Introduction

There are five infant development theory modules this term. These provide an introduction to some key themes connected with the infant's earliest days.

Learning outcomes
Trainees should understand:

- What shapes the emotional environment into which the child is born
- Our current knowledge of the infant's earliest experiences and capabilities
- The importance and nature of early attachments
- The effects upon the developing child of premature birth and of maternal depression

Method
Trainees should study the texts or other material in the relevant sets below, either A) or B), for each module and then complete the test. The test should be completed at least two days before the module's seminar. Questions about the course material can be posted on the course message board, where trainees and staff can join in a discussion about the issue in advance of the online seminar.

Trainees are expected to be able to discuss this course material in the seminar.

Bibliography

Required reading
These texts should be read before the start of the course.
Background reading


Module 1: Parents

Introduction

At birth a child enters into a world that is created by its parents or carers. Along with the infant’s inherited potential, it is the parents’ relationship with the child and with each other that plays a crucial role in the child’s earliest development.

In this module we look at the nature of the parental relationship and its effect upon the child. The second set in the module considers the role of the father – the mother-infant relationship figures in many of the following modules.

Learning outcomes

Trainees should:

A) The parental couple

- Understand the effect of the parental relationship upon the child

B) Fathers

- Understand the roles and challenges of the father

Course material

A) The parental couple


B) Fathers


Further reading


Module 2: Pregnancy and birth

Introduction

Pregnancy and birth are powerful experiences for a woman, experiences that help to shape her relationship with her newborn child. In this module we consider the unconscious aspects of these experiences and how these form the basis for the child’s early environment.

Learning outcomes

Trainees should:

A) Pregnancy

• Understand the psychological processes that take place within the mother-to-be during her pregnancy

B) Birth

• Understand the mother’s experience of normal and complicated birth

Course material

A) Pregnancy


**B) Birth**


**Further reading**


**Module 3: Beginnings**

**Introduction**

This module considers the infant’s early feelings and capabilities

**Learning outcomes**

Trainees should:

A) Life’s first feelings

- Understand the importance for the infant’s development of its early emotional environment
B) The infant’s earliest capabilities

- be aware of the infant’s early capabilities

Course material

A) Life’s first feelings


Harlow, H. Harlow's Studies on Dependency in Monkeys
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OrNBEhzjg8I

Nova Life’s first feelings
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZBaSTKMLNU


Spitz, R. (1952) Emotional deprivation in infancy
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvdOe10vrs4

B) The infant’s capabilities

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=USBPydiLbY0


Further reading

Module 4: Attachment

Introduction

This module introduces attachment theory.

Learning outcomes

Trainees should:

A) An introduction to attachment theory
- Understand the basis for attachment theory
- Know the characteristics of each attachment type
B) Disorders of attachment

- Understand the aetiology of each attachment disorder
- Recognise the impact of early disordered attachments on later relationships as a child and as an adult

Course material

A) An introduction to attachment theory


Longroad ‘Attachment Robertson, Bowlby & Ainsworth’
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KVskAjrCkSU

B) Disorders of attachment


Further reading

Module 5: Two early difficulties

Introduction

This module looks at two significant early difficulties that are experienced by some infants: the challenges of premature birth and the impact of maternal postnatal depression. Either of these experiences can have a profound effect upon the infant's early and later development.
Learning outcomes

Trainees should:

A) Premature birth

- Know the effects of various stages of prematurity and the support that is required by the premature infant
- Understand the issues faced by the parents when the infant is premature

B) Postnatal depression

- Understand the aetiology, nature and consequences of maternal post-natal depression
- Understand the treatment and support options that are available for the mother and the infant

Course material

A) Premature birth


B) Maternal postnatal depression


Further reading