

ATTACHMENT DISORDERS: THE INABILITY TO CONNECT!

Though surely to avoid attachments for fear of loss is to avoid life... Lionel Shriver

WHAT TO KNOW!

- ❖ Individuals who have attachment disorders have difficulty forming lasting relationships as they often lack consciences
- ❖ Attachment Disorders are viewed as the result of early childhood trauma which affects a developing brain
- ❖ Trauma, neglect, abuse, or a separation from the primary caregiver usually occurs during the first three years of life
- ❖ If a child is unable to attach when younger, they may not be able to attach during the rest of their lives
- ❖ People with AD have low self-worth and do not learn to trust; they lack the ability to be genuinely affectionate and caring with others
- ❖ People with AD have a fear of getting close to anyone; safety is a primary drive and they often need to be in control to feel safe
- ❖ Characteristics of those with AD include:
 - ❖ History of abandonment, neglect, abuse, multiple foster care placements, excessive numbers of caregivers, or lack of caregiver responsiveness
 - ❖ Superficially engaging/charming and indiscriminately affectionate with others
 - ❖ Anti-social behaviors such as lying, stealing, manipulating, fire-setting
 - ❖ Destructive to self and others and cruelty to animals
 - ❖ Lack of empathy, caring for others, and genuineness
 - ❖ Poor eye contact and lack of physical affection and closeness
 - ❖ Learning/attentional problems and lack of cause-and-effect thinking
- ❖ Most professionals believe that at the core of Attachment Disorders is deep-seated rage due to unfulfilled needs as infants
- ❖ DSM V recognizes primarily two types of Attachment Disorders:
 - ❖ **Reactive Attachment Disorder** is a chronic condition where people have little or no emotions when interacting with others and appear unhappy, irritable, or sad
 - ❖ **Disinhibited Social Engagement Disorder** where people are not fearful when meeting strangers and may be overly friendly and compliant with them
- ❖ Attachment Disorder in adults refers to the absence of distortion of age appropriate social behaviors
- ❖ Treatment usually involves a combination of therapy, parent education, medication, and family counseling

WHAT TO DO!

- ❖ Learn all you can about AD and have realistic expectations and patience
- ❖ Maintain a safe and stable living situation
- ❖ Keep predictable schedules/patterns to insure a sense of safety and reduce chaos
- ❖ Model caring, affectionate and empathetic behaviors consistently
- ❖ Set clear expectations and boundaries; respond consistently to develop trust
- ❖ Be understanding and respectful yet firm; sincerely apologize when wrong
- ❖ Take care of yourself, manage your own stress, eat and sleep well
- ❖ Seek professional help to develop and enhance bonding among family members

WE CAN HELP!

Call us at **954 755-2885** or email us at DrKimmel@KimmelPsychology.com

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