transitioning into social settings, being more anxious interacting with others. I speculate this could be because they are more isolated during the pandemic and have less physical, social, and emotional interactions with others.

I recognize that my background working with children and being a mother may influence my evaluation of the following material. Someone unfamiliar with this field may interpret the literature differently.

Significance of the Capstone

Bowlby (as cited in Meier et al., 2013) identified secure and insecure connections between the individual and primary caregiver, which predict the quality of people's social relationships during their lives. Experiential evidence has recommended that a child securely attached to their caregiver experiences the feeling of being loved and understood, which, in turn, could cause moderate psycho effective growth. However, a bonded child based on separation anxiety and insecurity tends to consider the world dangerous and unsafe. These children require protection, sympathy, and emotional support and, as a result, become more at risk when they face fears or threats (Meier et al., 2013).

Definition of Terms

Attachment Theory

“Attachment theory, credited to the work of John Bowlby, Mary Ainsworth, and Mary Main, amongst others, was seen as a significant addition to understanding human social behavior.

Drawing on concepts from ethology (the study of animal behavior), evolutionary biology, systems theory, and cognitive psychology, as well as his training in psychoanalytic object relations, Bowlby advanced a point of view that emphasized the influence of affectional relationships and experiences on personality development, whether healthy or pathological” (Sable, 2004, p. 3).

Attachment Style

Adaptation of a specific pattern of attachment experiences and subsequent dependence on a particular attachment-related technique of emotional regulation results in a systemic way of relational expectations, feelings, and behaviors (Mikulincer et al., 2003).

Secure Attachment

When upset or disappointed, seeks closeness and interaction with people with little or no hesitation or disappointment. When help isn't accessible, they will be able to comfort and calm themselves and fall back on auto-regulatory techniques (Fisher, 2014).

Co-regulation

Human beings are continuously neurobiologically influenced by one another in their early years and throughout their lives through body-based implicit and explicit interactions. It indicates that emotion and physiological reactivity are transmitted via words and nonverbal communication (Fisher, 2014).

Emotional Regulation

“the process of initiating, avoiding, inhibiting, maintaining, or modulating the occurrence, form, intensity, or duration of internal feeling states, emotion-related physiological, attentional processes, motivational states, and the behavioral concomitants of emotion in the services of

accomplishing affect related biological or social adaptation or achieving individual goals'' (Eisenberg & Spinrad, 2014, p. 338).

Positive Parenting

From infancy through adolescence, parenting requires encouraging a child's emotional, intellectual, physical, and social growth. Positive parenting means continuously loving, connecting, empowering, encouraging, and providing for a child's needs. The parent-child connection shall be maintained in an equally respectful manner. Positive parenting should begin at a young age, leading to various beneficial developmental outcomes (Johnson, 2020).

Attachment in Adulthood

The attachment styles of parents are connected to the way they parent their children and the quality of their connections with them; according to attachment researchers (Jones et al., 2014), Bowlby primarily studied attachment in children; however, he saw attachment as a lifelong pattern that influences people's ideas, feelings, and behaviors.

Covid-19 Pandemic

According to Liang et al. (2021), the coronavirus pandemic 2019 (COVID-19) spread quickly worldwide, forcing a global shutdown. Individuals have experienced significant mental stress because of the health crisis and social isolation. Attachment style could well be considered one of the important aspects influencing the emotional processing of parents and children in periods of stress, such as when faced with the challenge of COVID-19 (Liang et al., 2021).

Securely Attached Individuals

Secure attachment is the core of an individual's mental health and social adaptability, and it may be used as a versatile tool when needed. When faced with fear or danger, those with a secure

attachment type are more likely to manage their painful thoughts properly and have enthusiasm for addressing issues (Nielsen, 2017).

Resiliency

Resilience enables a person to adjust to shifting circumstances easily; it is a capacity to recognize new possibilities, adjust to limits, and recover quickly from various sorts of stressful events (Joanisse,2013).

Internal Working Models (IWMs)

“Cognitive and emotional representations of self and others that operate fairly automatically and unconsciously to monitor attachment-related experiences on an ongoing basis and that forms the basis of behaviors” (Pearlman & Courtois, 2005, p. 451).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed the aim of this capstone and its importance. I discussed the background to the research problem. I outlined the study's theoretical framework, identified important terminology and concepts, and provided the capstone structure. In the next chapter, I will discuss attachment theory and the importance of secure attachment in the child's mental health. I will also discuss how attachment styles and parent-child relationships can impact the way children regulate their nervous system and develop resiliency during stressful life events.

Chapter Two: Literature Review

Chapter one discussed the importance of attachment, how it impacts individuals throughout their lives, and how individuals may achieve secure attachment if they benefit from a secure attachment connection with an attachment figure. The psychological effect of parental rejection, neglect, and stressful life event like the pandemic was discussed. Then, I outlined the theoretical framework identified and defined the essential terms and concepts around attachment and resiliency during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In this chapter, I will begin by discussing the framework of attachment theory and its impact on children's ability to self-regulate and be resilient during stressful life events like pandemics. I will then review the literature on the ways insecure attachment affects children's mental and social well-being. Lastly, I will discuss a variety of clinical interventions that helps parent and children to securely bond and develop self-regulation skills or co-regulate with their caregivers.

Attachment Theory

Throughout evolutionary history, the survival of young children has depended on being protected by a caregiver from danger. Biological selection forces created an intrinsic system – the attachment system – that pushes vulnerable infants to obtain close physical and emotional contact, especially while upset, to ensure adequate security, improving their survival chances. (Bowlby, 1969, 1973, 1980).

Bowlby's Work

John Bowlby's research on attachment theory began when he was 21 years old and working in a home with children with behavioral issues. Bowlby's clinical experiences with these two boys whose moms' relationship with them was dysfunctional had a tremendous impact on

Bowlby. Then his research continued for ten years, looking into the histories of 44 adolescent thieves (Bowlby, 1944). This research solidified his belief that the disturbance of the parent-child relationship should be considered a crucial predictor of mental disease. Later, he investigated the relationships between mothers and their young children who had been hospitalized (Bowlby, 1951). Bowlby believed that it was crucial for mental health “that the infant and young children experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with their mother (or permanent mother-substitute)” (Bowlby, 1952, p. 11).

Bowlby (1969; 1973; 1980) defined attachment theory as healthy and psychopathological growth. Bowlby concluded attachment insecurity increases susceptibility to psychopathology, despite its origins as an adaptable set of mechanisms to deal with pain. Recent research has connected attachment components to various symptoms and forms of disorders, including depression, anxiety, eating disorders, and personality disorder, particularly borderline traits, congruent with Bowlby's beliefs (Davila & Levy, 2006).

Children with "good enough" responsiveness from their caregivers have less anxiety and avoidance and are considered to have stable attachment patterns (Fraley et al., 2015). A secure relationship allows the most adaptable reactions to changes and closeness to relatives. Children who do not have access to caretakers display either a high level of anxiety or rejection. Those who excel on the anxiety scale are often unable to moderate their attachment demands but prefer to be over-seeking or over-involved in pursuing connection or worry about losing the relationship. Those who are high in avoidance, on the other hand, have trouble locating their connection's demands since they learned to reduce their needs because their parents are usually not present (Fraley et al., 2015).

Connections between genetic, neurobiological, and environmental variables, as Bowlby conceptualized, result in the formation of neural networks responsible for the control of stress resilience, anxiety response, and identity formation. All three elements must also play a role in developing certain psychopathologies or even mental diseases (Wedekind et al., 2013). Secure attachment is an essential aspect of a child's emotional self-regulation. According to developmental psychology, the impression of possibly harmful events and situations in early life is based mainly on the emotional responses of the caregiver (Wedekind et al., 2013).

Bowlby combined ideas for this field to understand the affectionate connection between newborns and their parents and the long-term impacts of early attachment experiences on personality growth, interpersonal functioning, and psychopathology. He modeled psychology after behavioral systems; a theory was taken from ethology. He observed that attachment-related behavior in infant stages (e.g., clinging, crying, smiling, monitoring caregivers, and continuing to develop a priority for a few trustable caregivers or primary caregivers) is part of a functional biological process that makes it more likely to protect from threats and predation, solace during times of stress, and socialization (Davila, & Levy, 2006).

Later he supported the child's necessity for a secure bond with a parent. He believed that children who do not have a strong connection with their caregiver would exhibit symptoms of temporary deprivation (Bowlby, 1951). He categorizes these responses to separation from a caregiver into three categories: protest, despair, and detachment. Children protest when they feel threatened by separation from an attachment figure. They may cry, be angry or try to escape and look for their parent. Protest is usually followed by sadness, withdrawal from interaction, aggression towards another child or a beloved toy, and experience mourning the loss

of the caregiver (Bowlby, 1973). The final stage of detachment is characterized by a restoration to socialization that is complete.

Bowlby's attachment theory is based on biological considerations; smiling and vocalization by babies lead the parent to the child's desire to interact and draw them closer to the child. In addition to feeding, learning about the surroundings, social engagement, and safety, Bowlby highlighted the importance of attachment in creating safety through proximity to the caregiver (Farinha, 2018). When children are left alone or go exploring and realize that they are too far away from their caregiver, the fear system kicks in, activating the attachment system, which turns off the exploring mechanism. The fear system will be turned off, and the exploration system will be activated when the attachment figure becomes available and assures the child about their safety and security (Farinha, 2018).

Mary Ainsworth Work

Mary Ainsworth, who investigated the mother-child bond, contributed considerably to the attachment theory's development. Ainsworth believed attachment was generated by the (constant) availability of the attachment figure, but the stability of this connection was determined by the attachment figure's responsiveness (Rosmalen et al., 2016).

She realized that separating from the mother physically was not the most critical factor in interpreting the child's reaction to the Strange Situation. The strange situation (SS) is a 20-minute test that assesses and categorizes a child's connection to their caretaker. The child is usually separated from the caregiver for no longer than three minutes each time. According to Mary Ainsworth and her coworkers (Ainsworth et al., 1978), most children tried to seek their mother's proximity. They felt relief at the reunion, roughly 25% with minor signs of

"indifference" (anxious-avoidant attachment), and 15% of children expressed interest in proximity but not much sense of relief at the reunion.

As a result of the research, Ainsworth categorized attachment into three categories: secure, anxious-ambivalent, and anxious-avoidant (Rosmalen et al., 2016).

Ainsworth's Strange Situation Categories

Secure Attachment

Secure attachment was described as copying and representing the attachment figures by being available, accessible, and supportive. The insecure attachment used to be known as not looking for out the attachment discern when distressed or having challenges leaving the attachment figure, possibly due to having an unresponsive, rejecting, unpredictable, or insensitive care provider (Ainsworth & Bell, 1978). Children with secure attachment styles get upset as parents leave them and become happy when they return. Parents who raise a securely attached child tend to play more, and they respond to their children in a loving, responsive and sensitive manner. These children act less aggressively, have manageable behavior, and work more mature. As children grow up in a securely attached environment, they have a better sense of trust and stay longer in a long-term relationship. They also have higher self-esteem and are better able to seek support socially (Cherry, 2019).

Secure attachment means creating a feeling of being safe and secure, regulating emotions by relaxing stressful moments and staying calm, and providing a secure environment for the child to explore (Divecha, 2017). Attachment parenting which Ainsworth believed could be different from secure attachment, is based on seven (B's) elements according to Divecha (2017); birth bonding, breastfeeding, baby cries, babywearing, bedding close to the baby, balance, and beware of the baby trainer. She critiques attachment parenting, saying that while a mother could

breastfeed, she could do so in a less calm and nurturing manner. Meanwhile, she could feed her baby with a bottle, interactive and responsive, with a gentle and loving voice. In fact, what is essential is the way the mother is communicating with her baby and its quality (Divecha, 2017). Attachment means positively building a connection with an infant by being present and sensitive toward their emotional and physical needs (Kath et al., 2018). This research did not support the attachment parenting approach and found it unnecessary, extreme, and not the same as attachment theory. They critiqued the process by saying a mother could carry her baby all day, breastfeed and co-sleep, and not be sensitive or responsive to them, and as a result, they will bond insecurely (Kath et al., 2018).

Anxious-Ambivalent Attachment

Children who are ambivalently connected tend to be extraordinarily unsure about strangers. Therefore, they experience distress when separated from their caregivers, but they do not show any signs of comfort or assurance either when their parents return (Cherry 2019). Some children may even reject being comforted or show aggressive behavior toward the parent. As an adult, these individuals will grow up hesitant when becoming intimately close to others, offering a cold and distant relationship. These challenges will cause the connections to end more frequently (Cherry 2019).

Avoidant Attachment

Children with an avoidant attachment model will likely keep away from caretakers. This avoidance will frequently be reported after a parent's absence. These young people may not reject attention from a caregiver; however, they do not actively seek comfort from anybody else. Children with an avoidant attachment exhibit no desire between their primary caregiver and a

stranger. As a grown-up, those with this attachment style have difficulty showing any emotions, feelings, or thoughts with romantic partners (Cherry, 2019).

“Unavailability, hostility, and lack of fulfillment from caregivers can result in a feeling that relationships and intimacy are so difficult that we tend to stay on the sidelines... perhaps a major ‘disconnection’ from relationships as a source of comfort in life. We have learned that we meet our needs better ourselves. We have learned to dismiss others and live in an isolation bubble of self” (Poole Heller, 2012, p. 5).

Disorganized Attachment

Main's Work

Later, Mary Main introduced a fourth type known as disorganized attachment (Main & Solomon, 1990). Attachment studies focused on childhood trauma during the late 1970s and early 1980s, including physical and emotional abuse. Anxiety, fear, and disorientation were connected to abused children (Cicchetti & Barnett, 1991). Children with disorganized-insecure attachment type have no apparent attachment behavior. Their reaction and responses to their caregivers are usually a mix of reactions like resisting, avoiding, or seeming to be burdened or anxious when caregivers are present (Cherry, 2019).

Main and Hesse (1990) presented the first understanding of the relationship between unsettled and disorganized attachment, hypothesized that unsatisfied individuals might have children susceptible to dysfunctionality due to their parents' frightening behavior (Bahm et al., 2016). “When parents are overly fearful themselves, chaotic or terrifying, we may become so frightened and confused in relating. This describes a conflict between two major biological drives that occur when a child looks for a safe attachment figure and find instead a need to protect oneself through the survival instinct to dis-attach” (Poole Heller, 2012, p.5).

Internal Working Model

Attachment theory is about infants' first relationship with their caretakers. The child develops an inner working model of connections, influencing their ability to create strong relationships later in life (Bowlby, 1977). The challenges experienced by children in their earliest relationships can cause difficulties in their marriage, difficulties in bonding with their children, and personality confusion (Bowlby, 1977).

The "Internal Working Model" (IWM) is a mental image of self and others shaped by early attachment connections and carries forward and provides an internal framework used for dealing with stress, regulating emotions, and engaging in intimate friendships (Riggs & Riggs, 2011). IWMs are principles we internalize depending on our early interactions about what works regarding others, and they might be our life norms (Main, as cited in Johnson & Whiffen, 2003). The IWMs can impact people's emotions, beliefs, and behaviors, which can develop expectancies about the individual, significant persons, and the interaction between the two (Pietromonaco & Barret, 2000).

The Impact of Parents' Attachment Style on Their Children's Resiliency

Parental sensitivity supports the growth of children's brains; nevertheless, some caregivers may be unclear about establishing a solid relationship using sensitive attunement (Davis et al., 2017). The ability to develop secure connections like being loving, compassionate, and attentive may take a lot of practice for some parents (Davis et al., 2017). Parenting approaches such as parental sensitivity and supportiveness can enable children to figure out how to articulate and regulate emotions in healthy ways (Bocknek et al., 2009). Children who grow up with less attentive or present caregivers, on the other hand, tend to hide their intense emotions, which would not lead to a reduction in the stress response that comes with intense

emotions (Bocknek et al., 2009). Parents that are attentive and understand their children's feelings guide their children to communicate and deal with intense emotions, defined as emotional regulation (Bocknek et al., 2009).

Attachment and Emotional Regulation

Attachment style may be viewed as one of the significant factors linked to the affect regulation of parents and children during stressful situations. People with diverse attachment styles have various emotional responses to cope with unpleasant life events (Liang, 2021). Depending on an individual's attachment type, parents have different abilities to communicate, feel, and relate to their children's emotions (Liang, 2021). Parents with a secure attachment style may offer emotional guidance to their children and react to their varied emotions consistently in a more compassionate way, allowing children to modify their moving experiences and encourage emotional regulation growth. Parents with insecure attachment patterns, on the other hand, are less optimistic and helpful to their children's emotional regulation. Parents who have a dismissive attachment style have a limited capacity to show feelings and disengage if their interactions with their children are negatively influenced. As a result, their children use unhealthy and avoidant emotional management techniques to reduce the expression of their emotions to relate to their parents (Liang, 2021).

Attachment theory claims several statements regarding the effectiveness and preferred usage of various emotional regulation techniques (Mikulincer et al., 2007). Secure attachment is linked to the positive and effective use of antecedent-focused emotion regulation, mainly through cognitive strategies, resulting in low and steady emotional responses in challenging social contexts. On the other hand, insecure attachment is linked to issues with emotion regulation,

resulting in poor results in stressful social circumstances and a high level of emotional intensity that persists (Mikulincer et al., 2007).

Affect regulation is another primary subject in attachment and childhood development research. A mother's capacity to manage her own emotion in everyday life gives a model for affect regulation regarding parenting and bonding (Schoore 1994). Parent interaction in such situations influences children's prefrontal cortex, which is involved in self-awareness, concentration, emotional expression, and the neocortex, which is engaged in thinking, desire, and instincts (Siegel and Hartzell, 2003).

Effective affect regulation in both the parents and children is linked to relationship satisfaction and developmental outcomes. In contrast, unsuccessful emotional regulation is associated with various long-term negative consequences (Siegel and Hartzell, 2003).

The attachment connection allows for much more than only the growth of different skills; it also develops areas in the brain involved in emotional processing. A parent who creates the right environment supports brain development and underlies these critical interpersonal and social abilities (Joanisse, 2013).

Secure Attachment and its Impact on an Individual's Resiliency and Emotional Regulation

Children's self-esteem, self-confidence, social competence, and resilience have been associated with being securely attached (Sroufe et al., 2000). In other terms, caregivers who are continuously loving and attentive create a sense of security and safety in their children, which could help them gain a feeling of belonging and connection toward others (Pastorelli et al., 2016). The term "emotion regulation" includes the activities that help control stress levels. Readjusting one's attention and engaging in self-comforting actions have been demonstrated to lessen ongoing emotional distress in babies (Braungart et al., 2001). Insecure infants may either

overregulate (avoidant babies) or underregulate (resistant infants) their feelings during circumstances intended to initiate the attachment system. In contrast, secure infants appear to show the right level of emotion and recovery from a stressful event like a separation (Braungart et al., 2001).

More current findings focus on a child's resiliency and a child-mother connection, measuring each dimension in different situations. The results support that insecure child exhibit lower coping abilities (e.g., empathic sharing, social referring, exploratory speech patterns) than secure infants (Nachmias et al., 2001).

Psychological Effects of Insecure Attachment

When a child feels endangered, the parent cannot be emotionally attuned or provide a safe and protected space; the child can suffer from stress and anxiety. Given the lack of a recovery process with a caretaker, unhealthy relationships can result in poor self-regulation in children (Flores, 2013). For example, children have no opportunity to get any comfort from their parents in a stressful situation. In that case, their emotional stress response system will end up with early psychological and biological scars, which heightens the risk of accessing external physiological self-regulation (Flores, 2013).

Psychopathology, negative affect, narcissistic personality, emotional pain and anxiety, and other distress characteristics have all been connected to insecure attachment. Relational challenges, feelings of loneliness, and anger toward others were also observed in people with avoidance or anxiety attachment styles (Wei et al., 2005). Insecure attachment patterns have been linked to emotion dysregulation, low levels of self, poor self-worth (Roberts et al., 1996), inadequate coping mechanisms, dysfunctional perfectionism, poor social abilities, and limited self-awareness (Wei et al., 2005).

Some environmental loss or rejection from parents in childhood could also harm children's healthy upbringing, and "symptoms of anxiety, depression, or anger, therefore, are responses to these disruptions of personal bonds" (Sable, 2000, p. 56). A healthy attachment bond with a responsive and psychologically accessible parent gives children a secure foundation and encourages a healthy balance of exploration and emotional stability. The significance of a sense of safety in optimal child growth and mental health is well documented (Punamaki, 2017).

Attachment in Adulthood

Modern theorists believe that adults have the same attachment desires as children and that these needs are met in their adult relationships with their romantic partners, friends, or family members (Feeney, 1999). If any environmental failure- such as a parent being unpredictable, rejective, or inconsistent, occurs during childhood, it would influence the child's healthy development (Sable, 2000).

Bowlby believed that young people generalize the expectations received from the interactions with caregivers into the cognitive characterization of how responsive and available the caregivers are and their worthiness of love and support. These representations seem to affect cognition and behavior in attachment connections over time, even into adulthood (Elliot & Reis, 2003).

Even though there are different ways in which an adult individual's attachment style is measured and designed, there is agreement on two major types: avoidance and ambivalence. Highly avoidant individuals are considered uncomfortable with intimacy and try to hide their desires for close relationships. Anxiety/ambivalence is characterized by emotions of stress and insecurity about relationships. An excessively anxious/ambivalent individual often wishes for

emotional intimacy, but the fear of being rejected or abandoned stops them from developing romantic connections (Green et al., 2007).

A large amount of evidence shows attachment patterns change over time. It's still tricky to figure out how and why attachment styles evolve. Transitioning to parenting, experiencing trauma, marital conflict and cooperation, the meaning or construal of life situations, consistent risk factors, and therapy have all been connected to changes in attachment style in adulthood (Fraley, 2019).

Attachment During the Pandemic

Parents are a child's earliest social platform, teaching them many crucial things. One of the essential social principles is trustworthiness; newborns understand whether their caregiver will be present to meet their basic needs and react to their signals continuously (Erickson & Egeland, 2004). The "attachment system" can be triggered by stress, pain, disease, starvation, and distressing events in the environment; in addition to separation from a caregiver, even adults get activated when confronted with a threat (Rajkumar, 2020). The worldwide COVID-19 pandemic is a source of stress beyond the family relationship. Still, given the novelty and uncertainty surrounding this disease, many families are likely to see it as a severely stressful event. A new study suggests that caregivers' perceptions of COVID-19's influence are linked to more significant parental stress and, as a result, a higher probability of harsh parenting (Chung et al., 2020). The effects of the covid-19 pandemic on parenthood have been negative and positive. Some parents go through a mental breakdown, and their daily activities have been drastically altered, affecting how they interact with their children (Tinni, 2020). Research shows the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic may have caused distress for most families and, as a result, a greater likelihood of aggressive parenting (Chung et al., 2020).

Some caregivers found sitting at home doing nothing very challenging and expressed concern about their children's mental health due to the pandemic. On the other hand, some parents stated that they were happy to get quality family time with their children (Tinni, 2020). These families decided to set up a specific daily routine for their children. Even if they are stuck at home and can not participate in their everyday activities, they still have something to look for during the day (Coyne et al., 2021).

Also, the COVID-19 pandemic imposed various stressful restrictions on younger human's everyday life, such as canceling sports and activities, separation from friends, and increased anxiety about economic uncertainty and the risk of disease transmission, sickness, or deaths in friends and family (Coulombe & Yates, 2021). Positive ties with parents are a potent form of assistance as they navigate challenging life events such as trauma, sickness, and relationship disruptions. As a result, attachment security may help attenuate teenage adversity's harmful mental health effects by fostering coping mechanisms (Coulombe & Yates, 2021).

In addition, the pandemic has been profoundly influencing most individuals' mental well-being and society at large (Rajkumar, 2020). During the pandemic, children were isolated from their peers and had limited access to their outside activities, which put them in a challenging position socially and emotionally (Johnson, 2020). School and daycare closures led to anxiety, boredom, sadness, and worry in many youngsters, which may cause young children to express their stress by acting aggressively (Johnson, 2020).

The pandemic also has had psychological effects on children, and researchers don't yet know the long-term implications. To address these issues, strategies that will assist children and adolescents in coping with the pandemic's short- and long-term mental repercussions,

particularly those considered more susceptible in this group, are becoming increasingly important (O'Sullivan et al., 2021).

Attachment Interventions for Therapists

In today's mental health settings, knowledge of attachment theory is essential. A thorough awareness of a client's attachment styles leads to more effective treatment. For instance, a therapist who recognizes the client's attachment type, resiliency, and the risk associated with that attachment pattern, is more prepared to provide compassionate and appropriate interventions in therapy (Bettmann, 2006).

Attachment theory can reveal insight into how individuals react to stress and relational situations, which is helpful in the therapeutic setting. Understanding these features of clients' behavior is essential throughout the evaluation and case conceptualizing phases of therapy to design suitable interventions and predict possible therapeutic difficulties (Davila & Levy, 2006).

Mutual trust, hope, and acceptance are the foundation of a counseling relationship, which provides the necessary framework for helping a client with a history of insecure attachment styles. A therapeutic relationship provides a safe space for the client to be confident in exploring past traumas but instead repairing the unavoidable disruptions that may happen in the therapy session (Cortina, 2013).

Group Therapy

Attachment-focused group therapists are particularly concerned about creating a safe platform for establishing lasting, secure attachment, better internal working models of relationships, increased positive attributes, and trust. In terms of effectiveness, group therapy assists making and maintaining emotional contact between members of the group and the therapist, especially during emotional conflict, while sustaining emotional exposure and

vulnerability (Black, 2019). To achieve these goals, group facilitators use several techniques (Flores and pages, 2017), including psychoeducation, potential conflict, awareness, and relaxation techniques to decrease nervous system activation, provide a safe emotional environment for interpersonal exploration, assess early attachment interactions and internal working models, working with transference and countertransference, and trying to promote and practice mentalization. Furthermore, attachment-sensitive group therapist strives to foster procedures that allow individuals to examine their differences, constructively address their anger and conflict, and heal unavoidable relationship stresses and bursts. An attachment theory-informed facilitator would prioritize treatments that promote secure attachment, such as managing and restraining anger and tension, encouraging emotional co-regulation, and supporting increased mentalization within the group (Flores & Porges, 2017).

By encouraging the vocal communication of all thoughts and emotions (not just hostility) and lowering obstacles to emotional bonds among members of the group, the leader is seen as a maturational agent (Levine, 2017) instead of a source of insights. Using current analytic principles, these group therapists treated higher-functioning clients with "pockets" of preoedipal impairments and tensions. To strengthen personality development and aid in separating and explaining overlapping mental images of self and others, the modern analytic facilitator asks members to articulate their emotional experiences and overcome barriers to doing so (Black, 2019).

Somatic Interventions

Somatic Experiencing is a neuroscience, relationship-based strategy for trauma relief that recovers the autonomic nervous system's homeostasis (Carlton, 2009). Somatic Experiencing connects the inadequate physiological patterns which have been impaired during the stressful

event or its tendentious aftermath by tracking internal changes, restoring self-regulation, re-negotiating trauma within the nervous system, and deactivating the state of hyperarousal so common in traumatized peoples, and is based on the theory that humans, like animals, have an innate potential to repair and achieve adaptability. Somatic Experiencing uses bottom-up sequencing to aid the body in healing trauma by increasing awareness of natural human experiences. The nervous system gets pushed into dysregulation when the body responds to a severely stressful circumstance. Internal stress and emotions associated with the traumatic incident become trapped within the body, unable to be released, resulting in various traumatic stress (Carlton, 2009).

Children's neurological system is not fully formed when born; it is fundamentally shaped by their interaction with caregivers from 0 to 18 months (Schoore, 2002). Additionally, the right brain area is responsible for autonomic, involuntary stress management, and emotional regulation that is meant to develop during the first two years, implying that the child-parent interaction is critical. After delivery, the newborn instinctively engages in what Bowlby refers to as closeness-seeking behavior, in which the baby seeks emotional regulation from the caregiver (Bretherton, 2004). Therefore, the nervous system of infants can fully mature when their caregiver responds positively to the child's stimuli and secure attachment form as a result.

The fundamental mechanisms that contribute to the benefits of mindfulness meditation have been the subject of several research. The influence of the practice on the neurological system is one field of study that has recently gained a tremendous amount of attention. Mindful awareness is a mindset that seems to increase neuronal plasticity, meaning that meditation can genuinely alter brain structure (Siegel 2007).

Mindfulness and Meditation

"Paying attention in a certain way and on purpose to the present moment nonjudgmentally is called mindfulness" and has been more widely used in research and therapy programs (Kabat-Zinn, 1994, p. 4). Mindfulness can be seen as developing a secure attachment with yourself (Siegel, 2007, p. 180).

Mindful people are open and sensitive to their life's events, attempting to experience each moment without judging it (Carlton, 2009).

Mindfulness and a secure bond will help individuals to be more resilient. Anyone who uses mindfulness and has secure attachment will cope with the challenges by being present. Furthermore, when people have a secure connection, they build confidence to solve issues, develop empathy, and form positive social relationships. These are necessary for children to deal with the pandemic's challenges (Aini et al., 2021).

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy

Stressful life events in childhood can create a terrible memory that can last a lifetime. It's critical for clinicians like therapists, psychiatrists, and caregivers to notice the impact of trauma because it can lead to symptoms of depression later in life, whether in adolescence or adulthood (Arellano et al., 2014). Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is among the most well-understood and researched therapeutic techniques for children and adolescents who deal with depression, anxiety, or PTSD (Seligman & Ollendick, 2011). CBT focuses on addressing existing challenges, modifying complex cognition and behavior, and explaining how emotions, thoughts, and behavior patterns interact (Bru et al., 2013). CBT had first developed in the 1960s by Ellis and Beck, who employed the ABC model, which concentrated on how emotional outcomes are

influenced by a belief (Bru et al., 2013). Self-monitoring, cognitive organizing, relaxation techniques, and the pursuit of enjoyable activities established this model (Bru et al., 2013).

Acceptance Commitment Therapy

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) believes that the foundation of individuals' mental challenges is the complex relationships of consciousness, language, and life events that lead to a decreased ability to adjust or continue behaviors aligned with their values. ACT is a technique for increasing psychological flexibility, and it is defined as being fully engaged in the here and now (Swain, 2013). ACT has six core processes; acceptance, cognitive diffusion, being present, self as context, values, and committed action. These six phases are interrelated and develop upon one another. The purpose of ACT is to be mindful of and appreciate thoughts and emotions rather than changing them. Clients will find a way to deal with the anxiety of worrying thoughts and feelings (Hayes et al., 2006). ACT encourages clients to identify their values and act in a value-focused manner. Accepting worrying emotions and experiences that may develop throughout the process and the ability to defuse these thoughts and feelings are both supported (Swain, 2013).

Four research studies looked at mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) in anxious children and teens and concluded that it lowers uneasy sensations (Biegel, 2009). For example, the research found that MBSR may promote a more adaptable way of processing feelings and thoughts that underpin tension and behavioral and psychological challenges. Mindfulness practices are supposed to increase acceptance, conceptual understanding, and other skills that detach from emotional and intellectual experiences that cause distress and its consequences. In addition, the varied meditation activities can be thought of as possibilities for exposure and desensitization to internal experiences that are often ignored or suppressed, perhaps allowing a

more flexible approach to painful circumstances (Baer, 2007). Finally, Mindfulness meditation practices can help individuals establish a non - judgmental observational position to symptoms of anxiety and depression, which can be an effective cognitive-behavioral coping tool (Asmaee et al., 2012).

Emotional-Focused Therapy

When an attachment bond is solid and secure, it provides both a safe sanctuary and a secure foundation in stressful situations. On the other hand, attachment insecurity impairs these processes and limits the relationship's potential to provide emotional stability and good affect regulation (Wiebe & Johnson, 2017). Emotionally focused therapy (EFT) is an evidence-based therapy that attempts to assist individuals to strengthen their attachment ties to improve relational performance (Wiebe & Johnson, 2017). EFT sees feelings as a fundamentally flexible asset that empowers individuals to remember and help organize meaningful data provided by internal and external signals and aids individuals in making sense of themselves, those around them, and the world. This form of therapy effectively affects various clinical symptoms, including complicated trauma, depression, generalized anxiety, social anxiety, and families with young children who have eating disorders (Lopes et al., 2021). Emotion-focused therapists assist clients with their relational problems, concerns, or challenges by promoting emotional awareness, communication, contemplation, regulation, and change within an emotionally sensitive and transforming connection. Emotion-focused therapists focus on specific markers of emotional issues in sessions and provide sensory and gestalt-inspired tasks to assist clients in resolving them. Emotion-focused therapists focus on indicators of emotional regulation issues (features) in sessions and provide experiential and gestalt-inspired jobs to assist clients in fixing them (Lopes et al., 2021). An example of this might be the empty chair technique; an individual

will be asked to sit on a chair facing an empty chair and imagine someone is sitting there. The therapist will then guide the person to get engaged in the conversation with exaggerated expressions to be more aware of the attached emotions. This exercise assists the client in identifying their hidden feelings, expressing them openly and freely, and understanding relationships.

Attachment-based Family Therapy

Attachment-based family therapy (ABFT) is a brief, empirically established, emotion-focused experiential therapy that has been specially created and developed to restore attachment ruptures that have harmed trustworthiness in the parent-child relationship. The physiological, physical, and psychological need for deep and secure attachments is exploited in attachment-based family therapy. As a result, the therapy doesn't begin with problem-solving or behavioral management techniques. Instead, it attempts to identify what events like abuse or relational patterns like harsh criticism have harmed trustworthiness in relationships, like emotion-focused therapy (Diamond et al., 2016).

ABFT has a clear outline for therapists working with children and youth to develop a secure bond with their parents, which I detail in chapter 3. These steps include a relational reframe, alliance-building, an alliance with parents, an attachment task, and an autonomy-promoting task. ABFT emphasizes family characteristics such as parental rejections and criticism, poor parental affection, and child-parent conflict. This model aims to improve individuals' behavior and interpersonal communication (Diamond et al., 2016).

Parent and Child Therapy

PACT (Parent and Child Therapy) is attachment-based psychotherapy for children ages 4 to 12 who have emotional and social difficulties. It's for dysfunctional parent-child interactions

that haven't improved with systemic family treatment. PACT uses narrative approaches and sensory activities founded on the idea of supported looking to redefine parent-child connection conflict (Amos & Furber, 2007). PACT focuses on both the parent and the child's inner emotional experiences of the past events in their relationship and why that still affects how they connect in the present moment. A one-way screen provides parents' reflective ability and sensibility and creates the child's feelings of safety in her primary attachment relationship (Amos & Furber, 2007). PACT needs two qualified mental health professionals, one for a caregiver (typically the mother) and another for the child. This approach requires accessibility to a playroom with a one-way mirror and an observing area with good audio equipment. PACT's storytelling phase is usually short and can effectively bring certain families forward (Chambers, 2006). The interventions used in PACT are Parallel Parent-Child Narrative (PPCN), Preparation to Meet as If for the First Time, Looking Before Doing, and finally. They are looking After. Each of these four stages is now described (Chambers, 2006). In the first stage, PPCN intends to engage with the storyline parts from the parent and child's internal working models. The next step is when the clinician encourages the mother to recall and discuss her child's aspirations, desires, and worries. The origins of attachment occur due to 'becoming ready for the baby': prepared to learn, visualize, get ready to love, and explore. The goal of this stage is to draw the other's attention to the child. The therapist searches for any blame and tries to correct them (Chambers, 2006). The following step is considered a correcting process. The mother will be given a space to observe a method to understand and accept the actual child instead of the dream baby she created during her pregnancy. The final phase of 'looking after' can start when a mother sees the child instead of just the behavior, therefore minor misinterpretation or confusion. The

mother will be asked to join the play while the child is leading, responding, and following (Chambers, 2006).

Chapter Summary

In this chapter, I discussed that the attachment system is biologically based, which serves a survival role for the child and gets activated after the birth by the individual's relationship with the attachment figures (Brisch et al., 2012). Bowlby believes in the impact of the quality of the relationship between a parent's attachment style and the outcome of upbringing a child who could be defined as secure or insecure. He indicates that securely attached children have empathetic and responsive primary caregivers. On the other hand, insecure ambivalent, attached children deal with an inconsistent primary caregiver who sometimes meets the child's needs while ignoring their needs. Internalized problematic attachments in caregivers can create negative thoughts and feelings about self and others in children and create dysfunctional coping mechanisms (Grecucci et al., 2018). In addition, the caregiver's skill to tune into the child's needs affects attachment. For example, secure attachment develops when an attachment figure satisfies and responds to the child's needs, whereas insecure attachment develops when caregivers are unresponsive (Brisch et al., 2012).

When a child is in a distressing circumstance, the natural response of caregivers is to provide safety and express emphatic feelings. Parents may vary in caregiving-related reactions since they are not equally competent and driven to be effective parents. They may be unable to keep their children safe in some situations, or they may react with dysfunctional feelings. These differences can be linked to the mental description of self and others (Grecucci et al., 2018). The next chapter will discuss a workshop that discusses attachment theory and helps parents form secure bonds with their children.

Chapter Three: Summary, Recommendations, and Conclusion

Children with an insecure attachment style can experience several negative consequences, such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress disorder. In this paper, I focused on the parent-child relationship during a pandemic. I reviewed research that studied the impact of secure bonds on children's ability to develop self-control and resilience. In the literature review, I looked for evidence in recent findings that support a connection between securely attached children experiencing fewer mental health issues and being more resilient. In this capstone, I presented a theoretical background, described terms or phrases, and discussed recent studies on children's resiliency and mental health.

In the literature review, I reviewed attachment theory and how it can provide insight into how people react to stress and relationship problems. I discussed how understanding these aspects of a client's behavior is critical during therapy's evaluation and case conceptualization phases. Appropriate interventions can support caregivers who are insecurely attached to their children, which may have created mental health challenges for them during the pandemic.

In this chapter, I will summarize and use the material presented in the last two chapters to provide a workshop for therapists who work in this field and parents who have had some challenges with bonding securely with their children during this stressful time.

Recommendations

My purpose in writing this paper has been to create a workshop that would serve as a reference for therapists and caregivers. This workshop will provide clinicians with the knowledge to assist families with insecurely attached children battling mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and PTSD during a covid-19 pandemic. It will also offer resources for caregivers to support their children in mastering self-regulation, co-regulation, and resiliency.

I am proposing a workshop series of six sessions that will define and discuss key findings and material that assist parents in understanding attachment theory, attachment styles, resiliency, positive parenting tips, and how stressful events like the pandemic can impact how attachment forms. The workshop aims to raise the clinician's awareness of the attachment meaning, what an insecure and secure attachment looks like, and how it affects children's mental health and capacity to learn self-regulation. Hopefully, caregivers will leave with a better understanding of the principles and, as a result, will be prepared to support their children.

Outline of the Sessions

Before beginning the workshop's material, the facilitator will be given the attendees brief professional background information. These include educational background and the rationale for holding the session. In addition, participants will be encouraged to introduce themselves, mentions how many children they have and their age, and describe what motivated them to join the workshop. Participants can pass if they do not wish to share during the program because they may not feel safe and trustworthy in the surroundings. Then the facilitator will share the workshop's learning goals and explain the possible physical and emotional effects of some of the contents on individuals and how individuals can ground themselves or take a moment to reflect. The workshop then starts with psychoeducation around attachment and its impacts on individuals' parenting and mental health. The idea is that through psychoeducation, people learn about attachment styles, self-regulation, and attachment parenting, and as a result, parenting feels less shameful and stressful. This section will outline the various topics discussed throughout the sessions. The workshop will have an age requirement of 18 years old and a total number of individuals of approximately 20. Each session will last around 90 minutes, with a 10- to 15-minute break in the middle. Each unit is presented in detail, with key findings

and how the material would be delivered in the workshop, what the information means in broad terms, and why clinicians and parents should be familiar with them. The sessions will review the attachment theory, styles, psychological impacts of the pandemic on child-parent relationships, and the ways parents can promote resiliency in their children. Furthermore, individuals will be provided tools to take away to help them navigate their feelings. The workshop will encourage participants to share any emotions or thoughts and create a safe and non-judgemental space to establish a therapeutic environment and engage people more with the materials. In the end, caregivers will be provided a handout with a summary of parenting tips to take home.

Session One: Attachment

Attachment theory would be the first subject to discuss in the workshop. This will involve looking into the origins of attachment theory, how the concept has changed over time, the various attachment types that exist, and how they impact individuals' relationships. The workshop in this session focuses on providing general information primarily to caregivers/parents. Learning where attachment theory originated is the first and most crucial step starting with Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth's work by explaining how they collaborated to extend Bowlby's idea with the Strange Experiment. Participants would watch a clip of the "Strange Situation" study and observe a secure and insecure relationship between a mom and her child. After the video, the participants will be asked to discuss what they saw and share how they feel about the caregiver-child interaction they had witnessed. After that, the different kinds of attachments will be explored, including how attachment has been formed and shows up in everyday life in their relationships.

As I discussed in chapter two, insecure attachment could affect children, so parents must be aware of their children's attachment type. An anxious attachment type children may become

highly dependent on the caregiver due to a fear of abandonment. On the other hand, children with avoidant attachment styles tend to be resistant, and they can be helped by reflecting on their feelings or experiences. Caregivers should be cautious while interacting with children who have avoidant attachment since they may disconnect or skip from the situation. As previously established, the disorganized attachment type is the last insecure attachment style introduced by Main. Children and caregivers with disorganized attachment types appear to be lost and unpredictable. The workshop will provide information on how parents can relate to their children and meet them where they would be with their varied needs. A facilitator should be aware of some individuals being triggered hearing some of these terms or feel guilty, shame, or blamed and introduce some grounding exercises when needed.

Session Two: Attachment-Based Family Parenting

The benefits of therapy and how to find a clinician will be discussed at the beginning of this session. Individuals can openly explore how they feel about seeing a clinician to address their challenges due to insecure attachment in therapy. In chapter two, numerous therapeutic approaches were reviewed with the hope of being useful for parents and children who may have attachment difficulties and clinicians who are supporting families.

The facilitator will introduce attachment-based family therapy (ABFT) in this part and will explain how parents who are sensitive, responsive, and protective will raise children with a sense of trust and worthiness. These children internalize these interpersonal assumptions as internal working models, which will be the base for their future relationships and help them learn how to regulate their feelings due to these trusting interactions. The presenter will then introduce ABFT and its techniques: relational reframing, promoting attachment repair, focusing on core emotions, and unfulfilled attachment needs. The first technique is the relational reframe, which

assists the parent to turn their attention away from their child 's attachment challenges and strengthen the parent-child bond. An example of relational reframing would be whether their children can go to them for support, advice, and protection when under stress or emotional pain? If they don't, why would that be? People are welcome to share or pass if they are not comfortable sharing.

The goal of this session would be to teach caregivers how to establish an empathic atmosphere to help children constructively process their emotions. Parents will learn that children who frequently exhibit distress and show dysfunctional feelings like guilt and shame are usually a result of dismissing or critical environment. Parents will be encouraged to implement validation and open-ended questioning to assist their children in digesting their emotional experiences more fully. The presenter will model how to reflect, empathize, and validate what children are experiencing by providing examples: It must have been hard to hear that; I would feel hurt too. Parents respond to the child's experience by validation, connection, and empathetic (warmth offering and accepting) manner, forming a secure bond. The facilitator introduced strategies on how to focus on children's primary adaptive vulnerable feelings by saying, "I can see you are getting emotional; that must have been hurtful to hear," and acknowledging children's attachment and personality needs like "You wanted to feel like your friends care about you" or by saying "It sounds like your friend doesn't believe in you as well as you'd like them to believe in you."

Then, the presenter will give time to parents to ask any specific questions they may have and provide some tips on how to approach those situations.

Session Three: The Impact of a Pandemic on the Child-Parent Relationship

In this session, parents will be introduced to how the pandemic impacted the way they parent their children and the factors involved. Depending on parents' socioeconomic situation and the social support families have, they may face various levels of COVID-19 effects. Research has shown that low-income parents are more likely to experience stress due to their income and living conditions than families from the middle class with higher income (Ladwig et al., 2001). Families of various cultural backgrounds may respond differently to distress and connect with their children. Stress, anxiety, sickness, malnutrition, and stressful situations like the pandemic can trigger attachment. Children are at risk of mental effects, and scientists are unsure of the long-term consequences. As part of the ABFT approach, the facilitator will bring parents' attention to their ongoing life stressors, such as romantic relationships, jobs, mental health challenges, etc. The presenter expresses understanding and compassion for these difficulties, as well as assists them in recognizing how these pressures may influence their parenting methods. Participants will learn various approaches to help children cope with the pandemic's short- and long-term cognitive effects. The attendees will also be given a list of activities that support creating a deep connection between children and their caregivers. For example, caregivers will be introduced to labeling characters' emotions in books and Tv shows, practice validations, and label children's feelings. They will also be given an emotion wheel tool to practice labeling feelings and complex emotions. The workshop will next go to the impact of the pandemic on child-parent relationships. Caregivers will learn the importance of their secure bond with their children and their critical role in their lives (O'Sullivan et al., 2021).

Session Four: Mental Health and Insecure Attachment

The third session's goal will be to talk about children's psychosocial development and how attachment influences their growth. Stressful life events like the pandemic may affect a child's healthy psychological development and create anxiety, depression, or anger (Sable, p. 56, 2000). A strong connection and attachment foundation with a sensitive and emotionally available caregiver enables children to balance curiosity and emotional regulation. Feeling safe has always been acknowledged in how children's mental health develops (Punamaki, 2017).

In this session, the workshop will explain how having a good enough responsive caregiver could create less anxiety and resistance; therefore, children's attachment style could form a secure bond which is very important to developing self-regulation. The impression of potentially stressful events and situations in earlier life stages is mainly based on how caregivers react emotionally. The discussion then will move on to parents' mental well-being and how it affects their children's social-emotional growth. The attendees will be introduced to activities that support social-emotional development. As Attachment-Based parenting points out, active listening helps the caregiver reflect on the child about what they are trying to say, do, and, most crucially, feel. Parents can often sense that their children are upset, but they may fail to acknowledge, comprehend, or accept the emotions beneath it. These underlying emotions could be disappointment, irritation, grief, or fear. When parents listen to their children with a sense of empathy and validation, they assist their child in de-escalating the situation and remaining calm to solve the problem.

Since this session could trigger some, the individuals will be suggested participating in a stress-relieving exercise. This exercise is a basic anchoring approach that requires participants to

identify numerous objects around them to draw their awareness back to the present; for example, things they see, smell, hear, and so on).

Session Five: Self-Regulation /Co-Regulation/Resiliency/ Mindfulness

Children can co-regulate if a parent can regulate and respond to the event mindfully, calm and relaxed. This session's goal would be to teach parents techniques for staying calm and grounded in stressful circumstances, specifically the pandemic. Secure attachment bonds foster the growth of adaptable self-regulatory skills in children, allowing them to manage their discomfort successfully and manage their pain. Children's trust in their parents' capabilities to provide emotional support provides them with a toolkit of efficient ability to cope in high-stress situations when separated from their caregivers (Compas et al., 2017). Research has provided strong evidence that a secure attachment reinforces resilience in various ways, from better physical health to coping skills, and lowers the risk of depression and PTSD (Wiebe & Johnson, 2017).

Participants will be encouraged to identify strategies that help them regulate their emotions and feel safe, such as exercise, journaling, and expressive arts such as dance and painting. Individuals will then be recommended to take some time to think of a suitable activity that works for them while being reminded that not all grounding exercises work for everyone. The workshop will also review various techniques such as box breathing, body scanning, and mindfulness practices to equip parents to cope with their daily life stressors to support their children in staying grounded and being psychologically flexible. This session will end with guided body scanning, and they will be asked to provide some feedback if they see themselves trying this approach during a challenging time with their children.

Session Six: Positive Parenting Based on Attachment During the Pandemic

Positive parenting is the process of guiding children's emotional, mental, physical, and interpersonal growth. Positive parenting includes continually loving, interacting, inspiring, leading, and meeting children's needs. A respectful interaction between parents and children needs to be maintained. Positive parenting promotes loving, healthy family relationships and guides children by praising and nurturing their positive actions (Tinni, 2020). For attachment to keep, three main factors should be present. Children must believe that they can reach out to their parents at any time. They should be able to have conversations honestly without fear of being rejected or judged. Children must also believe that their parents can keep them emotionally, physically, and psychologically safe. Empathy is among the most crucial skill that a parent can use to help their child flourish. It enables them to comprehend their emotional life, identify whatever they're feeling and thinking, and assist them in becoming mindful of their emotional being. Empathy and validation create trust in the relationship, and children feel about being heard and understood.

Parents who make time for their children and give them complete and undivided attention allow their children to open up and share their thoughts and emotions. Also, when parents spend quality time with their children and those little moments turn into a way of being, it speaks so much to the child that they are worthy, interesting, valuable, and essential. These slight pauses and attention communicate extensively, even if caregivers are incredibly busy with their job and housework (Coyne et al., 2021). In addition, parents who plan their day based on their children's physical, emotional, and psychological needs find it easier to connect and support them. Parents who are sensitive to their children's needs create a consistent routine around

eating, exercising, studying, and spending time together, which helps their children to be able to predict their day and feel safe.

Parental sensitivity refers to a parental ability to respond intuitively to their children's cues (Wolff & IJzendoorn, 1997). Attachment theory's concentration on how to parent sensitively is based on studies on infants (Ainsworth et al., 1978). However, caregivers need to be mindful of their children's needs throughout childhood and guide them in processing their emotions and thought processes (Patterson, 1982). At this time, the facilitator will introduce the Video feedback Intervention to promote Positive Parenting and Sensitive Discipline (VIPP-SD) attempts to improve parenting sensitivity along with sensitive disciplining, that is, parents' ability to anticipate the child's viewpoint and indications when discipline is needed which is an essential aspect of parental sensitivity. When children are irritated or upset, the sensitive response entails using more appropriate and child-oriented, introducing compassion to the young person (Lieberman, 2004). Parents should be encouraged to practice kindness and pay undivided attention to their children's daily tasks to show their sense of presence. This can begin small and manageable, like making breakfast, showering, exercising, preparing food, and cleaning the house and their children (Coyne et al., 2021).

In addition, if parents are expected to be sensitive and increase their capacity to support their children throughout all the challenges during difficult times like the pandemic, they must get educated on how to care for themselves. Clinicians will also require different strategies for handling their stress and buffering against the impacts of exhaustion in serving other people (Coyne et al., 2021). The World Health Organization defines self-care as taking action to protect or enhance one's health, particularly during stress. "The ability of individuals, families, and communities to promote health, prevent disease, maintain health, and cope with illness and

disability with or without the support of a healthcare provider” (Organization & Asia, 2014, p.15).

Parents benefit from knowing that when they are under stress, the existence of powerful long-term motivators can help them move forward in a more adaptable way. Values have the power to change how individuals deal with stressful life events. When people have trouble in their lives, they will be more motivated and capable of overcoming the problems they face meaningfully and based on what is important to them (Coyne et al., 2021). Consider taking a moment and imagining how they may spend their energy during the challenging time with their children or focus on something significant and valuable.

The Workshop's Ethics and Guidelines

Confidentiality must be introduced at the first session since many individuals will disclose personal information. In addition, participants must be safe and protected in a non-judgmental setting. They will be reminded to be mindful of others and avoid interrupting when they share. Members will also be expected to be kind and sensitive to others' diverse cultural backgrounds. The workshop has been designed to be face-to-face, and if the circumstances change, it will be held online along with guidelines like secure passwords and links.

Questions and Feedback

Respondents will ask questions and leave comments at the end of the workshop to improve future sessions. It will be fascinating to see which exercises they found most beneficial and whether they would like to know more about other approaches. Participants will also have the opportunity of a follow-up session to see how they are progressing overall.

Limitations to this Capstone

This section highlights the limitations that exist within the research on insecure attachment in children and its impact on resiliency and mental health difficulties. I consider myself a limitation to this research paper as I probably have a lot of assumptions and biases regarding attachment and parenting. As I mentioned before in chapter 1, having an experience working with children along with their families and being a mother may have affected my judgment in reviewing materials. Another limitation would be a lack of research on how distress impacts how individuals support their children to regulate their emotions during the pandemic. The goal of this capstone was to focus on younger children that have insecure attachment styles as a result of the pandemic, which could lead to anxiety, depression, and PTSD. More research on insecure attachment, resiliency, and psychological issues is needed. Furthermore, future research could include younger children from various cultures, ethnicities, socioeconomic classes, and genders.

This capstone divided the literature into three categories: insecure attachment during the pandemic, mental health challenges, and resiliency. According to studies, each component influences the other, and more research into the intersectionality of these concepts will significantly benefit the area of study.

Summary

I used the literature reviewed in chapters one and two in this chapter and created a workshop. This workshop has been designed to help parents and caregivers who need to learn about attachment and positive parenting. The workshop provides information about the challenges caused by the pandemic and the ways parents can reconnect and bond with their children securely and positively.

Conclusion

The capstone project looked at attachment theory and how it may be helpful to individuals in understanding how they respond to distress and relationship troubles based on their attachment type. I discussed how important it is for therapists to recognize specific client attachment style characteristics in therapy to choose the most effective interventions for those struggling with an insecure attachment that contributed to psychological problems during the pandemic.

This capstone's goal was to develop and deliver a parenting workshop based on attachment theory. Caregivers raising and supporting young children were the target group for this capstone project. Another goal was to provide parents with tools to help them regulate their emotions. This capstone can also assist parents in understanding more about attachment theory and how Parent-child interactions play a vital role in children's socio-emotional abilities, externalizing behaviors, emotional regulation, and mental function. Also, it emphasizes the importance of establishing and maintaining a stable parent-child emotional connection is valuable in every aspect of a child's growth and continues to carry on into the child's relationships as an adult.

Lastly, the workshop detailed in chapter three is intended to help participants comprehend the impact of the pandemic on parents and their young children. I hope that the sessions will provide supporting tools for both caregivers and clinicians, building a healthy attachment. In addition, I hope that the workshop introduces different approaches to self-regulation and resiliency during stressful times, allowing them to progress their healing from trauma. The workshop intends to provide a safe and supportive space where people affected by the pandemic feel supported and heard.

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