

Attachment, Trauma and the Brain

Week Two Assignment

Participants Assigned to Activity B:

You are being asked to try the following activity over the next week and share your experience with the activity with the larger group during the upcoming week's class. If you have questions about the activity, please contact the instructor via email or phone to discuss those questions.

One of the importance components of attachment is the way in which a child perceives (internal working models) a caregiver and a child interact. Eliciting these perceptions and internal working models with children and even teens is important in understanding the trauma they have experienced in relationships, the child's anxiety, and the child's possible avoidance in relationships. Specific ways of coaching parents how to decrease their child's anxiety and decrease their child avoidance in relationships can be found once the child's views of the attachment relationship becomes more exposed. As children get older, (pre-teen to teen age) I have found that story telling can support talking about what they intend NOT to talk about in session.

This week, I want you to take 15 minutes and ask a child to complete one of the story stems below or one you create yourself. The child can be a client you work with or a child who belongs to you, a friend or family member. You will start the story with one of the stems provided or you can create your own. You simply read the stem and then ask the child (or teen) to complete the story for you. You may prompt them anyway you would like to respond what would occur next. You can even use paper, pen or toys to support them in showing what occurs next.

The importance of the assignment is to practice tuning into the child's story and thinking about what it tells you about their attachment experiences, their anxiety (child and/or caregiver), and their avoidance in relationships (child and/or caregiver).

You will use the a guide taken from Timothy Page, PhD and his short review of the Narrative Story Stem Technique which will be provided via the "My Classes" Forum connected to this class ...

In class you be prepared to share something about this experience:

- 1) What you found hard about the story stem process?
- 2) What you enjoyed about this story stem process?

- 3) How this technique relates to what you are learning about attachment styles ... anxiety and/or avoidance in relationships?
- 4) Based on your experience, what would you do with the child and caregiver?

POSSIBLE STORY STEMS

Spilled Juice: The family is sitting at the table drinking juice. Bob/Jane reaches for the juice and he/she spills the juice!

Monster in the Bedroom: The mother says to Bob/Jane, "It's time for bed." Bob/Jane goes to his/her room and says, "Oh no! There's a monster in my room!"

Departure: The parents are going on a trip and the grandmother will stay with them.

Reunion: The parents return from their trip.

Uncle Fred: The mother is sitting on the couch, crying. The child enters and the mother says, "I'm so sad because Uncle Fred has died."

OR CREATE ONE RELEVANT TO SOMETHING YOU KNOW THE CHILD HAS EXPERIENCED

A child hears noises in the hall, she/he looks outside ??

NOTE:

Assignment and Story Stems taken from MacArthur Story Stem Assessment and used for examples

Revealing the Inner Worlds of Young Children: The Macarthur Story Stem Battery and Parent-Child Narratives Book by Robert N. Emde, Dennis P. Wolf, David Oppenheim; Oxford University Press, 2003