

Babies Are Amazing!

Jane Dickens

Health Visitor/Perinatal and Infant Mental
Health Champion

Main Points

- What is the Parent Infant Relationship
- What does a good relationship look like
- Why is it important
- How do we know this
- Understand some of the main terms used
- What to notice if it's not working so well
- What we can do to help
- Watch a couple of short films
- Questions at the end



Begin Early



What can new-born babies do?

The old story:

- Poo
- Wee
- Sleep
- Feed
- Cry

The new story:

Babies are exquisitely sensitive and social beings:

Make relationships, they need a companion

Recognise care giver by voice before they are born, and within minutes post birth they know their mother's smell and recognise them by sight

Make space in their mind for another

Communicate

Orientate to faces and their brains benefit from the bio-chemical release that is triggered by mutual gaze

A few months on: discriminate care givers emotions, follow signals and adapt their behaviour to keep the parent close

Have innate altruism

Have innate sense of justice

Love and comfort does not spoil a baby

Babies are amazing!

How Can We Do That??

Demistifying terminology and science...

Attachment bonding mind-mindedness

Parental sensitivity and warmth

mother-ease voice

mutual gaze

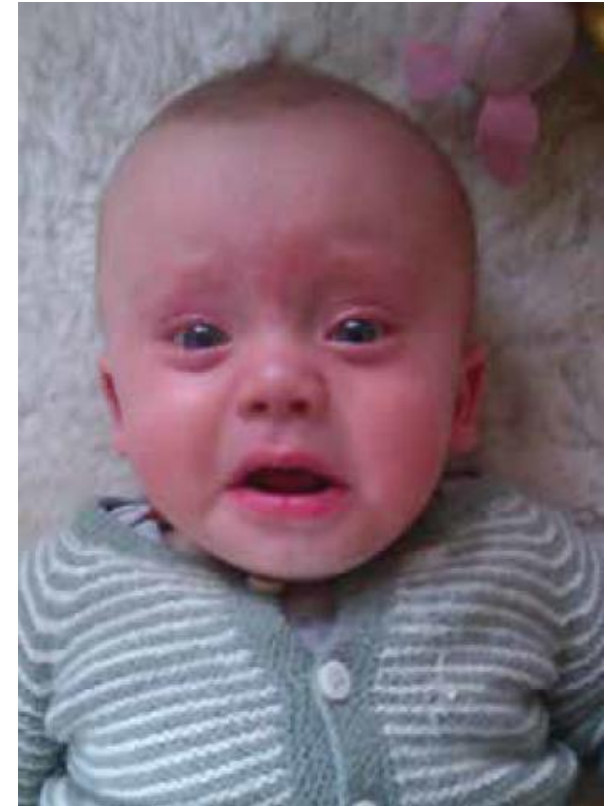
Cues

Synapses neurons hormones

Perinatal mental health

Infant mental health

Responsive parenting



Perinatal Mental Health

- The mental health of the mother during pregnancy until 1 year after birth of the baby

Infant Mental Health

- This develops from pregnancy and continues to develop in response to the way the baby is responded to and the environment the baby is in

Attachment

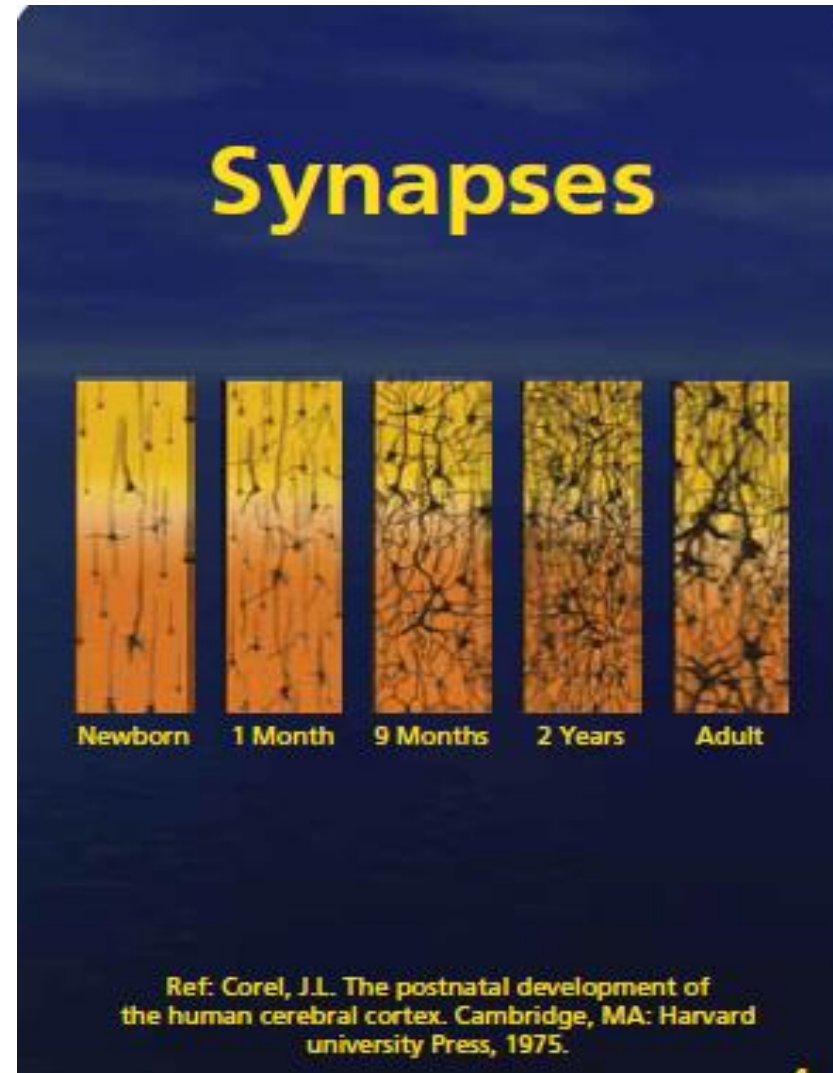
- The emotional bond between child and parent/main care giver.
- Relates to social and emotional development in early childhood.
- Secure Attachment is a sign of a good relationship.
- Also other types of attachment
- Attachment style can change depending on the situation

Parent Infant Relationship



What does a Good Parent Infant Relationship Look Like?

- Key components of secure attachment
- Mind-Mindedness – the parent’s ability to see the child as separate from themselves, with own thoughts, feelings, needs
- Parental Sensitivity – is the parent responding to the baby in a way which matches the baby’s needs? -
Mother-ease voice, tone, choice of words, touch, body language



Born Ready to Relate



Bradford District Care
NHS Foundation Trust



Mutual Gaze



Cues



8

Engagement Cues

- Responses
- Play simple interactive games – peek-a-boo
- Simple rhymes
- Talk, smile, use mother-ease voice
- Baby is most interested in the human face, doesn't need toys or screens/TV to be happy

Disengagement Cues

- Responses
- Cuddle,
- Give space to be
- Deep breath yourself to have a moment to watch baby and wonder
- Talk in soothing voice
- Baby may just need a short break before engaging – every day experiences can be overwhelming at times.

Too Much



Support Parents Support Practitioners

- Interventions – use of Parent Infant Relationship Resource Cards
- Training
- Supervision
- Support to refer on to other services when needed



Developing Empathy



Bradford District Care
NHS Foundation Trust

- Supporting parents to have positive relationships with their children
- Supports the long term social and emotional development of the child
- Improves the infant's mental health with life-long benefits
- Reduces violence in society

Thank You

jane.dickens@bdct.nhs.uk

