

## Attachment Theory in Therapy

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| <b>Instructor:</b> Dr. Bita Sharifzadeh, OPQ #<br>10884-07 | <b>Class Instruction:</b><br><br>The length of time will depend on the student's availability. |
| <b>Email for existing clients:</b><br>psy.elite@dbn.life   | <b>CEC #: RA05410-23</b>   |

### Course Syllabus

#### **Problem and Need:**

As therapists, we are often working with clients who have difficulty in maintaining satisfying, balanced, and close relationships. Clients' struggles with boundaries, asking for and receiving help, and sharing are significant barriers to the progress of therapy. Many of these struggles are rooted in clients' attachment history and negative, pessimistic perceptions (i.e., internal working models) of themselves or their significant others.

Given how often we face relationship difficulties in our clients in a clinical setting, this brief course will provide therapists with the opportunity to understand attachment theory, how to assess attachment, and how to use attachment-informed therapy to help our clients create more secure, sustaining relationships.

#### **Course Clientele:**

Psychotherapists who would like to have a deeper insight into their client's relationship difficulties and those who seek to apply an attachment-informed approach in their practice are encouraged to take this course.

#### **Length of Activity:**

The course is 1.5 hours and will be available online on the [DBN Elite](#) website. The course must be completed within 6 months of purchasing it.

## **Course Evaluation:**

The course is pass/fail, no numeric grade will be provided. A passing grade is 75%.

-Final Exam (100%): The course evaluation will be a cumulative exam that consists of 20 multiple-choice questions and true or false designed to assess your knowledge of attachment theory. The final exam will be available to you once you have completed the lecture.

## **Trainer:**

Dr. Bitá is a Clinical Psychologist with over 20 years of experience in treating individuals, couples, and families. She holds a doctoral degree in Clinical Psychology from Concordia University as well as a postdoctoral degree in Psychopharmacology from Alliant University. Her specialties include the treatment of depression, anxiety, trauma, and OCD, amongst others. Her preferred modalities are CBT, mindfulness, and sensorimotor psychotherapy.

## **Learning Objectives:**

By the end of this course, students will learn about:

- 1- Define attachment development and key concepts in attachment theory
- 2- Define assessment methods for evaluating attachment styles
- 3- Explain the relationship between attachment and brain development
- 4- Define attachment-informed psychotherapy

## **Content:**

| <i>Topics Covered</i>   | <i>Suggested Readings/Resources</i>             |
|---|---|
| <b><i>Development of Attachment Theory</i></b><br>-John Bowlby's pioneering work<br>- Key concepts of Attachment Theory<br>- Early contributions: Strange Situation and Attachment Styles | Holmes (2014). 45-78                            |
| <b><i>Assessment Methods</i></b><br>-Assessing attachment in children<br>-Assessing attachment in adults  | Sroufe, Waters, Vaughn & Waters (2021). 170-337 |

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|---|---|
| <p><b><i>Attachment and Brain Development</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Early brain development an</li> <li>- The interconnection of nurture and nature</li> </ul>   | <p>Schore, &amp; Schore (2008). 9-20</p>  |
| <p><b><i>Attachment and Psychotherapy</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Attachment patterns in adults</li> <li>- The relationship between attachment and psychotherapy</li> <li>- Attachment informed psychotherapy</li> </ul> | <p>Bowlby and Attachment Theory (2017)<br/>113-161</p> <p>Slade &amp; Holmes (2019)<br/>152-156</p> |

## **Recommended Readings and Resources**

***Resources for the class are available on [DBN lib](#)***

Bretherton, I. (1992). The origins of attachment theory: John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth. *Developmental psychology*, 28(5), 759.

Bucci, S., Roberts, N. H., Danquah, A. N., & Berry, K. (2015). Using attachment theory to inform the design and delivery of mental health services: A systematic review of the literature. *Psychology and Psychotherapy: Theory, Research and Practice*, 88(1), 1-20.

Holmes, J. (2014). *John Bowlby and attachment theory* (2nd ed., pp. 45-78). Guilford Publications.

Salter Ainsworth, M.D. & Bell, S.M. (1970). Attachment, exploration, and separation: illustrated by the behavior of one-year-olds in a strange situation. *Child Development*, 41(1), 49-67.

Schore, J. R., & Schore, A. N. (2008). Modern attachment theory: The central role of affect regulation in development and treatment. *Clinical social work journal*, 36(1), 9-20.

Slade, A., & Holmes, J. (2019). Attachment and psychotherapy. *Current opinion in psychology*, 25, 152-156.

Sroufe, L.A., Waters, E., Vaughn, B.E., & Waters, H.S. (Eds.).(2021). *Measuring attachments: Developmental assessment across the lifespan*. (pp.170-337). Guilford Publications.