

**Attachment
Network
Wales**



**Rhwydwaith
Ymlyniad
Cymru**

**Attachment Network Wales—Rhwydwaith Ymlyniad Cymru
NEWSLETTER**



Summer 2012

Message from Chair of Attachment Network Wales

Dear Colleague

Since our last newsletter the Attachment Network Wales – Rhwydwaith Ymlyniad Cymru has been hard at work developing its working definition of attachment entitled Attachment – A Fairly Brief, Very Interesting and Reasonably Comprehensive Overview. It is intended to be fairly brief, very interesting and reasonably comprehensive! It is aimed at people who don't necessarily know very much about attachment to explain what attachment is and why it matters so much without getting too technical. We have circulated it with this newsletter so get in touch and let us know if we've achieved that.

We are working on our website www.attachmentwales.org so hopefully this will be the last newsletter and future updates and information will be on the website. We will keep you posted on when it goes live.

The Attachment Network Wales – Rhwydwaith Ymlyniad Cymru ran a workshop at the Swansea University School of Law and Welsh Government Taking the Rights Steps conference in June. The workshop explored the concept of childhood attachment from a rights based perspective and considered the important role that attachment plays in ensuring that children can access their rights under the UNCRC. We were delighted to be able to support such an important event and have the opportunity to show how a rights based approach promotes positive attachment.

As well as contributing to other events, we are also working on our own conference planned for 12th June 2013. The conference ~ Attachment; children's rights and needs within the family ~ will be run in partnership with Swansea and Newport Universities. The event is shaping up to be a fascinating day with input from academics, policy makers and practitioners who are pioneering attachment based work in Wales so make a note of the date!

Now the Attachment Network Wales – Rhwydwaith Ymlyniad Cymru is up and running

building the membership base is a priority. Please become a member and help us promote understanding of attachment in bringing about better outcomes for children, young people, adults and families. Membership only costs £30 (£20 concessions) and entitles you to discounted rates at our events including next years conference, access to information, resources and many other benefits. A membership form is attached. Membership on the steering group is open to any member of the Network, so if you would like to become more actively involved, please contact Helen Griffiths at Helen@adoptionuk.org.uk

Last but not least the Attachment Network Wales – Rhwydwaith Ymlyniad Cymru is holding a half day seminar and AGM. This event will be from 10:00am – 1:00pm on 23rd November 2012 at the Local Government Data Unit in Cardiff. We have a range of speakers booked including Welsh Government, academics and practitioners and the focus is looking at Attachment in Policy and Practice. The cost for the event is only £40 (£30 concessions) and will include annual membership of the network. We hope to see you there!

Finally, please do keep in touch. I would be glad to receive any suggestions regarding the content of the website and we are always looking for contributions to future e-newsletters.

Yours faithfully



Charlotte Drury

Chair

Attachment Network Wales – Rhwydwaith Ymlyniad Cymru

Attachment at the Millennium Centre

The national post adoption organisation, After Adoption, which has an office in Grangetown in Cardiff, held its annual conference in Cardiff on 24th April. The conference was called 'Making the Connections. Attachment Adoption and Children'. Over 100 people attended, including adoption social workers, psychologists, teachers, therapists and 11 adoptive parents. Approximately half the audience were from Wales.

Gwenda Thomas AM Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services opened the conference and outlined the direction that Welsh Government is taking in the Draft Social Services (Wales) Bill. She referred in particular to the proposal to develop a single National Adoption Service which will take over several of the functions of the current 24 Adoption Agencies who between them undertake around 250 adoptive placements a year in Wales.

The keynote speakers were varied and stimulating. John Timpson, a business man and contributor to After Adoption management committee and training fund, spoke about how his business principles extend to his family life. He and his wife have fostered over 80 children. He has written a helpful little book called 'A guide to Attachment and how it can affect people's lives'. He was clear that if individuals are to achieve a sense of achievement, autonomy and confidence they need to feel valued by those close to them who need to offer encouragement, praise, opportunity and acceptance of their difference.

He was followed by Louis Sydney, a child and adolescent psychotherapist working in Milton Keynes. He talked about how early neglect or trauma interfere with brain development and lead to different patterns of attachment; secure, anxious/ambivalent, avoidant/dismissive/minimising, disorganised. He advocated a theraplay approach to work with the family on structure, nurture, engagement and challenge. The emphasis on each of these areas would vary according to the individual child and their needs.

Louise Bomber is an Attachment Support Teacher and Therapist working in Brighton and Hove. She

works with many teachers who have children in their classes with demanding or controlling or withdrawn behaviour and she tries to encourage teachers to look for the meaning behind this behaviour. A child constantly with their hand up wanting attention may be desperate for reassurance that they are not going to be abandoned again, a child who pushes to the front of the dinner queue may have been terribly neglected when tiny and still after 5 years of adoption cannot subconsciously believe he will really have enough to eat.

Dr Jill Hodges, a Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychotherapist in Great Ormond Street Hospital, talked about some research into how maltreatment can affect a child's internal working models of attachment. She was been significant in establishing the use of 'story stems' as an assessment tool in working with children. The research shows that the internal working models of how the world works in relation to the child are set down early and are hard to shift, and this can only be achieved with therapy and therapeutic parenting.

A range of workshops were also offered. One by Jonny Matthew who works at the Hillside Secure Unit in Neath Port Talbot on the way in which early trauma impacts on brain development and subsequent behaviour. Another by Erica Beddoe, an Educational Psychologist from RCT who described the very practical strategies she uses with schools who are struggling to understand the needs of children with attachment difficulties. The general buzz was encouraging and we hope that some of the Welsh participants collected an ANW membership form from the Adoption UK stand.

Ann Bell - Adoption UK

Attachment-based working in a secure setting for adolescents

Hillside is a secure children's home providing accommodation for 22 young people serving criminal sentences or who are placed on a Secure Accommodation Order for their own safety. Young offenders come to Hillside because they are too young or too vulnerable to go to a Young Offender's Institution.

The children who come to Hillside, with very few exceptions, have marked attachment related difficulties. It is often these difficulties that underpin the behaviours that bring the young people to the attention of the criminal justice system or the Family Court.

One of the challenges in terms of intervention is the need to look beyond the behaviour that brought them to Hillside, in order to focus on the true causes. This can present a challenge when national governing authorities and the prevailing professional ethos encourages a focus on behavioural problems and cognitive interventions to address them. For example, youth offending services often request that young people undertake offence related work, such as the development of victim empathy or consequential thinking skills. Whilst these issues are valid, they are often premature and leave the underlying psychological issues undressed.

Until these basic needs are met in such a way as to allow alternative neural networks to begin to develop, other interventions will have little resonance for them. In order for this to happen the overall context of care needs to be structured on an attachment footing as well as providing individual therapy. Added to this is the need to take account of the recent research about the impact of poor early experiences on brain structure and function.

Staff training

The training of staff to properly understand child development, particularly the importance of attachment, is central to this approach. Prevailing cultures in care settings often focus on helping children to comply with behavioural norms or achieve educationally, when they are not yet developmentally ready. Instead, having undertaken attachment training with all front line staff, Hillside encourages them to concentrate on building trust and establishing more meaningful relationships with children as the vehicle for interactive repair. Interactive repair (the process of quickly repairing the relationship with a young person when they have been disciplined) is an essential part of intervention at this stage.

Model of working

At Hillside we have endeavoured to develop a sequential model to our intervention with young people. This entails taking a developmental view and trying to give young people what they missed in their early years: building trusting relationships with adults, developing a secure base and a more positive internal working model (view of self and the world).

The Adolescent Trauma Recovery Model (Skuse & Matthew – in press) is a staged model of understanding impaired development that provides a template of general developmental trajectory alongside presenting behavioural symptoms and possible interventions. Staff are guided to understand troubled adolescents as children who have not properly undergone normative early developmental stages. Such children need opportunities to be therapeutically held, cared for and guided by adults in a consistent, predictable and reliable way.

This has meant freeing up keywork staff to spend time on a one-to-one basis with young people wherever possible. The nature of the activities undertaken during such time is not the principal issue; rather staff are free to engage in whatever they feel the young person is most positively disposed towards – computer games, listening to

the young person is most positively disposed towards – computer games, listening to music, sport and fitness, arts and crafts or simply watching television together. The focus is on intersubjectivity (attunement, shared attention and shared goals). In practice this entails joining in activities together, sharing time and ultimately winning trust.

Over time – sometimes a very protracted period - this yields opportunities to talk in more depth, to discuss pertinent issues that arise and to revisit difficult life experiences. Specialist therapeutic intervention can often be required at this stage but importantly, it can take place within the context of safe and supportive relationships with staff (e.g. a keyworker). This is crucially important as young people are not left alone in dealing with their

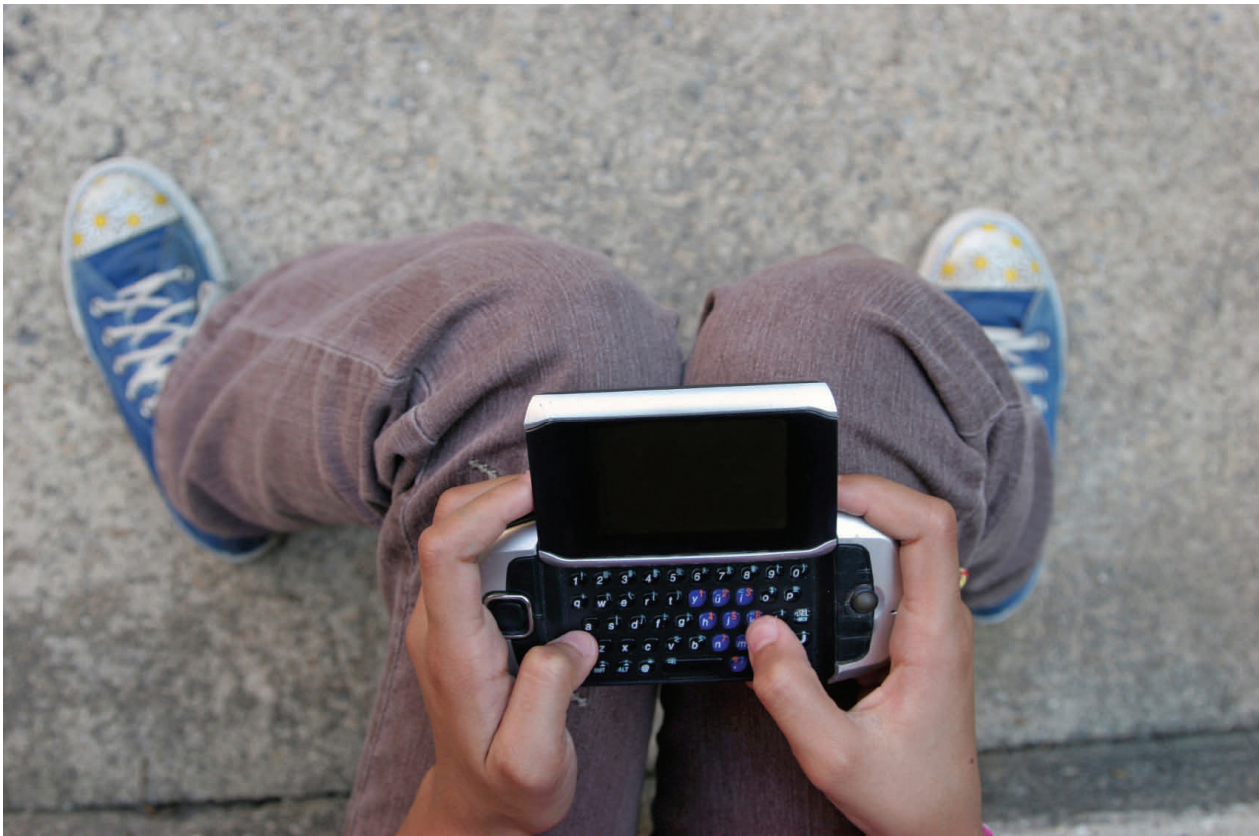
feelings. Rather the processing of past experiences that goes on in between therapy sessions is contained and understood, allowing the young person to feel as emotionally safe as possible and subsequently maximising the beneficial effects of therapy.

It is not until much of the past trauma is processed that young people are ready to embark on the cognitive challenges of victim empathy or offence related work. In having dealt with the underlying trauma-related issues we often observe that many of the problem behaviours that initially led to the secure placement naturally dissipate. In some cases offending behaviour or personally risky behaviour may not even need to be directly addressed; in other cases,

young people can usefully go on to do more cognitively based work.

What this approach to intervention with troubled young people offers, is a model of working that is grounded in theory. This means that, rather than intervention being a scatter-gun of short term efforts to address different symptoms, we strive to understand the causes of behaviour and target these in a coordinated way. If interventions are sequenced appropriately, this can ensure the most efficient and effective use of available resources, as well as maximising the opportunities for young people to succeed in the longer term.

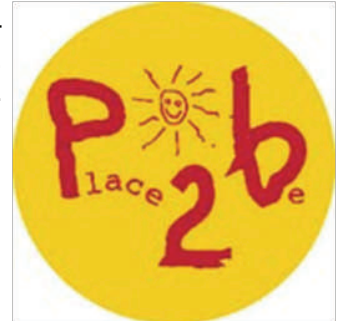
Jonny Matthew & Tricia Skuse
Hillside Secure Children's Home



Attachment Network Wales: Member profiles

Place2Be

Place2Be has developed a much valued comprehensive school based counselling service in schools, mostly primary schools during the last eighteen years. We are currently based in 160 schools across England, Wales and Scotland. The areas in which we work suffer immense socio economic deprivation and many parents are hard pressed both financially and emotionally to cope with the demands and responsibilities of parenthood. Our integrative therapeutic approach is strongly influenced by attachment theory. Many of the children whom we help have experienced considerable insecurity in their early upbringing. For many, this has constituted significant mental trauma, leading to a great deal of anger, fear, shame and mistrust. Through our counselling relationships with these children, we provide the necessary consistency and understanding to help them feel less helpless and overwhelmed. We also provide support to parents and teachers to enable them to respond to their children's needs more sensitively and positively.



Peter Wilson , Clinical Consultant , PlaceBe

Children in Wales

Children in Wales is the national umbrella children's organisation in Wales, bringing organisations and individuals together to:



Children in Wales
Plant yng Nghymru

- Make the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child a reality in Wales
- Fight for sustainable quality services and fair shares for all children and young people
- Ensure special attention and treatment for children in need
- Give children and young people a voice

Children in Wales works to meet the following objectives:

- to support and develop strong networks
- to produce and disseminate information
- to develop policy, practice and research
- to raise public, political and professional awareness
- to support new and existing initiatives

Children in Wales is a membership body and is open to individuals and organisations from a wide range of fields with varying interests, but all of whom are interested in improving the lives of children and young people in Wales.

Book Reviews

Hughes, D. (2009). Principles of attachment and intersubjectivity: still relevant in relating with adolescents. In Teenagers and attachment: helping adolescents engage with life and learning. A. Perry, (Ed.) London: Worth Publishing. 123-140.

In Dan Hughes' *It was that one moment* Hughes, a clinical psychologist, introduces the collection of poems by briefly taking the reader through his formative experiences of helping children who have suffered trauma and neglect.

The poems themselves are divided into three distinct chapters. The first, *A broken beginning*, explores the thoughts of children suffering from neglect and abuse through poems from the child's perspective. In it the poignant poem *If my parents had*

died invites the reader to consider the unique grief that looked-after children experience. The chapter *Second Start* then explores the journey into a new life – in foster care, adoptive families, therapy – in the child's voice, but also the therapist's and adoptive mother's. The poem *Your sweet persistence* explores the transition from neglect into a new more stable environment, but still reminds us that even in better times there is still a great and complex struggle: "I discovered the pain of discovering what had been missing". The final chapter deals with the notion of intersubjectivity, after which it is named. The process refers to "the impact that a person's subjective experience has on the subjective experience of the other and vice versa" and has been employed to prevent or remedy attachment disorders. Hughes explores the proc-

ess in poems that focus on the intersubjective sharing between caregiver and child. After each poem Hughes puts them into a clinical context, which is both helpful and goes further to remind the reader that the poems are from real experience.

Many of the poems are harrowing. Hughes muses: "Is this poem a bit harsh? I don't think so." From an aesthetic perspective the poems may come off heavy handed, but that is the nature of child abuse. For anyone working with children who have seen neglect and abuse, this book may be essential reading. Hughes statement in the introduction of the first chapter rings very true: "It may be hard to read about them, though I think we need to do so."

Fionnuala Coombs, The Fostering Network

Creating Loving Attachments: Parenting with PACE to Nurture Confidence and Security in the Troubled Child, 2012, Kim S.Golding and Daniel A. Hughes. Publisher Jessica Kingsley.

Dr Kim Golding and Dr Daniel Hughes are recognised as authors and leaders in the therapeutic field. Their latest collaboration 'Creating Loving Attachments', published this year, is a wonderful book that is positive and deceptively easy to read. Playfulness, acceptance, curiosity and empathy (PACE), developed originally by Dan, are presented as a parenting approach that promotes intersubjectivity. A section on each element of PACE clearly explains each one and the examples of

parent-child exchanges illustrate how they may be used in everyday life. These narratives demonstrate the impact of our attitudes, challenging us to see beyond the behaviour, reflect on our response and facilitate change and empathy. PACE parenting, combined with love gives hope, helping the children to feel safe, accepted, build relationships and come to terms with their past. Presented primarily as an approach for children with trauma and attachment difficulties this book has relevance to all effective parenting and building of relationships.

Although this book draws on a wide range of contemporary research including neurosci-

ence it is easy to understand but is also relevant to professionals.

Jude Hills – Adoptive parent



Events and Training

Promoting Resilience ~ the importance of childhood attachment

The quality of the relationship between infants and their primary care giver is crucial to the child's development through into adulthood. We see the consequences of disruption to that early relationship in children who struggle in school, with their peer relationships, with parents and with authority figures. The consequences for them and for society as a whole can be devastating. However there are many opportunities throughout a child's life to work with them to repair the damage and improve outcomes for the child or young person and their families. This half-day event will address attachment and childhood resilience from a policy, practice and research perspective in order to explore what can be done to improve outcomes for children and young people.

Speakers:

- Huw Maguire, Head of Family First, Welsh Government
- Jonny Matthew and Dr. Tricia Skuse, Hillside Secure Unit
- Suzanne Spooner, Social worker and research student, Cardiff University

During the morning delegates will have the opportunity to:

- Increase their understanding of attachment and the opportunities professionals and others have to work with children, young people and their families to raise resilience and reduce the impact of early childhood trauma
- Raise awareness of attachment and consider the implications for planning and delivery of services to enable an informed approach that will improve outcomes for children and young people
- Look at ways of supporting children, parents and care givers

Venue: Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales, 3-7 Columbus Walk, Cardiff, CF10 4SD

Cost: Members £10 Non members £40 (£30 unwaged) includes annual membership of the network

Date: 23rd November, 10:00am -1.00pm

For more information and further details contact Helen@adoptionuk.org.uk Tel:- 02920 230319.



For further information about membership or contributing articles to this newsletter contact Helen Griffiths at Helen@adoptionuk.org.uk ; Tel:- 02920 230319

Membership Form

The Attachment Network Wales/Rhwydwaith Ymlyniad Cymru has been established to raise awareness of the important of attachment and impact of early childhood trauma, to promote research, influence policy and practice and provide re-sources, training and shared knowledge, learning and understanding.

Becoming a member of the Network will enable you to become part of a community of practice working to promote understanding of the importance of attachment to bring about better outcomes for children, young people, adults and families. It will also give you access to resources and information being developed by the Network, discounted rates on conferences and events and early notification of relevant events being run by a wide range of organisations. Funds raised through membership enable the Attachment Network Wales to continue to work to promote this vital area of practice.

Title		Full Name		
Position/profession			Organisation	
Address				
			Postcode	
Telephone			Mobile	
Email				

Membership type:	Public/Private Sector Organisation	(£40 pa)
	Individual	(£30 pa)
	Student	(£20 pa)

Areas of Interest (please tick all applicable):		
Counselling	Therapy	Attachment Theory/Academic
Social Work	Parenting Support	Education
Health	Youth Offending	Foster/Adoptive parenting
Policy/Welsh Government	Other (please specify)	

Are you interested in becoming involved with the Attachment Network Wales Steering Group? Yes/No

We welcome your involvement in the development of the Attachment Network Wales. Please contribute any ideas you have for future activity of development:

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Payment details – payment can be made by cheque or invoice to: contact Helen Griffiths:
Helen@adoptionuk.org.uk ; Tel:- 02920 230319