

Bonding for Life



Attachment across the lifespan

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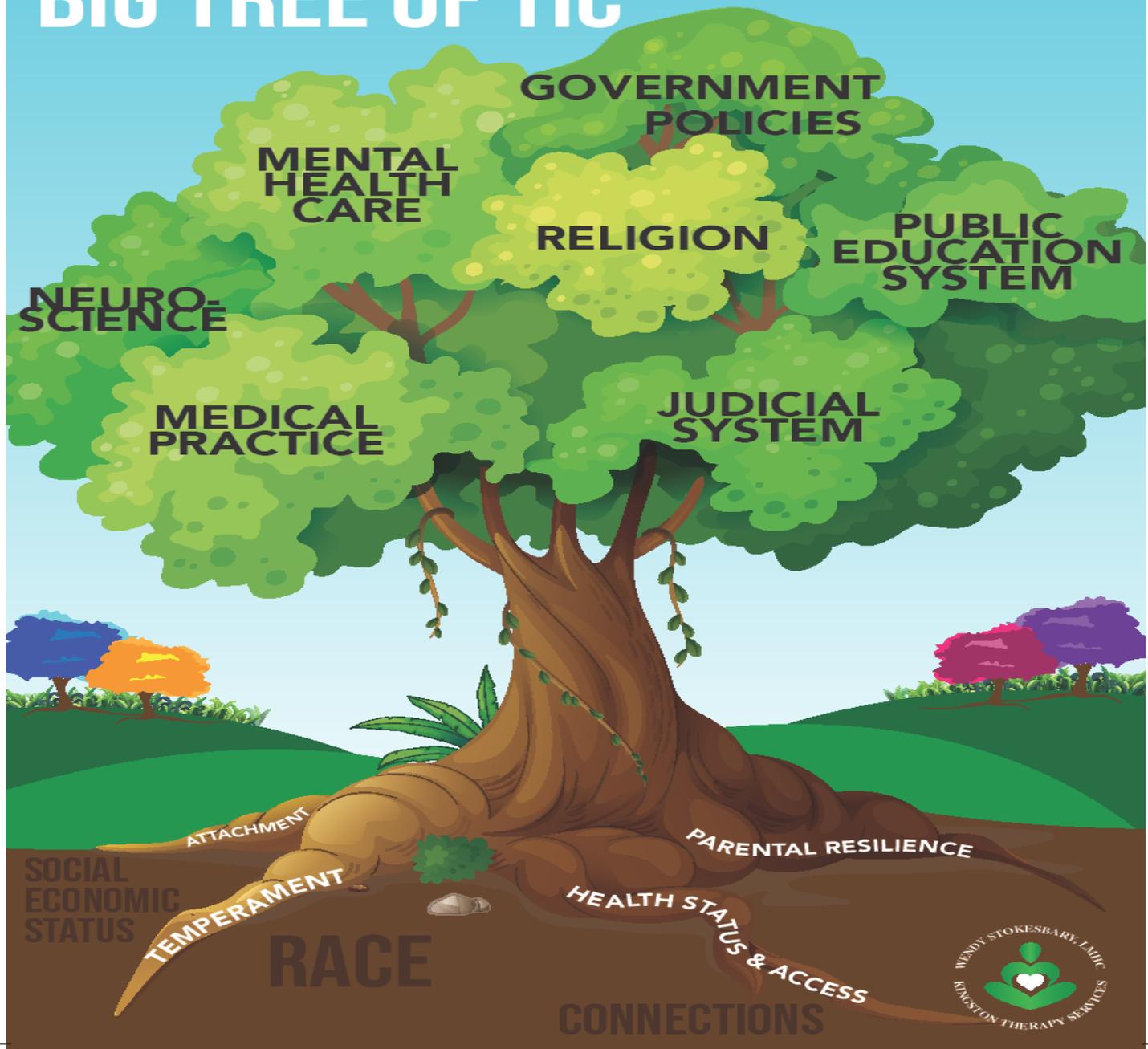
Objectives

- Understand definitions of secure and insecure attachment
- Understand importance of secure attachment for healthy lifelong development
- Understand impact of relationship on infant brain development
- Learn ways to be responsive to the attachment needs of a child you know
(have permission to play!)

BONUS:

Gain access to resources for joining the trauma informed practice movement.

KINGSTON THERAPY SERVICES
BIG TREE OF TIC



Foundations in attachment research

Research shows:

- Bowlby (1969/1982)
- Ainsworth (1978)
- *Circle of Security*
Attachment Based Parenting
: Hoffman, Cooper, Powell
(2006)

- The quality of caretaker (mother) response also called “sensitive responsiveness” predicts the quality of the relationship between child and parent
- Critical for healthy brain architecture for the developing child
- ***Improving caretaker responsiveness increases secure attachment***



SENSITIVE RESPONSIVENESS

Benefits of secure attachment across life span

Childhood

- Better brain architecture: (improved learning and problem solving capacity)
- Improved trust and empathy and healthy relationships
- (social-emotional functioning)
- Improved tolerance to stress (resilience)
- More creative (able to explore)
- Less aggressive behaviors
- Development of self esteem starts here

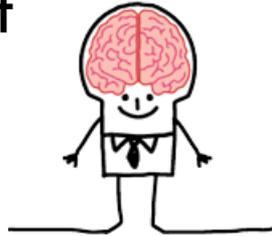
Adulthood

- Lifelong improved functioning in multiple social roles (like higher marital satisfaction)
- Less risk for depression and anxiety
- Less risk for hypertension (likely more correlates will emerge)

<https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2016.01087/full>

Infant mental health

- Neurobiology of Attachment



Brain Architecture=

Goal is a healthy brain with many neural connections

- Eye contact
- Serve and Return
- Quality –
 - ▣ Consistent (80% of the time meeting needs)
 - ▣ Parent is emotionally regulated – calm, mirroring
 - ▣ Sensitive and adjusts to child's need to explore or have comfort

Impact of neglect

<https://developingchild.harvard.edu/science/deep-dives/neglect/>

Insecure attachment:

- Avoidant: child no longer seeks parent for support because they are not reliable. Child tends to not trust adults for soothing and support.
- Disorganized/Ambivalent: child is uncertain about whether caretaker is a source of comfort because the caretaker's response can cause more distress. Child's behavior can be dramatic and disruptive as result.

Numbers of people affected

60% of population demonstrate secure attachment

40% estimated insecure attachment

1 to 3% estimates for RAD

Research and definitions controversial



Reactive attachment disorder

- Diagnosed between ages 9 months and 5 years of age.
- Only diagnosed in cases of extreme neglect or abuse.
- Considered rare
- Controversial in terms of limited data specific to children from Romania from work at Tulane University

(Dr. Matthew Vasquez, University of Northern Iowa)

Reactive Attachment Disorder

- Limited positive affect or smiling
- Unexplained episodes of **irritability**
- Sad, fearful, inhibited, or withdrawn behavior towards caregivers
- Failure to respond to comfort when offered
- Attempts to nurture or soothe oneself during times of distress as opposed to seeking comfort from caregivers, often calming down more quickly without the presence of an adult
- Lack of reaction to caregivers' attempts to interact or to others moving about a room
- Failure to engage in interactive activities or motions such as reaching out when picked up or responding to a game of peek-a-boo

Organizing Feelings



Healthy Social Emotional development means a person has:

- Ability to self soothe
- Ability to ask for support with feelings when needed
- Ability to respond to others' emotions (empathy)
- Ability to have quality reciprocal relationships
- Better self esteem

BEING WITH (CoS)

Eye contact

Match facial

Physical touch

Soothing tone of voice

Label feelings

Resource:

Gottman's emotion coaching

Play time

Language of the child-

- Exploring concepts
- Developing motor skills and manipulating objects
- Developing language
- Turn taking and social skills
- Imaginary play for social practice
- Enjoyment and fun

Resource: Connection Requires 4 things



Adult secure attachment

Highly influenced by our own childhood history with caretakers

Stan Tatkin, Ph.d, Your Brain on Love, the Neurobiology of Healthy Relationships (2013)

- Burdensome, complicated, obnoxious people
- BUT, there's nothing better than when someone gets you
- Sensitive responsiveness- validating and soothing feelings

References and resources

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Harvard Center for the Developing Child

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Key Terms for Trauma Informed Care

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