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Key concepts of attachment security

A practical guide to caring for children and teenagers with attachment difficulties

Chris Taylor

Jessica Kingsley 2010, £18.99

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Reviewed by *Maureen Perkins*



Written predominantly for foster carers, residential care workers and other professionals who support vulnerable young people in their daily life, Chris Taylor's well-researched book is grounded in 20 years' practice in residential care.

The book focuses on imparting a wealth of information to staff, with the objective of creating a safe and therapeutic environment to promote recovery from trauma. The guide opens with a comprehensive description and definition of attachment theory, showing what different attachment styles look like in children and the specific needs of children with less secure styles of

relating. There are several chapters bursting with practical ideas and suggestions based on training that the author has developed over many years. These include working with conflict, working with anger, managing challenging behaviour, and changing problem behaviour. I appreciated the learning outcomes at the beginning of each chapter and the thorough breakdown of the topics covered in the content section.

The author states his view that there is a place for well-timed therapy for some young people on some occasions but that attachment repair takes place in the relationships of daily life. Thus the book highlights the importance of the understanding and skill development of the primary carers of the young people in residential care.

As a therapist, I would have valued a section dedicated to therapy with looked-after children. Nonetheless, this book has a lot to offer therapists working with young people, particularly those of us who work with the key concepts of attachment theory, namely the relationship and the secure base. The basic assumption that children who have experienced early trauma and disrupted attachments are 'doing the best they can' is a caveat that I will keep in mind.

Overall, I feel this book is well structured, practical and deserving of a place on the bookshelf of any professional working with this client group.

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