

Infant Mental Health and Attachment



Encouraging education around Infant Mental Health is crucial in ensuring a child develops into a thriving toddler, teen, and young adult. Because a tremendous amount of learning and developing happens in the early years of a child's life, trauma at this stage can affect their future well-being.

So how can we combat this?

Infant Attachment Styles



The chart below explains four different attachment styles an infant may have, what happened to cause this attachment style, and the behavior that manifests as a result. The goal is to provide interventions so that every child, no matter what they have been through, can eventually learn to develop a **secure attachment**.

ATTACHMENT STYLE	HISTORY WITH CAREGIVER	INFANT'S STRATEGY WHEN UPSET
Secure	Caregiver consistently responds when infant is upset, provides instrumental AND nurturing care	Cry; infant knows that caregiver will soothe, uses voice to get needs met
Anxious- Avoidant	Caregiver does not respond when infant is upset	Infant has learned not to cry to get needs met, self-soothes using objects rather than relationships
Anxious- Ambivalent	Caregiver inconsistently responds when infant is upset	Infant cries (and is difficult to soothe) in an effort to stay in caregiver's direct attention
Disorganized	Caregiving is frightening/traumatic	Infant had no clear strategy when upset



Infant Interventions that can promote a secure attachment include:

- Taking time to regulate yourself
- Connect with your child
- Notice the need
- Develop age appropriate attachment rituals
- Prepare for transitions

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