The DMM as a Comprehensive Theory of Adaptation

A bio-psycho-social model of distress and adaptation

Theories in the DMM

- Bowlby
  - Evolutionary biology
  - Ethology
  - General systems theory
  - Psychoanalytic theory
  - Information processing
- Ainsworth
  - Empirical evidence
  - ABC Strategies
  - Strange Situation
  - Developmental pathways

After Bowlby
- Piaget
- Behavioral learning theory
- Cognitive neuroscience
- Vygotsky
- Social ecology
- Chaos (complexity) theory
- Gestalt theory
- Genetics & epigenetics
- Person-centered therapy
- Family systems theory
- Epidemiology, etc.

DMM Attachment is a theory about protection from danger

- Danger experienced by one’s parents
- Danger experienced by the self
- Danger to one’s children
- The DMM focuses on functional formulation of knowledge of danger for treatment

Psychological & behavioral organization

- Protect the self
- Select a reproductive partner
- Protect one’s progeny to their reproductive maturity
- Safety & sex: That’s all there is!

Strengths approach

- Flexibility of development & functioning is our species major strength.
- Flexibility permits adaptation to many niches.
- Plasticity permits individuals to adapt to changing circumstances.
- Individual differences are an advantage to a population of humans.

Three systemic processes

- Adaptation
- Maladaptation (Szasz, Eysenck)
  - Is suffering
  - S-P strategies used beyond developmental appropriateness
  - Used in inappropriate context
  - Preclude other functions
  - Unpleasant side-effects
- Intervention
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Potential levels for intervention:
- Biology
- Neurology
- Psychology
- Relationships
- Context

How does the brain adapt to fit the demands of the environment?

Parallel Arousal Systems

Arousal:
- Pain
- Fear
- Anger
- Desire for comfort
- Comfort
- Bored
- Tired
- Sleep
- Depression

Sexual Arousal:
- Sexual pain
- Sexualized terror
- Sexual aggression/submission
- Romanticism
- Affection
- Satisfaction
- Afterglow
- Sleep
- Numbness

Multiple Dispositional Representations

Life cycle development

Transformations of information
- Truly predictive
- Erroneous prediction
- Omitted from prediction
- Distorted for prediction
- Falsified for prediction
- Denied prediction
- Delusion prediction
**DMM Self-Protective Strategies in Infancy**

- True Cognition
- Integrated
- True Negative Affect

**DMM Self-Protective Strategies in the Preschool Years**

- False Positive Affect
- False Cognition

**DMM Self-Protective Strategies in the School Years**

- False Positive Affect
- False Cognition

**DMM Self-Protective Strategies in Adolescence**

- False Positive Affect
- False Cognition

**DMM Assessments**

- CARE-Index: Infancy
- CARE-Index: Toddlerhood
- Strange Situation: Infancy
- PAA: 2-5 years
- SAA: 6-13 years
- TAAI: 16-25 years
- AAI: adulthood
- Parents’ Interview
Systemic formulation
- Family formulation, within cultural context
- Functional explanations around protection & reproduction
- Relational understanding of disorder (set aside notion of individual illness)
- Replace it with interpersonal adaptation to threat: known but intolerable, unknowable, unspeakable, and uncontrollable.

Reallocation of resources
- Epidemiological prevention
- Modify service structures & providers, avoiding over-use of services
- Use therapists as transitional attachment figures
- Select therapeutic tools from full array
- Act in the zone of proximal development for family members
- Focus on 'critical cause' (Crittenden & Ainsworth, 1989)

IASA Family Attachment Protocol
- Blind, reliable assessment
- Valid assessments
- Transparent assessments (visible to court)
- Integrated with reports by other professionals
- Family Functional Formulation
- Evidence-based recommendations

Novel hypotheses & treatment implications
- Post-natal depression & psychosis
- Eating disorders
- Autism
- ADHD
- Asthma
- Pervasive developmental disorder
- Child sexual abuse & sexual offending

An array of treatments
- Biology
- Genetic, Epigenetic Tx
- Neurology
- Biochemical, EMDR, Healing
- Psychology
- Talk therapies
- Relationships
- Professional development, Advocacy
- Context

Attachment, adaptation, & hope
- Reframe disorder as suffering that comes from exposure to danger or unsuccessful reproduction
- Recognize the strength it takes to develop strategies to survive these conditions
- Respect the value of the strategies used to protect the self, one’s partner, and one’s children from adversity
- Capture the power of using our minds in relationships to find new ways of adapting to the present.
- Golden rule of treatment: Do unto patients and clients as you would have them do unto others.