

Poster Presentation Abstract

The following proposal for a poster presentation is a review of the literature on the potential benefit to utilizing mindfulness to foster secure attachment in early parent-child relationships and increase parental efficacy. Parenting is an important process that occurs in the lives of many people as they seek to promote and support the developmental, emotional, cognitive, and social development of a child. Psychiatrist John Bowlby has contributed greatly to the field of parent-child relationships and pioneered the work in attachment theory. The security in attachment between a parent and child influences the development and ability of the child to relate to others and to his environment. Various factors can affect a parent's ability to develop a secure attachment with her child and thus her parental efficacy. Insecure attachment and increased negative parent-child interactions can cause children to have behavioral, cognitive, and emotional issues and affect their adulthood.

Mindfulness has a long-standing origin but has become a topic of increasing psychological interest. Bringing awareness to the present moment and other tenets of mindfulness have crossed into psychological interventions and treatment. Research into this relatively new concept in psychology has indicated beneficial results in the treatment of several psychological disorders including depression. The promising indications from mindfulness research with depression has demonstrated the potential usefulness of mindfulness for insecure attachment and parenting interventions.

Mindfulness training and practice in tandem with parenting programs has indicated positive effects between parents and their early adolescent youth. An ideal direction to take mindful parenting research is into preventative and early intervention stages as it has been indicated that the earlier parenting intervention and preventative measures can occur, the better outcome children will have. Mindfulness practice has been indicated to be effective in treatment for depression and preventing recurrent depressive episodes and rumination. Maternal depression has been linked to insecure attachment and child behavioral issues. Mindfulness practice can address automaticity that can dominate parent-child interactions and lead parents to react to their children in a negative pattern. The nonjudgmental awareness mindfulness offers can break the pattern of automaticity and allow parents to respond to their children rather than react, paving the way for more positive interactions and better child outcomes. The positive impact of mindfulness on individuals' intra-psychic space has been established and should be further

examined for usefulness in cultivating positive interpersonal dynamics. Interpersonal growth and understanding focused on the parent-child relationship can disrupt intergenerational transmission of insecure attachment and increase parental efficacy. Increasing the quality of the interpersonal, parent-child relationship utilizing mindfulness can cultivate secure attachment in the relationship and improve child outcomes.