

# Attachment Theory

John Bowlby

# Bowlby: Attachment Theory

- Bowlby worked on how babies become attached to the mother figure and what happens when they are separated.

# He found that:

- Young children can experience feelings of loss and grief when separated from loved ones.
- Young children need to develop strong bonds with parents or key carers for healthy development.
- When children are left by families in hospital they go through the following stages: protest, despair and detachment in dealing with people. (working in conjunction with J. Robertson)

# Bowlby's work has influenced:

- Settling in process
- The assignment of key workers to babies and children.
- The use of play workers, and provision for parents to accompany children when in hospital.
- Use of comforters from home

# Michael Rutter

Emotional, personal and social  
development

- Michael Rutter based his work on John Bowlby's theory and found that children are capable of other attachments.
- He believed separation is not always the crucial factor in emotional disturbance.
- Initial failure to form bonds are more significant than disruption

- Some children are vulnerable to stresses of childhood
- If children from warm loving homes are deprived they can recover
- He found that family discord and dysfunction is more influential on children's emotional development than separation
- “ this difference suggests that the association may not be due to the fact of separation of both parents, but rather to the discord and disturbance which surrounded the separation”  
Rutter

# Research methods

- Used correlation studies on the groups of adolescent boys
- Used clinical interviews and questionnaires to measure the quality of family relationships
- Tested the possibility that anti-social behaviour could correlate with other factors than maternal deprivation

# Effectiveness of implementing

- Children – workers knowledge of their home circumstances
- Parents – recognition that separation is not always the crucial factor in emotional disturbance in their children
- Children who are more vulnerable to stresses of childhood will benefit from support from knowledgeable workers
- Children can recover from early deprivation when provided with support from key workers or other significant individuals