

Delivering specialist challenging
behaviour services in the
community: the use of attachment
theory and Mahler's theory of
psychological birth to promote the
use of relational security in a
single person service

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Aims of presentation

- Attachment Theory
- Mahler's Theory of Psychological Birth
- Application of Theory to Practice in a Single Person Service
- Challenges using this approach
- The benefits of using this approach

Attachment Theory

- John Bowlby (1907-1990)
 - "A relationship that develops between two or more organisms as their behavioural and physiological systems become attuned to each other" (Tiffany Field, 1985)
- Making and Breaking of Affectional Bonds
- Disabled people not able to control attachment to primary figure
- Attachment essential for existence
- Caregiving/Careseeking

Attachment Behaviours

- Any form of behaviour that results in a person attaining or maintaining proximity to some other clearly identified individual who is conceived as better able to cope with the world.
- It is most obvious when the person is frightened, tired or sick and is assuaged by comforting or caregiving.
- At other times the behaviour is less evident.
- Occurs throughout life; especially in times of emergency.

Mahler's Theory of Psychological Birth

- Margaret Mahler
- Psychological Birth - five stages:
 1. Symbiotic
 2. Differentiation
 3. Practising
 4. Rapprochement
 5. Individuation

Single Person Service

- Lily and referral to IST
- Shared group home to own flat
- Core Staff Team
- Individual work with Lily
- Modelling to staff team (Shift work)
- Staff support meetings
- 24hr phone support
- Liaison between staff and managers; and service provider and care management

Lily's presentation

Signs of being in Symbiotic phase

Lily is unable to care for herself or go out of the house. She becomes completely dependent on her supporters.

Wants to be fed with a baby's bottle, wear nappies, etc.

Signs of being in Practicing phase

Lily likes people to watch her doing activities.

She will do the same thing over and over again to show different members of her core team.

Signs of being in Rapprochement phase

Lily can engage in reasoned decision making.

She is able to use humour.

She looks after others.

Signs of being in Individuation phase

Lily is able to go out on her own.

She goes shopping independently.

She is able to spend time on her own without support.

Challenges

- Staff team worked for a supporting people provider = conflict between independence vs cared for
- Staff uncomfortable about making relationship with Lily
- Maintaining staff motivation
- Changes in staff team
- Multi-agency involvement

Benefits

- Lily supported in her local area
- Staff provided with new skills
- Provider demonstrates ability to support people who are really hard to help
- Non-medical approach enables integrity of person centred approaches to be maintained
- Can achieve behavioural change without expecting the person to change first