

Secure Attachment Style Workshop - with Anna Morfidis, BSc, WC, LSC

This workshop is geared to all parents who want to learn and understand how to best help their youth become the best version of themselves and carry a positive self-view therefore be able to have more confidence, success, and resilience in adolescent and adult years.

The ages of 0 to about 12 years old are very crucial in a child's life. These are the years that they rely on their primary caregiver for all their needs to be met. This is also the time that they develop their core beliefs about themselves and the world around them based on what they experience. This will later on become their subconscious hard drive and dictate their reality as adolescents (ages of 12-24) and then as adults.

Let us discuss needs first. According to Maslow's hierarchy of needs, we have a certain responsibility as parents to make sure we fulfill those needs in order to help our children feel safe, seen, secure and soothed.

Having the 4 s's satisfied, will undoubtedly lead to a secure attachment style. Why is secure attachment so important?

Because a secure attachment as a child will lead to an adolescent and an adult that will have the ability to form healthy relationships, be confident, have the ability to cope with stress and other health related issues and influence their adult relationships. The most important quality of a secure attachment style is a POSITIVE SELF VIEW. Out of the 4 attachment styles that have been identified, the secure style is the only one that produces a positive self-view for self and others. The rest produce a negative self-view either for self and or for others. (we have the Anxious, Avoidant, and Disorganized style).

Why is positive self-view so important?

Because it literally shapes all of our experiences. It helps to not succumbing to peer pressure as adolescents. It helps with academics as they believe in themselves capable to achieve. It avoids them from being people pleasers or doormats as they think more highly of themselves and they are their own protagonist

in their movie called *Life and the Only Ones* on their pedestal:.) It helps when things go "wrong" in life to not blame oneself. There is a separation there and room is given to the ability to work through life's challenges as they are not absorbed as "their fault". Positive self-view means positive core beliefs about the self. It means that your self concept, the way you think and feel about yourself is positive. It means that you feel good enough, you feel worthy, you feel loved, you feel accepted, you feel included, you feel capable, and so much more.

These core beliefs become the lenses of perception for the adolescent and the adult. Life circumstances and relationships will be viewed through those lenses of perception so how wonderful would it be to make sure that our youth does indeed operate from the above core beliefs as opposed to the ones that sound like I am unlovable, I am not worthy, I am damaged, I am misunderstood, I am not good enough:(

About 40 percent of our population in North America studies show having a non secure attachment style which means 40 percent of our population has a negative self view and unhelpful core beliefs. The good news is that core beliefs can be changed with methods such as CBT (Cognitive Behavioral Therapy), affirmations, etc, so no stressing if you feel it is too late! It is never too late:)

We also now know that no one escapes attachment style. We all acquire one by the age of 12:) Many books have been referring to this important childhood phenomenon such as Dr Nicole LePera in her book *How To Do The Work* and Dr Daniel Siegel in *Brainstorm*.

He also elaborates on the 4 s's we spoke at the beginning.

What really is safe, seen, secure and soothed?

1. The first S involves making the commitment that you won't be a source of fear for your child. It also stresses the importance of reconnecting after a disagreement and apologizing if you're the one in the wrong. "Safe" also means working on providing your child with a sense that home is a haven.

2. Children who feel “seen” have a sense they are acknowledged. As a caregiver, you can help a child feel seen by taking the time to understand what they may be going through and to learn who they are.

3. “Soothed” children are comforted at all times and not only during emotional moments. Siegel’s framework suggests encouraging children through the acronym PEACE:

- Presence
- Engagement
- Affection
- Calm
- Empathy

4. The last of the 4 S’s refers to cultivating a sense of security and trust between caregivers and children. This is often the case when caregivers consistently show up for the little ones in the other three S’s. The “secure” component of the 4 S’s involves encouraging children to understand and be unafraid of their emotions and recognize those in others. Feeling secure means they can be vulnerable, make mistakes, and voice their opinions without fear of punishment or rejection.

THE END

Room for discussion with parents, allow for questions and feedback.

By,
Anna Morfidis