



THE UNIVERSITY
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**EARLY RELATIONSHIP
BUILDING –
SO EVIDENT IT GOES
WITHOUT SAYING OR
NOT EVIDENT SO IT GOES
WITHOUT SAYING?**

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Please acknowledge that the land we meet on today is the traditional land for the Kurna people and respect their spiritual relationship with their Country. Please also acknowledge the Kurna people as the traditional custodians of the Adelaide region and that their cultural and heritage beliefs are still as important to the living Kurna people today.

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Acknowledge pronouns, the tyranny of time and a seemingly generic overview.

What is a relationship

- **the state of being connected**

We might pick and choose...

Babies have no choice in this.

That means a profound responsibility.



History

Some people saw babies as involved not blank slates...

- **Spitz (1930's) discovered infants and children could die if they were not connected with or touched: they could receive adequate nutrition and health care, but failed to thrive from lack of loving contact...**
- **Bowlby (1958) identified attachment as a lasting psychological connectedness between human beings.**
- **Klaus and Kennell (1965) ...the process of attachment is about mothers [parents] and babies falling in love...**

What do you think this baby is thinking? [and feeling]?

History

- **Ainsworth (1973) saw attachment as a deep and enduring emotional bond that connects one person to another across time and space...**
- **Rubin (1967, 1975) identified prenatal attachment and possibly instigated Kangaroo care**
- **Winnicott (1985) identified the notion of the good enough mother [parent]**

All cited in Music 2015.

More recently...

Porges (2011) identified the Vagus nerve as central for secure attachment/connection rather than it just being a balance between SNS and PSNS.

A normally developing child will develop a relationship with any caregiver who provides regular physical and/or emotional care, regardless of the quality of that care BUT

For this to occur meaningfully we need good enough early parenting free of immediate influences that stir up anxiety, defensiveness, fear or aggression.

Relationships for babies

- **A baby cannot exist alone, but is essentially part of a relationship...when you describe a baby you are describing a baby and someone... *Winnicott 1987***
- **Giving birth is the most overwhelming psychological upheaval a woman experiences and [then] she has to start a relationship with her newborn baby...**
- **A relationship is the connection between parent and baby critical to health and a special attachment the baby cannot live without... *Bruce Perry 2010***
- **Relationship and connection are interwoven...**



New Baby Must Haves



<https://static1.squarespace.com/static/52053e89e4b019bfc9d36d60/t/573100382b8dded92ff4049b/1462829834180/>

Issues

There is a veritable industry offering popularised therapies/strategies that have hijacked and/or corporatized babies and parents including making considerable money out of attachment (Prior and Glaser 2006).

Almost all education focus before birth is on labour and birth then breastfeeding.

Social knowledge of PND is poor.

First Month Essentials



<https://www.bing.com/images/search?view=detailV2&ccid=ZffEc3zC&id=83C3509A8657C59C81CE1305D98FFC3BBE14F075&thid=OIP.ZffEc3zCa8vhftIF5pMZRgHaHa&mediurl=https%3a%2f%2fs3.amazonaws.com%2fsbeh-media-bucket%2fFirst-Month-1.jpg&exph=700&expw=700&q=Things+That+Need+Babies&simid=608004897967508901&selectedIndex=8&ajaxhist=0>

But...

We don't really know what constitutes relationship building/quality from the maternal perspective – new focus on fathers to some extent.

Research findings focus on/commonly applied to pathology not normality – so presumably everyone knows about relationship building and can just do it themselves? We don't need to tell them...

So evident it goes without saying?

- **SA Perinatal Practice guidelines - no mention of relationship building**
- **Attachment concerns related to pathological situations**
- **No specification about how to nurture this – just to watch out for it not being right – nothing in antenatal care, nothing in normal labour – but that birth trauma may effect bonding**
- **Preconception care – main goal to reduce risk factors with the psychosocial focus on violence or possible PND, money, difficult life events, social support.**
- **In Assessing the Parent Infant Relationship the purpose is to give clinicians information and guidance in identifying women at increased risk of disrupted early relationship with their infant(s) not promoting and supporting this for all women and their partners.**
- **Pregnancy policies in SA - nothing**

Not evident so it goes without saying?

- **Pivotal example of astonishing omission – Midwifery continuity of care and care-provider – no evidence at all for promotion of relationship building/attachment.**
- **3 distinct meta-analyses have suggested that maternal sensitivity to infants' attachment needs, the putative main precursor of infant attachment, accounts for only a moderate portion of the variance in attachment security.**
- **We need a greater understanding of patterns rather than a generic type recipe for relationship building.**
- **We don't know enough about oxytocin.**

Who is responsible?

- **Parent(s)/Health professionals?**
- **Families/Communities?**
- **Societies/government? Babies don't vote**
- **How much do we care?
What value do we place on this relationship?**
- **Gerhardt (2014) insisted it's not just about facilitating more secure parenting styles, but also for interventions at a neighbourhood, workplace, and macro-social level to create more secure environments and indeed a more secure society...**

Not evident so it goes without saying?

Start with available preconception health care, education and support.

Review pregnancy and postnatal care - we have made the process of pregnancy, birth and postpartum so procedural and risk averse that the intrinsic intimate compelling elements of early relationship building are no longer evident – in the hurry to get everything covered/checked off the list we have left off the evident and we undermine that by the limited evidence.

We need to rethink ...

Crying - Letting a baby cry during the first six months is not advisable that includes controlled crying/comforting – that is not addressing the real problem.

Sleep - responding promptly and warmly to the baby's cries - talking - will create secure, organized attachment and relationship building concomitant with plentiful support - - *a 30 day Auslying In.*

These are both lucrative industries that seemingly pit baby against parent.

Erikson (1963) Trust (and hope) vs Mistrust

So evident it goes without saying?

Bruce Perry (2010) – empathy is vital because we are born for love – feeling into, feeling with, seeing the world from baby’s perspective – this is a lifelong process of relational interaction

...you cannot love yourself unless you have been loved and are loved. The capacity to love cannot be built in isolation.

Where to begin?

Leonardo da Vinci - The same soul governs the two bodies

Brazelton and Cramer (1990) - the Earliest Relationship is from conception

Vivette Glover -

Begin before birth



Reference list

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(In slide citations contained in most of above).



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