

Reflective Worksheet – Attachment Theory

Having attended the training module on attachment theory, you now have the opportunity to try to make some attachment observations during your shadow shift/induction process/

This doesn't mean that you should be walking around the home with a clipboard, but instead, familiarise yourself with the questions below (or refer back to them while on shift) and try to notice responses the children and young people give to staff. This is an interesting way to put theory into practice when thinking about different attachment styles. Learning to observe even the smallest interactions between child and adult can be very helpful to form strategies for positive engagement.

1. List 3 responses (behaviours) that you observed from a child over the shift that resulted in them gaining closer staff attention (this may include things like asking a direct question or starting a conversation)

Observed response (behaviour from child)	Was it successful? (Did staff give closer attention following the behaviour?)	Was it a positive way to get closer attention from staff?

2. List any behaviours that you observed from a child/children over the shift that resulted in staff removing themselves from them or giving less attention.

Observed response (behaviour from child)	Was it successful? (Did staff remove attention following the behaviour?)	Was it a positive way to get less attention from staff?

We don't 'diagnose' attachment styles for children because they can change and adapt their styles to suit how best to get their need met. However, having a general idea of what set of strategies a child tends to use to get their needs met can be useful.

From your earlier observations and with the aid of the following lists (tick any responses you observe), have a thought about which attachment style you may have seen in action! This is simply to get your reflective thinking going and your curiosity as to why the children respond in the way they do.

Avoidant-type behaviours

Child sits apart from carers not seeking comfort

Child response (behaviour)	Tick if observed (✓+ if observed more than once)
Child sits apart from carers	
Child actively avoids contact from carers	
Child shows little or no preference between known carers and you	
Child gets frustrated but doesn't ask for help	
Child covers ears or shouts to avoid what is being said	

Ambivalent-type behaviours

Child response (behaviour)	Tick if observed (✓+ if observed more than once)
Child is wary of you as new staff	
Child becomes agitated or distressed when known carer leaves the room	
Child may show clingy behaviours towards known staff but they don't quickly settle with that closeness	
Child may ask for things, then abandon them	

Disorganised-type behaviours

Child response (behaviour)	Tick if observed (✓+ if observed more than once)
Child shows mixture of avoidant or aggressive behaviour while close to known staff	
Child shows a complete inability to self-regulate emotion	
Child may appear dazed or confused when staff interact with them	
Child gets quickly angry at known carers	

Final reflective thoughts

This box is simply for you to jot down what you feel you were observing along with any other observations – on how the interactions made you feel for example. This is an important step to understanding how you may respond to a child's interaction with you. Also, you may want to comment on discussions you have had with staff to support better understanding of the child you have observed today. Remember to maintain confidentiality around the identity of anybody in this worksheet.

Manager comment / reflection

Signed (Staff) _____ Date:

Signed (Manager) _____ Date: