

Adult Attachment Interview Special Issue # 3

Edited by
Franco Baldoni and
Nicola Sahhar



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DMM News Editor-in Chief



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Third special issue dedicated to the DMM-Adult Attachment Interview

This is the third DMM News dedicated to the DMM-AAI. The first two issues were much appreciated by our readers and in this issue we continue to explore the potential of the DMM-AAI for research, clinical and forensic applications.

We also announce the upcoming IASA Conference on "Attachment and Treatment", in Miami, 9-11 November 2015, with a list of main speakers and events. It will be a great opportunity for all researchers and clinicians who are interested in attachment, development and adaptation. Several DMM courses are offered before and after the conference; take one to make your trip pay off even more!

We hope to meet you in Miami at the IASA Conference!

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See you at the 4th IASA International Conference in Miami, November 9-11, 2015

Make sure you hold open November 9-11, 2015 for the 4th IASA International Conference on the theme **Attachment and Treatment** in Miami, Florida.

You Won't Want to Miss Our Stellar Conference Speaker Lineup!

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Clark Baim, Birmingham, UK

Editorial Board: Franco Baldoni (Editor-in-Chief),
Patricia M. Crittenden, Clark Baim and Andrea Landini

IASA International Conference Speakers

Peter Fonagy, PhD

*University College
London, UK*

**Mentalization, Reflective
Functioning and Treatment**



Patricia M. Crittenden, PhD

*Past President IASA, Family
Relations Institute, USA*

**Ten Ideas for Improving
Mental Health and
Treatment**



Daniel L. Schacter, PhD

Harvard University, USA

**Constructive Memory and
Imagining the Future**



Rodolfo de Bernart, MD

*Congress Chair, President
IASA, Institute of Family
Therapy of Florence, Italy*



Andrea Landini, MD

*Family Relations
Institute, Italy*

**Issues in DMM Integrative
Treatment: Bumps in the
Road to Change**



Other main speakers:

- **Lane Strathearn, MD, PhD** (USA/Australia): Brain Reward Responses in Drug Addicted Mothers: Can Oxytocin Reverse the Trend?
- **Lucina Q. Uddin, PhD** (USA): Brain Networks for Social Processing in Autism
- **James P. McHale, PhD** (USA): Family-Level Security in Diverse Family Systems: How a Coparenting Framework Changes Everything
- **Sohye Kim, PhD** (USA): Mothers with Unresolved Trauma: Brain Responses to Infant Distress and Intergenerational Effects
- **Michael Trout, PhD** (USA): Trauma and Loss: Developing a Coherent Narrative in Foster and Adoptive Families
- **Judi G. Smetana, PhD** (USA): Disagreements, Disclosure and Secrecy in Adolescent-Parent Relationships
- **Kenichi Mikami, PhD** (Japan): Using the DMM-AAI in clinical practice.

Register now!

Early bird registration ends on June 30 2015.

www.iasa-dmm.org/index.php/iasa-conference/

Join the conversation with IASA on Facebook.

More information on the congress on IASA website

www.iasa-dmm.org



The international association
for the study of attachment



Upcoming 2015 DMM Courses

Pre-Conference courses

- Nov. 5-8: **Spanish CARE-Index**
- Nov. 3-7, 2015 & March 6-11, 2016:
Infant Strange Situation
- Nov. 6-8, 2015: **Advanced Clinical AAI**

Post-Conference courses

- Nov. 11-13, 2015: **CARE-Index Top-Up**
- Nov. 12-14, 2015: **Advanced Clinical Toddler CARE-Index**
- Nov. 12-17, 2015 & Feb. 5-9, 2016 & June 1-6, 2016: **Adult Attachment Interview**
- Nov. 11-13: **Spanish CARE-Index**

A DISCOUNT is offered for those who register before JUNE 30.

More information on dates, locations and prices of the courses on IASA website www.iasa-dmm.org and Family Relations Institute website www.familyrelationsinstitute.org.

More about the DMM-Adult Attachment Interview

Disorientation (DO), a fairly recent modifier in the DMM-AAI classification system, is the center of concern in the next article. We are reminded that we do not know enough about the conditions and development of individuals whose attachment strategy is modified by disorientation.

Steve Farnfield moves procreation and sex into the foreground of attachment theory, showing that adoption might be connected with a confusion about whether one's own genes or the genes of the other might be passed on. First findings point to a subgroup of volunteering adopters whose attachment strategy is

modified by DO that interferes strongly with their ability to differentiate between self and others.

In the following article, Clark Baim presents the DMM-AAI-trainers' group that has been involved in the writing of these three special issues and a short summary of the first AAI-trainers' meeting in Key Largo.





Steve Farnfield

New Findings Regarding Adopters

Introduction

The AAI offers a means of assessing three of the core dimensions of parenting:

- A person's state of mind with regard to their childhood attachments
- Unresolved loss and trauma
- Mental integration or mentalizing

The other core dimensions of parenting are: relationship with spouse/sexual partner; family and wider social support and the meaning that a child has for the parent (see Farnfield 2008).

These dimensions are central to all parenting. If not always stated in these terms, these dimensions frequently form the basis of both child protection assessments aimed at determining if parents should have their children removed and the assessment of substitute parents to look after the children removed into state care.

A crucial omission in the second form of assessment (i.e., of substitute parents) is that when they are assessed, there is no child to elicit caregiving from the parent and hence no opportunity to assess 'meaning of the child.'

Recent Findings

A recent study used the DMM-AAI to determine the attachment strategies of all people applying to an English authority to adopt a child (Farnfield, submitted). The results give a profile of an atypical population when it is compared with the distribution of adult attachment using the Main and Goldwyn method with normative (relatively safe) populations. There were very few people in Type B secure or Type C; the majority of applicants were in Type A with nearly 50% in Type A2, approximately 25% in A3-4 and the final quarter in A/C. The majority of the people in A3-4 and A/C were unresolved with regard to loss and trauma and all of those in A/C had a DO (disorientated) modifier.

The people in this sample were all white, mainly

middle class professionals and caution should be used in translating these results to general practice until the study is replicated in other areas with a different demographic profile. A further problem was that all the interviews were conducted by family placement social workers with only a minimum of training in giving the AAI, so the quality of some interviews was not optimal.

Discussion

With this caveat in mind, the results nevertheless suggest that secure attachment is not a feature of this group and that there is a 50/50 split between applicants in a normative A2 pattern and those with complex histories that will require careful, person-specific scrutiny from placing agencies. The prevalence of DO is of particular interest. Disorientation is rare in AAI, so to find nearly 25% of a particular group in this pattern demands our attention. Quite what this means is not, at the time of writing, clear, but the working hypothesis is that it may be connected to confusion regarding procreation and the answer to a fundamental question: "Do I want to pass on my own or another person's genes?" Exploration of the loss of fertility with prospective adoptive parents may thus require more focused and considerate attention by professionals.

Conclusion

At a theoretical level, sex and procreation are central to attachment, but studies have given a relatively low priority to these topics compared to other areas. This study points to the need for further research, in particular whether the attachment strategies of people who wanted a child of their own, but could not conceive and decided not to adopt, are significantly different from this sample, especially regarding disorientation.

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References

- Farnfield, S. (Submitted). 'Attachment strategies of prospective adoptive parents.'
- Farnfield, S. (2008). 'A theoretical model for the comprehensive assessment of parenting', *British Journal of Social Work*, 38, 6, 1076-1099.



Clark Baim

DMM-AAI Trainers Group Launches in Key Largo

From November 27th to December 4, 2011, a group of 12 clinicians, researchers, trainers and academics met in Key Largo, Florida, USA to undertake the first course for the trainers for the Dynamic-Maturation Model Adult Attachment Interview (DMM-AAI). The course came at a pivotal moment in the evolution of training in the DMM-AAI, with the aim of meeting an increasing demand for training in a number of countries.

The trainers' course program was facilitated by Dr Patricia Crittenden (USA), developer of the DMM-AAI and founding president of the International Association for the Study of Attachment, in close collaboration with Dr Andrea Landini (Italy), neuropsychiatrist, psychotherapist and trainer based in Reggio Emilia, Italy.

The first cohort of trainee trainers comes from seven nations with a wide variety of professional backgrounds, and includes:

- Airi Hautamäki, Professor of Psychology and Social Psychology, Science University of Helsinki, Finland
- Steve Farnfield, Lecturer in Attachment Studies and Coordinator of the MSc in Attachment Studies, Roehampton University, UK
- Rebecca Carr-Hopkins, Independent Social Worker and Trainer, Targa Partnership, Brighton, UK
- Alison Dunkerley, Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Bolton Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, UK
- Martin Stokowy, Assistant Medical Director, Neurologist, Psychiatrist and Psychotherapist, Tagesklinik for Adult Psychiatry, Cologne, Germany
- Val Hawes, Consultant Forensic Psychiatrist, Fens Unit, HM Prison Whitemoor, Cambridgeshire, UK
- Sharlene Weitzman, MSW, RSW, CPTS, Chief Operating Officer, Bayfield Treatment Centre, Consecon, Ontario, Canada
- Victoria Lidchi, BSc, MSc, MPhil, DClinPsych, FRSH, Consultant Clinical Psychologist and Systemic Therapist, Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust, Monroe Family Assessment Service, Tavistock Centre, London, UK
- Peder Nørbech, Psychologist, PhD Candidate, Dept. of Psychology, University of Oslo, Norway
- Hélène Héту, Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist, Montreal Children's Hospital, Quebec, Canada
- Nicola Sahhar, Psychologist and Psychoanalyst, Licensed Private Practitioner, Düsseldorf/Cologne, Germany
- Clark Baim, M.Ed., Dip. Psych, UKCP, Psychotherapist, Senior Trainer in Psychodrama Psychotherapy, Co-Director, Birmingham Institute for Psychodrama (UK) and Change Point Learning and Development (UK and USA)

The training course was an opportunity for new trainers to work together in small groups to prepare session plans, generate teaching materials, practice delivering sessions, and give and receive feedback. The intense, collaborative activities brought the group together into a cohesive and supportive group of like-minded colleagues – a circumstance that bodes well for the future of the international training program.

The trainers' course also included a number of seminars devoted to recent theoretical developments in the DMM-AAI and how these new concepts might be taught. The group experimented with and practiced different teaching techniques, ranging from didactic presentations to 'interviewer / speaker' role plays (used to increase learning by 'bringing speakers to life' and enacting the dyadic behavior occurring during an interview). The trainers also grappled with thorny topics such as patterning, functional formulations, and the topic of keenest interest among AAI course delegates - the process and standards for reliability testing. By the

end of the course, the trainee trainers were well on the way to developing a comprehensive collection of group-generated lesson plans and teaching materials.

The training program ended with cheers of thanks and a heartfelt message from Dr. Crittenden: 'You are the future.'

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More information on IASA website

www.iasa-dmm.org

The website has a section of videos that members can access.

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