



**The School Years**

## Source of Change

- Little bio-neurological change
- Massive social-cultural input
- People & contexts drive development between 6 years & puberty.

## Opportunity for Integration

1. Physical safety (low anxiety)
2. Concrete mental operations
3. Not yet sexual

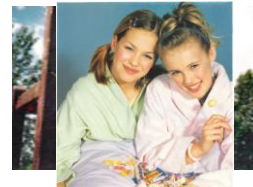
## Life outside of home

- 5-7 shift
- Importance of non-familial figures
- Privacy of the mind

## Attachment: Protective Relationships

## Peer Attachments

1. Best friend
  - a. Symmetrical
  - b. Non-reciprocal
2. Peer group
  - a. Inclusion vs. rejection
  - b. Leadership vs. popularity
  - c. Coordination with best friend



## Parental Attachment

1. Less need for physical contact
2. More reliance on joint plans
3. Need for support in self-development
4. Return to parents for safety & comfort

## Attachment: Information Processing

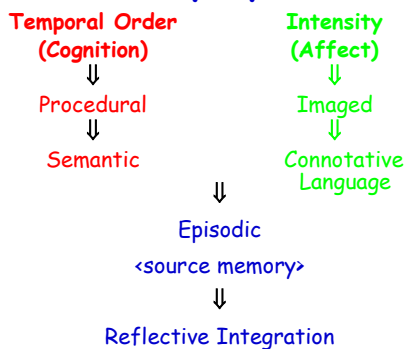
## Maturation & New Possibilities

- a. Personal semantic memory
- b. Connotative language
- c. Source memory
- d. Appearance/reality: secrets
- e. Concrete reflective functioning

## Semantic Memory

- Gather information
- Conditional contingencies
- Draw generalized conclusions
  - Type B: realistic, including negative
  - Type A: idealized other, negative self
  - Type C: blaming, confusing

## Memory Systems



## Source Memory

- A type of episodic memory
- The episode of how you got this information
  - Self now
  - AF now
  - Self past
  - AF past
  - Book, movie, etc.
- Essential to evaluate validity of information

## Privacy of the mind

- Daydreams & private thoughts
- Secrets
- Deception: false cognition

## Reflective Functioning

- Concrete instances
- Focus on self

## Why did I do that?

- The importance of mixed dispositions
- Discrepancy → Opportunity to think/reflect

## Explaining One's Behavior

**Why did you do that when you knew you weren't supposed to?!!**

## Because I felt like it!

- Type B: Parents accept imperfection.
- Type A: Parents require right answers.
- Type C: Parents can be fooled; children learn to deceive others & themselves.



## Integration

- Dual inputs: Cognition & affect
- Compare, contrast
- Correct error
- Construct best representation of when & where there might be danger
- Organize best predicted behavioral response
- The danger of integration

## Transformations of Information

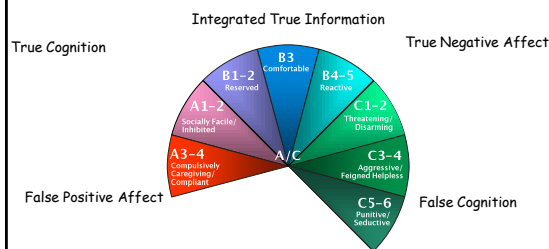
- True
- Erroneous
- Omitted
- Distorted
- Falsified
- Denied
- Delusion

The only information that we have is information about the past

whereas

The only information that we need is information about the future.

## DMM Self-Protective Strategies in the School Years



## Dispositional Representations

- Organize behavior
- Protection of self & progeny has priority
- Multiple representations that vary in
  - Completeness of processing
  - Speed of processing
  - Type(s) of transformation
- May be accurately predictive or in error
- More complex and versatile than IWM

## Information and Representation

1. All information is sensory stimulation represented as neuronal excitation.
2. Sensory stimuli have no inherent meaning.
3. Both past neuronal patterns & current self-state patterns are activated, in an interaction of self and experience.
4. Neuronal representation is:
  - a. Not veridical;
  - b. Not ever repeated identically;
  - c. Always currently self-relevant;
  - d. Creates disposition for future action;
  - e. Multiple neuronal pathways create multiple dispositional representations.
5. Attributions may be inaccurate.

## Attachment: Self-protective Strategies

## Strategies

- Develop the C5-6 strategy
- Recognize others' strategies
- Use new strategies in the right context

## C5-6

- Strategy of power & vulnerability
- Punitively obsessed with revenge
- Seductively obsessed with rescue
- Bribe and threaten

## C5-6

- Deceptive: both to self and others
- Blaming of others, innocent self
- Dismissing of others' perspectives
- Cold response to others' feelings
- Seductive use of others' desires & hopes

## Distortions

1. Compulsive: Compelled to do something, i.e., based on predicted temporal order.
2. Obsessive: Obsessed with a relationship, i.e., based on feeling states.

## Precision of Fit vs. Range of Variation





## Adaptiveness

- Using the right strategy for the immediate context
- A strategy for home and another for school, etc.

## Assessment:

## School-age Assessment of Attachment (SAA)

## Empirical Evidence

Analyses of Australian SAA data indicate that the SAA:

- Differentiates between clinical & non-clinical children.
- "Misclassifications" identified treated and stressed children.
- Children in the high subscript patterns had more dangers.
- Clinical children had high subscripts and U's or modifiers.

## Empirical Evidence, cont

Analyses of Australian SAA data indicate that the SAA:

- Parents of clinical children had psychiatric diagnoses.
- Low SES and professional mothers have more clinical children than middle income mothers.
- Sibs of clinical children needed treatment also.
- More parents in clinical families were separated.

Crittenden, P. M., Kozłowska, K., & Landini, L. (2010). Assessing attachment in school-age children. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 14*, 185-208.

## Empirical Evidence, cont

Analyses of American SAA data indicate that the SAA:

- Differentiated children of mothers who were sexually abusers as children from children of SES matched mothers who were not sexually abused.
- Children of sexually abused mothers used more extreme strategies

Kwako, L. E., Noll, J. G., Putnam, F. W., & Trickett, P. K. (2010). Childhood sexual abuse and attachment: An intergenerational perspective. *Clinical Child Psychology and Psychiatry, 15*, 407-422

## [ina]s

Occur when person faces incompatible required responses: seek an adult & avoid strangers; stay home & leave home.

1. Foster children & risk adoptions
2. Oppositional defiant disorder & ADHD
3. Psychoses

## [ina] or Type C ?

### [ina]

1. A+ strategy
2. Shame for what was done
3. Avoid neg. attention
4. Out of control, not able to stop or explain
5. Not disarming (shame, expect punishment)
6. Factual

### Type C

1. C Strategy
2. Blame others (or proud) of what was done
3. Seek attention
4. Regulated affect at high level
5. Disarming expectation of forgiveness
6. Nonverbal/affective

## End of the School Years

1. Personal reflection on reasons for behavior  
(Concrete logical thought about causal relations)
2. Best friend attachment relationship
3. Conscious awareness of the possible inaccuracy of information

## Appearance/Reality Issue Type A

- The child's A+ strategy functions to elicit parents' attention, reduce anger, hide evidence of the child's distress.
- The parents are pleased and there is little or no evidence of problems - other than discrepant positive affect and behavior.
- It is too good to be true.

## Appearance/Reality Issue Type C

- The child's behavior is outrageous; he/she clearly has a problem.
- The parents are low-middling (not extreme) in sensitivity and concerned. The strategy functions to make them more responsive.
- The only evidence of trouble tied to the parent is the discrepancy between child & parent.

## Intervention in the school years is difficult because:

1. Patterns are implicit (procedural & imaged);
2. Patterns are self-maintaining (e.g., teachers);
3. Children select niches among peers;
4. Context is rarely under control.

## Getting Started

1. Is there danger? (Remove it!)
2. What if you can't?
3. Is the child's behavior adaptive, given the danger?
4. Are the child's DR's integrated? (Does he know what he does & why?)
5. Does the child's behavior fit his parents'?
6. Do you need a full assessment of DR's, strategies, relationships, & danger?

## Principle

Every child with problems has had to distort his or her development to meet the needs of adults.

Intervention must enable the child to find his or her own perspective.

## Treatment

- Brain may never be entirely fixed or rigid, but potential for change varies across time, neural structure, and function.
- Focus treatment on emerging maturation because it is the most plastic.
- That means that plasticity moves forward from peripheral/somatic toward cortical.
- In school years, that is linguistic representation and concrete integration.

## Goals of Intervention

1. Teach new strategies in protected environment;
2. Teach context-specificity of strategies;
3. Teach child to tell the full story - without omissions, distortions, or intrusions.
4. Teach the reflective process, with concrete logic.

## Some Guidelines

1. Don't take strategies away (make explicit)
2. Add context-specific strategies (explicitly)
3. Talk explicitly about what happens.
4. Attend to (somatic) images and their meaning.
5. Never force or impose strategy reversal. (It increases the danger for the child.)

## Some Guidelines, con't

6. Knowing how the child's strategy functions, be careful not to augment it!
7. Use different approaches for Types A & C.
  - a. A's need to express acceptable negative affect safely.
  - b. Parents of C's need to respond to subtle change before exaggerated affect is needed.
8. If you can't change the context, have limited goals for intervention.

## Final thoughts

1. Be prepared to listen more than talk.
2. Be prepared to hear, really hear, the child.
3. Engage uniquely, offering only what you can give.
4. Assume parents' good intentions.
5. Don't rescue the child from the parents!