

DMM: Integrative Approaches to Family Treatment

Rudi Dallos
University of Plymouth
r.dallos@plymouth.ac.u

IASA's 10-Year Celebration, Florence, Italy, 2018

DMM - Family Formulation

DMM directs us to focus on attachment processes in the context of the family system – move beyond the dyad which has been central to attachment theory

Focus on :

- Trans- generational processes, both on continuities and CHANGE
- Interplay between parents' DRs
- Parents' DRs both shape the family process and family processes shape/maintain or alter their DRs.
- TRIADIC as well dyadic processes

Individual and systemic Formulations

- Systemic therapies focus on transactional processes in families
- Core concept - Feedback loops maintaining escalations and 'stuck' patterns
- The stuckness is inadequately conceptualised and does not consider :
 - Causal – developmental processes
 - Trans-generational attachment processes
 - Current on-going attachment dynamics in the family

DMM - and the therapeutic relationship

- Therapeutic relationship central to all forms of therapy
- Work with families is more complex have to form therapeutic relationship with each member of the family
- Different DRs for each member
- Also the interplay of their DRs

ACCIDENTIAL EFFECTIVENESS

Many therapies mostly only work when they 'accidentally' involve a systemic attachment intervention.

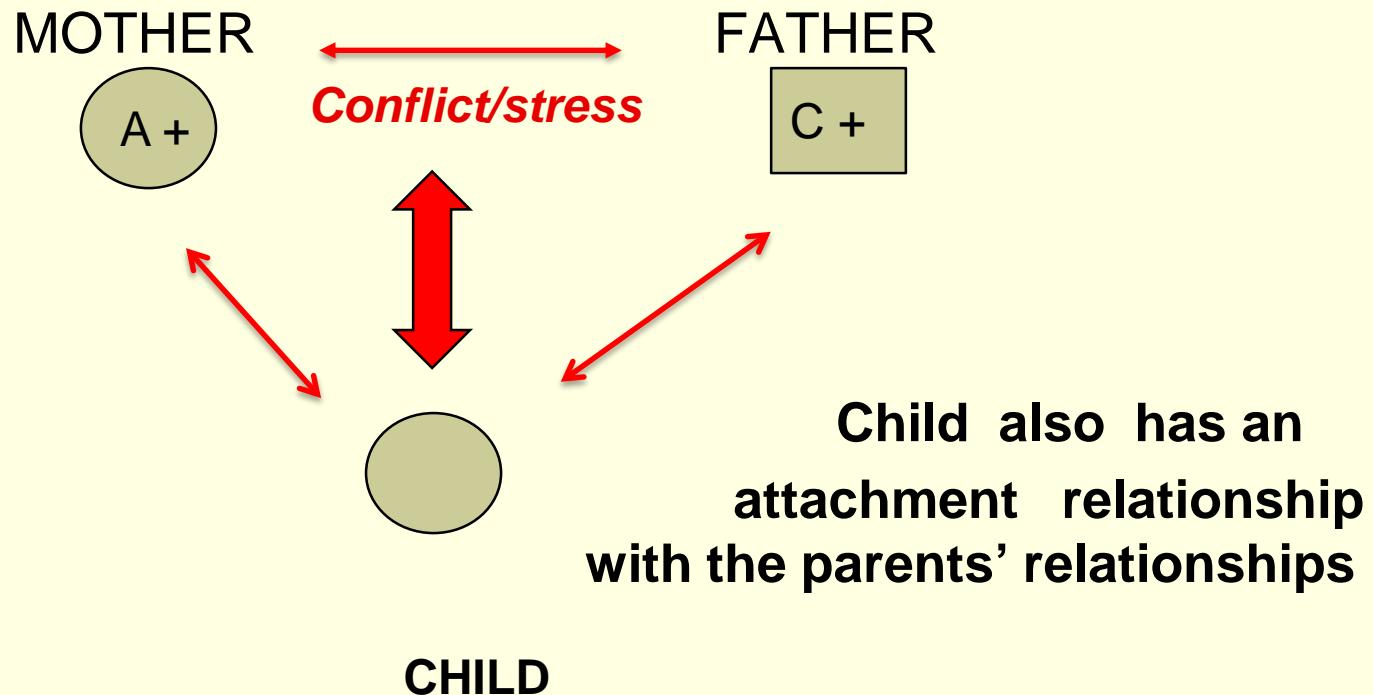
Example:

Mentalisation based treatment for children with ADHD .. Consists of teaching mentalisation/meditation to mothers and a child together.

Intention is to train the *child* to be able to self – regulate and use mentalisation.

Does positive change also, or even mainly occur because the *attachment relationship between the child and the mother changes*, i.e. they learn that they can mutually regulate their affect, mother gains confidence.... ?

FAMILY AS TRIADIC PROCESS



Relationship with each parent ,e.g. adapt to A or C patterns.... Aggravate or compensate each other.....

Conflict in construing relationship with each parent

Pulled in to take sides

Conflict in understanding impact on parent's relationships **'is it my fault?'**

A few examples of Integrative Formulation and Interventions... Utilising ideas from DMM

ABC model assumes continuity.. Applications using DMM consider a dynamic, evolving processes in families

Farnfield's Parenting Model

- Each parent's DRs - childhood experiences, shape their parenting
- Parents' may have different DRs.. relevant to parenting
- Compensation processes - parent with balanced DRs can assist parent with dismissing or pre-occupied DRs
- Multi – level, holistic: Individual, dyadic, triadic, community, culture...

DMM: Systemic processes and DRs

- Kozlowska's Model of Somatic Processes

Embodied, implicit DRs in parents can shape psycho-somatic symptoms in the child

Vulnerability relates not just to primary attachment figure but the interaction between AFs

Focus on breakdown in family systems ability to communicate re. pain

ANT: Systemic FT and DMM

ANT – combines systemic FT, with a focus on narrative FT approaches with DMM:

- Emphasis on change as well as continuity in trans-generational patterns
- Narratives and communication as shaping family life
- Narratives as shaped by and shaping attachment processes
- Corrective and replicative scripts - integrative DRs as representing potential for choice and change
- Triangulation - Emphasis on triadic processes - child exists in the context of attachment to each parent and their relationship
- Narratives and representational systems.. Not just what is said but how it is said

ATTACHMENT NARRATIVE THERAPY

Co - Creating a secure base



**Exploring Narratives
and Attachments**



Considering Alternatives

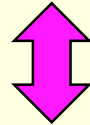


**Future and Maintaining
the therapeutic base**

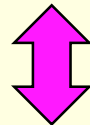


Process of Exploration in ANT: Formulation, intervention and permission

FAMILY PATTERNS /CIRCULARITIES



ATTACHMENT DYNAMICS SHAPING
CURRENT FAMILY PATTERNS



TRANS-GENERATIONAL ATTACHMENT
DYNAMICS SHAPING CURRENT FAMILY
PATTERNS AND ATTACHMENT S

DMM: Formulating Choice of Systemic Techniques

AVOIDANT/DISMISSING

Encouraging revision of use of affect

Action techniques - Role play

Enactment , sculpting

Reflecting on emotions in the session – between family members and family and therapist

Empathic Questions

Visual exploration and expression

Exploring expression and management of conflict

AMBIVALENT/PRE-OCCUPIED

Encouraging revision of use of cognition

Genograms and Life Lines

Tracking Circularities

Mapping Relationships – sculpting with objects

Exploring beliefs and punctuation

Scaling questions

Circular questions

Letter writing

REFLECTING TEAMS and REFLECTING PROCESSES

ANT - FORMATS FOR EXPLORATION:

Utilises sections of the DMM/AAI in therapy

- **To promote revision of DRs and shared family DRs**
- **Promote integration and Reflection**
- **Promote changes in the family processes**

FORMATS: Comforting, corrective scripts, triadic processes, semantic – episodic representations

Comforting

When you were ill or upset as a child – what happened?

Try to remember a *specific instance* of when you were ill or upset

- How did you get to feel better? Who helped you to feel better? How did they do this?
- What have you learnt from this in terms of how you comfort your own children? What do you want to do the same/differently?
- What do you think your own children have learnt about comforting from you?
- If it did not happen how do you imagine it might have? What difference would it have made to you if you had been comforted?
- How do you see that comforting was done in other families you have known?

Can be held as a family or couple interview or as a one-to-one conversation.

Exploring memories of Comfort

So if you were upset or distressed or frightened when you were young, who would you go to?

Nobody. I wouldn't go to anybody. The only time I ever did was once when Mum was at work and I had to sleep in my brother's room. I can't remember why, and there was a picture of me and her when we were little, cuddling, and I was only young and I was looking at this picture and I was crying so much because I thought because they're older than most parents that she was going to die really soon and I went down to Dad and he was like "Don't be stupid and go back to bed", and I had to go back to bed. And after that I didn't bother going to him. I would just bottle it all up and just not bother'

Claire

Explorations:

What do you think your dad's intentions were?

Can you think of a time when your dad responded differently?

What made you upset about looking at their photo?

Do mum and dad respond similarly or differently when you are upset?

FORMAT FOR EXPLORATION: Corrective and Replicative Scripts

Allows us to work in a positive frame with the family in that we assist the family to construe their *intentions* positively, i.e. they have tried to repeat what was good or correct what they felt was bad about their own experiences. This can then lead to a discussion of whether these attempts have been successful or not and possibly how they might be altered, strengthened, elaborated etc.

- What have you tried to do similarly or differently as a parent to how your parents acted with you?
- How has this worked, why.. What influences it?
- How is your relationship with your partner/ spouse similar or different to how your parents were as a couple?
- What do you value vs feel critical about in either of your parent's relationships?
- Does what you have tried to repeat/change work? Is there anything that you want to alter, strengthen, abandon about what you have been trying to repeat or change?
- What do you think your children might do differently when they are parents to how you were with them as parents?
- If you have not tried to do anything differently to your parents, can you imagine how it might be if you did?
- Why do you think your parents acted as they did?



Bertinoro, 2008



Cambridge, 2010

To download program materials, click here
<https://www.iasa-dmm.org/iasa-conference/>



Frankfurt, 2012



Miami, 2015