Attachment Internal Working Models

Structure & Content

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Attachment Internal Working Models

- **Based on interactions with close others people develop two types of ideas and thoughts about their attachment relationships – what we term "attachment internal working models)**
  - Self: evaluations of whether the self is worthy of receiving love, affection, care and support
  - Other: evaluation of whether the attachment figure is a reliable, responsive, trusting caregiver
  - People hold either positive or negative views of self and other (and the in between)

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Attachment Internal Working Models

- **The ideas and thoughts we have about our attachment bonds with our attachment figures comprised of 4 building blocks** (Collins & Allard, 2001, Gillath, Karantzas, & Fraley, 2016).
- **These building blocks guide our behaviour with our attachment figures:**
  1. Memories and experiences: All the information we store in our minds about past incidences and our interpretations of those incidences
  2. Beliefs, attitudes and expectations: "Relationship are a lot of hard work" (belief), "There's no need for me waste time in relationship" (attitude), "My parent tends to reject me" (expectation)
  3. Goals and needs: Feel secure (goal), success of this relates to a how well our needs are met, and distress is reduced
  4. Plans and strategies: Plans and strategies to attain goals and needs which influence behaviour. Contingent upon attachment histories

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Attachment Internal Working Models ("Schemas") & Early Maladaptive Schemas (EMS)

- **EMS share many parallels with attachment internal working models**
- **These parallels exist somewhat by design**
- Young and colleagues (2003) **drew upon the concept of attachment internal working models to inform the conceptual development of EMS**

- **EMS:**
  - Dysfunctional "themes or patterns consisting of memories, emotions, cognitions, and bodily sensations" (Young et al., 2003).
  - Relate to the self and others
  - Shaped (in part) by experiences with primary caregivers (i.e., attachment figures) early in life

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