

Placement stability and attachments: two strands in a single braid

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Our first intimate relationship



Balances exploration and safety

Effective if adults respond



Lifespan

- Childhood attachment influences how we think and feel about ourselves and other people over our lifespan
- Developmental pathways are probabilistic not deterministic
- But attachment disorganization remarkably stable over time and between generations

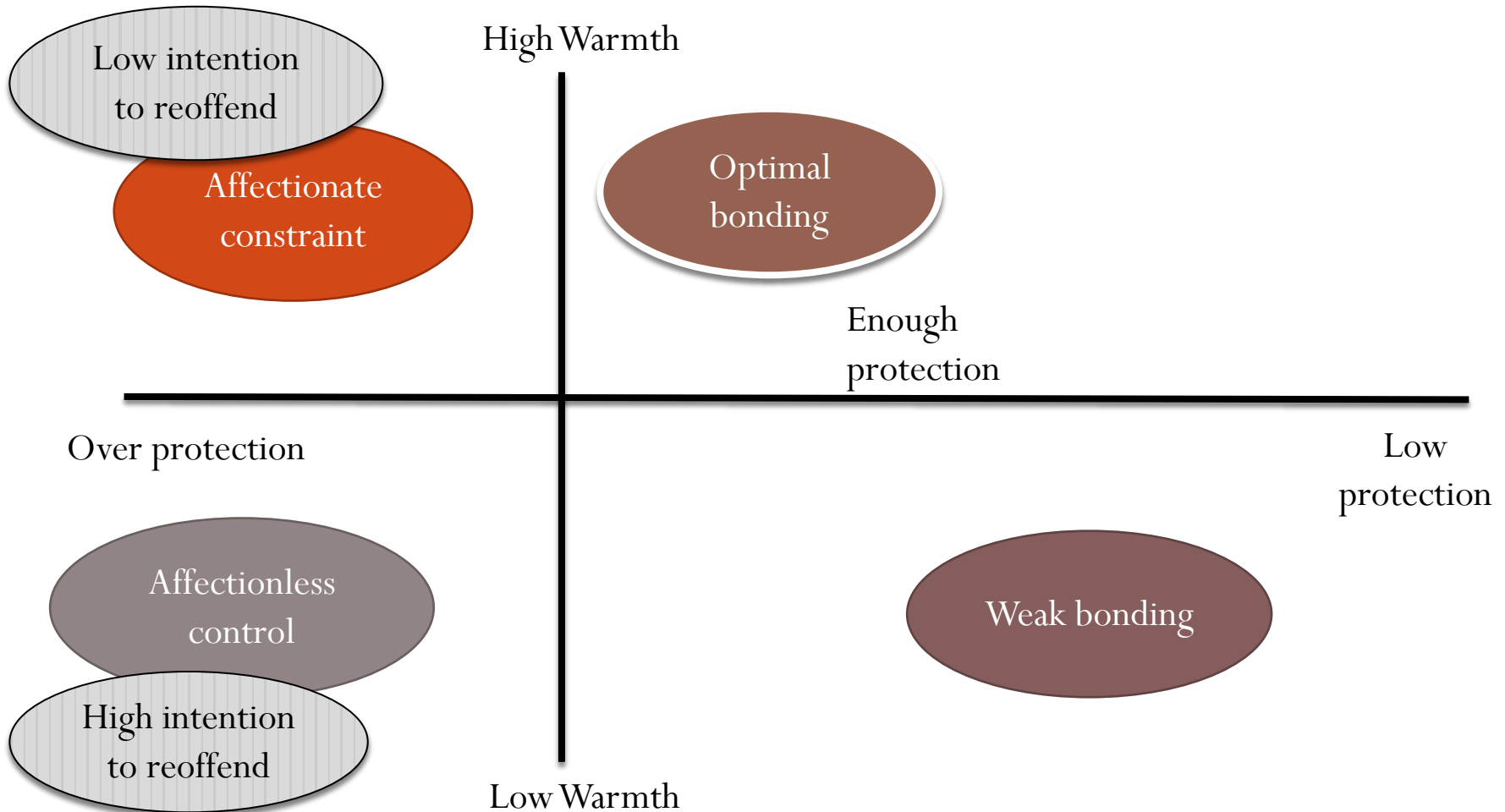
Prevalence of Disorganized Attachment

- 15 – 25% of children have disorganized attachment
- More widespread in families with low SES
- 43% in families with substance abuse
- 48% in maltreating families.
 - Van Ijzendoorn *et al* (1999)
- 80% in clinical samples
 - Lyons Ruth, 1996
- This, along with observational data, suggests that many **socially excluded** children have a disorganized pattern of attachment.

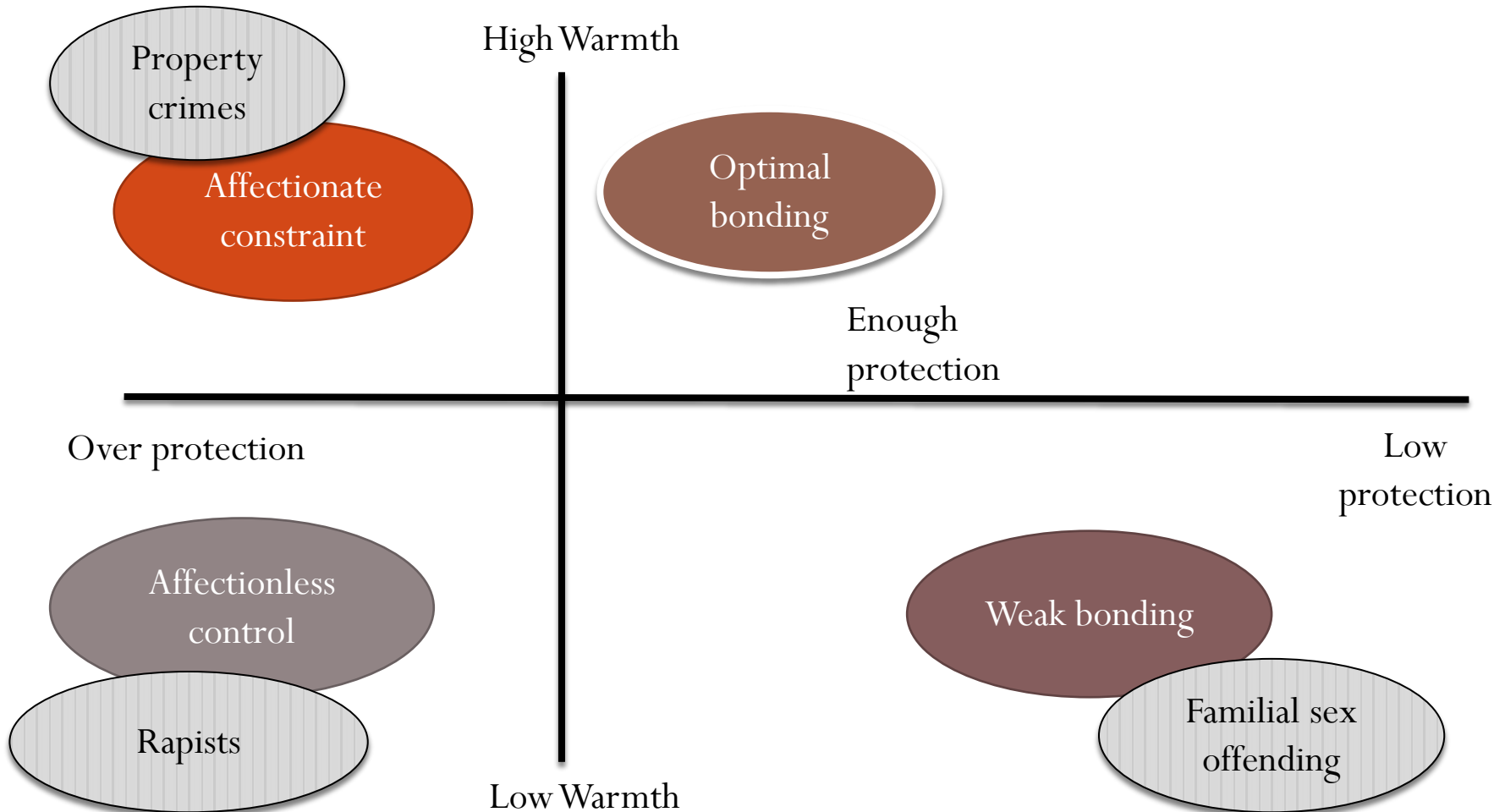
Attachment and mental health

Adolescent attachment style	Coping strategies
Preoccupied	INTERNALIZING: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Depression• Anxiety• Stressful transitions
	EXTERNALIZING <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Delinquency• Substance misuse• Promiscuity
Dismissing	DISTRACT SELF & OTHERS FROM ATTACHMENT CUES <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Substance misuse• Conduct problems

Parental bonding



We should be worried about this!



e.g. Smallbone & Dadds, 1998, Haapsalo *et al*, 1999, Bogaerts *et al*, 2005

Multiple placements

- Attachment organization develops from child's ability to predict caregivers' response to stress and distress
- Recovery happens with safe, stable relationships
- Changing caregivers and different approaches can have a disorganizing effect

Resilient enough placements

- Not all children have the same degree of difficulties
- Clough et al (2006)
- Tier 1: Relatively simple & straightforward needs
 - Placements may be stable because they are relatively low cost
- Tier 2: Deep rooted, complex needs
 - Placement moves may disorganize attachments
 - Difficulties often emerge with adolescence
- Tier 3: Extensive, complex & enduring needs
 - Require expertise, support, long-term commitment
 - May require support beyond childhood

Making a difference

- Sampson & Laub (2005) identified
 - New situations that “knife off” the past
 - More supervision, changed routines, transforming situations
 - Life turning-points include
 - School
 - Work
 - Residential change
- Recovery and change in a planned environment

Bonding for LAC

- Is risk aversion “Over protection”?
- Are unmatched placements “Low protection”?
- Are multiple placements “Low warmth”?

Recommendations

- Support therapeutic approaches that keep attachment in mind in social settings and through individual psychotherapy
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- Two strand integrated approach
 - Social milieu and individual work
- Interventions should take account of how to maintain the child/young person's safe relationships



Chris has published on working with attachment difficulties and provides consultancy, training, and practice-development in therapeutic approaches to early trauma and attachment difficulty

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