

## **SKILLS THAT SUPPORT SECURE ATTACHMENT:**

### **BUILDING "PREVENTATIVE RESILIENCE" AND CREATING CORRECTIVE EXPERIENCES**

#### **Interpersonal Neurobiology of Relationships: Working with Overarousal in the ANS, Early Attachment Disruptions**

Unavailability, hostility, and lack of fulfillment from caregivers in the '**Avoidant**' attachment model can result in a feeling that relationship and intimacy are so difficult that we tend to stay on the sidelines...perhaps a major 'disconnection' from relationships as a source of comfort in life. Expand intimacy with yourself, others and Essence.

The here today, gone tomorrow '**Ambivalent**' type of bonding leads to continual frustration and insecurity in relating that may manifest as feeling incapable of ever being truly loved or lovable enough and an over-focus on the "other" and an under-focus on the self. Often there can be a failure of developing object constancy due to unpredictability in parenting. As we repair this, we will embody the psychological self as well as expand beyond object-relations to embrace the individuated Essential Self.

When a parent is terrifying, we may become so frightened and confused in relating that '**Disorganized**' attachment can result. This describes a conflict between two major biological drives that occurs when a child naturally looks for a safe attachment figure, and finds instead too much fear resulting in a need to protect oneself through the survival instincts to dis-attach. In healing "misuse of power" wounds we will work to develop a return to personal empowerment, felt sense of safety and connection.

**Diane Poole Heller, PhD**

Compassionate Insight. Powerful Tools. Radical Change

**743 Club Circle, Louisville, CO 80027****Tel: 303 790 0603 Fax: 303-604-2145 email: [help@dianepooleheller.com](mailto:help@dianepooleheller.com)****Go to [www.dianepooleheller.com](http://www.dianepooleheller.com)**

**'Secure'** healthy attachment with parents who are present, safe and consistent offers the holding environment that allows for healthy relating and bonding. Fortunately, we can re-access the original, innate healthy attachment system later in life.

When we come to understand our early attachment styles in a healthy environment today, the original imprints that are the foundation of our self-protective ego structure can be healed so that we can be more in contact with our intrinsic core intactness and enjoy fulfilling relationships embodying our Essential Self. This comprehensive workshop embraces Body, Bonding and Being!

You will learn:

- To identify how over-coupling dynamics between early childhood "family of origin" attachment patterns may play out in adult relationships.
- To be able to define the distinctions between secure, avoidant, ambivalent, and disorganized attachment models.
- Three options of how the use of Corrective Experiences to aid in resolving fixed attachment patterns.
- How to facilitate "earned attachment" as repair and healing of early attachment wounds towards secure attachment.
- How to facilitate the deepest resolution which occurs on the Essential level

**See Following Outline**

## **DARe: Dynamic Attachment Re-Patterning Experience: Healing Early Attachment Wounds and the Neurobiology of Relationships**

### **I. Relational Field Dynamics**

- A. Impressionability in early bonding (**Louise Kaplan**)/**Margaret Mahler, Mary Ainsworth/ Mary Main**)
- B. From Infant to Individuality – Separation Individuation
- C. Holding environment with biological parents and beyond
- D. “Good enough” parenting (Winnicott)**
- E. Engendering basic trust and relative safety
- F. Intergenerational trauma and attachment dynamics

### **II. Physiology and Psychology of Secure Attachment (John Bowlby, Dan Siegel)**

- A. Innate blueprint for health – Core intactness
- B. Can be “earned” or “learned” later in life
- C. Clinical Interventions for nourishing the healthy attachment system now as well as healing bonding wounds from deficiencies of caregivers
- D. Clinical use of specific corrective experiences related to restoring secure attachment in adults after disruptions
- E. Importance of initiating and receiving repair attempts in the relational field (John Gottman)**

### **III. Overview of Our Social Engagement System and the Polyvagal Theory (Stephen Porges)**

- A. Physiology of our survival and attachment systems (**Peter Levine**)
- B. Level of danger and threat response in the autonomic nervous system and in the brain based on phylogenetic evolution
  - 1. Life threat - Dorsal vagal response
  - 2. Moderate threat – Sympathetic nervous system arousal toward active fight or flight responses
  - 3. “Smart Vagas” -Ventral vagal response is the first line of defense when appropriate– Social engagement; contact with self and other
- C. Still face research on DVD (**Ed Tronic**) or find on You Tube
- D. Distress and dysregulation between children and parents with subsequent repair**

### **IV. Ingredients for Thriving of Secure Attachment (Dan Siegel/ Daniel Stern)**

- A. Safe enough holding environment to engender basic trust in goodness of people
- B. Parents are present and consistent
- C. Clear, sensitive, attuned, age appropriate contingent communication
- D. Easy flow between connection and aloneness
- E. Relaxation in relational field
- F. Competent protection
- G. Positive dependency (Marion Solomon, Stan Tatkin, Allan Schore)**
- H. Interactive playfulness

**V. Avoidant Attachment Disruption – Causes, Reactions, Corrective Experiences**

- A. Parents attitudes and care giving style
  - 1. May be absent emotionally, neglectful or rejecting
  - 2. Low affect, need, or age related attunement to child
  - 3. Incoherent language and facial expression
  - 4. Only present when tasking or teaching function
- B. Child's adaptation to caregiver's deficiencies
  - 1. Avoid contact and does not seek reunion after separation.
  - 2. Sense of self remains isolated
  - 3. Tendency to dismiss relationships
  - 4. Possible dissociative symptoms
  - 5. Dry logical thinking with lack of intuitive component
  - 6. Lack of richness, emotion or depth in personal narrative
  - 7. May feel alien, outcast, not human
  - 8. May have trouble with embodiment
  - 9. Dissociative Auto Regulations as attempt to self regulate
  - 10. Use parallel attention more than joint
- C. Possible ramifications in adult relationships
  - 1. Experience emotional desert
  - 2. Little or non-personal memory of childhood
  - 3. Spend time on work, activities versus deep intimate relationships
  - 4. Dismiss needs of self and others
  - 5. May be unaware of level of disconnection they experience
- D. Sample Repair messages for Avoidant Attachment
- E. Specific clinical interventions and corrective experiences
  - 1. Kind eyes exercise to restore attachment gaze and heal gaze avert pattern
  - 2. Replenishment of desert into oasis exercise. Connect to emotional depth and sensate awareness in the body
  - 3. Coming out of isolation into the relational field as a resource without blocking it through disconnection

**VI. Anxious/ Ambivalent / Preoccupied or Angry-Resistant Attachment Disruption: Causes, reactions, and Corrective Experiences**

- A. Parents attitudes and caregiving style
  - 1. Loving at times but with inconsistent availability, perceptiveness, effectiveness
  - 2. Parents unresolved past intrudes on them causing reactivity not related to the child
  - 3. May invade boundaries of the child. "Chase and Dodge" Parent-Infant Action Sequences described by Beatrice Beebe on You tube
  - 4. Affect modulation often disrupted abruptly instead of flowing

**B. Child's adaptation to caregiver's deficiencies**

1. Becomes insecure and uncertain if and when needs will be met
2. Insecurity leads to over emphasis on the other
3. Dismisses self – loses self when others are present
4. Self-regulatory functions dys-regulated versus enhanced by parent
5. Child feels hunger for closeness with simultaneous disabling fear of losing it in over-coupled responses to relationships.

**C. Possible ramifications in adult relationships**

1. May re – enact inconsistent emotional availability and intrusiveness they originally experienced
2. Preoccupation with previous attachment wounds
3. Over – focus on others for External Regulation and need fulfillment – non-mutual
4. Leaky boundaries between past and present
5. “Wanting but not having” identity
6. Trouble receiving love and support, confusion related to needs and clean generosity.
7. Chronic anxiety in relationships wondering what will happen tomorrow or questioning whether they deserve love

**D. Sample anxious attachment repair messages**

**E. Specific clinical interventions and corrective experiences**

1. Noticing Caring Behaviors of Others: “The Five Languages of Love” by Gary Chapman
2. Receiving 1% more
3. Staying with self in the presence of others

**VII. Disorganized Attachment Disruption – Causes, Reactions and Corrective Experiences**

**A. Parents attitudes and caregiving style**

1. Lack of clarity and communication that contains paradoxical injunctions and double binds. This chaos creates unsolvable problems, which sets the child up to fail.
2. Parents are afraid or threatening or overly chaotic in a way that disorganizes the healthy attachment system that relies on safety
3. Sudden shifts of extreme states triggered by parents traumatic past confuse child, i.e., the parent oscillates rapidly between calm and rage

**B. Child's adaptation to caregiver's deficiencies**

1. Cannot use parent to soothe as parent is source of fear
2. Lack of necessary safety and excessive fear creates dis-attachment, disorganization and/or dissociation
3. Stuck in approach – avoidance dynamics with high arousal
4. Develops affect regulation problems, i.e., impulse control, acting out, aggressive or overly controlling behaviors
5. Unsolvable problems lead to overwhelm and loss of confidence, effectiveness or empowerment

**Diane Poole Heller, PhD**

Compassionate Insight. Powerful Tools. Radical Change

**743 Club Circle, Louisville, CO 80027**

**Tel: 303 790 0603 Fax: 303-604-2145 email: [help@dianepooleheller.com](mailto:help@dianepooleheller.com)**

**Go to [www.dianepooleheller.com](http://www.dianepooleheller.com)**

6

6. Two major biological drives are in constant conflict: the innate drive to attach and the instinctual drive to survive.

C. Possible ramifications in adult relationships

1. May experience panic or rage when getting close to another
2. Experience extreme shifts of mood when internally triggered
3. Easily overwhelmed when situations are not clear
4. High level of self-absorption due to inner turmoil
5. Lack of feeling protected
6. Want relationships and also fear relationships will be dangerous or traumatic
7. Difficulty relaxing in the relational field
8. Alternates between shutdown of Avoidant Attachment Adaptation and hyper-activation of the Attachment System of Ambivalent Attachment Adaptation

D. Sample disorganized repair messages

E. Specific clinical interventions and corrective experiences

1. Separating, untangling the attachment system from the survival system:
  - Identify location of threatening behavior
  - Freeze frame the threat to reverse the immobilization response
  - Invite client to do or say any active self-protective response
  - Create clear oasis of allies in a different location to give a safe place for the attachment system to land.
2. Use of clarity to counteract the actual physiology of confusion
3. Installing competent protector to restore safety

F. Initiating and receiving repair in relationships

6