



The Attachment Network of Manitoba

November 2012

Newsletter

HELLO MEMBERS!

This year we decided that we would publish our newsletter in the fall so that we could share it with you at our 10th Anniversary Conference here in Winnipeg, Manitoba. There are so many dedicated members who have contributed their time, energy and wisdom over the years, and have worked hard to make big things happen. However we call ourselves a network because a network is about connections, and every connection is important in keeping the vision moving and growing. This means that each and every one of us is important to the whole. So....get plugged in! Enjoy the conference, visit our website, and join us at a Network meeting some time. Welcome one, welcome all!

Julia Wellwood, Newsletter Committee

SALUTE TO... MARGE CHOMOWAY

Submitted by Julia Wellwood



It was with pleasure and anticipation that Joanne Brown and I sat down recently with Marge to dine and chat and honour her contribution to the Attachment Network of Manitoba. What we heard that night was the story of a remarkable woman on an unwavering path.

Marge was born and raised on a farm near Saskatoon, which she describes as an old fashioned farm. The rhythm of farm-life revolved around intensive labour without the big machines of today. Electricity didn't arrive on the farm until she was five years old. As the land sustained the family, the family in turn sustained her, and developed in her the deep, strong, roots that have carried her through her life.

A formative event came for her when she was about 14 years old. Her aunt had died and it was decided among the adults that she, of all the kids, was most suited to

moving into her cousin's home to help them through this difficult time. During this absence, she learned what family meant to her, and looking back she can see that she was meant to care for others and it began at an early age.

Marge told us about her lifelong belief that "by having correct intentions, things will happen" and how she has always been very clear about this and it is with this clear intention that her career fell into her lap. After leaving the farm, she had been working as a seamstress when she decided that she needed to do something different – but it had to be pragmatic – so she entered nursing. The first job that fell into her lap was at the University of Saskatchewan in Psychiatry. This was in the 1970's and she recalls how it was a time of unhindered exploration and experimental research at the university, which was well suited to her nature. At one point, as she was describing her work with teen patients, she told us what she had seen. "These kids didn't understand a word that the psychiatrists said, so I translated for them!" This story stood out for me, this ability in Marge to see a need and cut to the chase with a direct and practical response.

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When Marge moved to Regina, a job with a newly created crisis unit also seemed to fall into her lap. She was planning to upgrade her nursing skills when she was encouraged to apply for this job, based on her work in Saskatoon. This unit was a cutting-edge collaboration between the police and social services, and was created to provide crisis intervention for suicidal clients as well as domestic violence and child abuse situations. She got the job and by age 26 was acting supervisor.

Eventually Marge hop-scotched to western Manitoba where she worked as a Family Services Worker from 1980 to 1985 then moved on to Winnipeg in 1986. Her extensive training and experience in the area of child abuse opened more doors. She worked part time in family preservation and then moved into the Foster Care Program where she remains to this day. It was when she attended the Dr. Diane Benoit conference in 2002, The Importance of Nurturing Babies, that she reconnected with Laurie Marcella, her friend and former neighbour in Regina. Laurie, who was working at Healthy Start For Mom and Me, drew her into the newly forming Attachment Network.

Marge speaks of attachment as “a viable lens for understanding children”. As she listened to Diane Benoit at the conference, it clarified for her what she had been dealing with over the years, especially regarding disorganized attachment. The videos were key to that understanding. In her work in Foster Care, this learning has led to enhanced assessment skills regarding stability as well as to having practical applications that are supportive to foster parents.

Over the years, Marge has brought a wealth of knowledge, experience, and wisdom to the Attachment Network. She is a free thinker, unhampered by limitations. The possibilities are as wide as the prairie sky and she can take an idea right through to the pragmatics of implementing it. She has a knack for knowing where the cutting edge is, and like a seamstress, she then quietly and steadily works to create something new.

10TH ANNIVERSARY REFLECTIONS ON THE ATTACHMENT NETWORK

From Then to Now



Cathie Gold: Coordinator,
New Directions Parenting Centre, Winnipeg

In the ten years since the inception of the Attachment Network, there has been an awakening in the social services field. Even our language is changing! We think less of ‘using effective discipline techniques’ and

of ‘managing a child’s behaviour and are more likely to speak about ‘meeting a child’s need for connection’ and of ‘recognizing take charge moments’. The ability to reframe a child’s behaviour as information rather than manipulation has allowed us to find qualitatively different and more effective ways of working with families.

From Modified Interactional Guidance to Circle of Security we in Winnipeg have had access to world class training in Attachment. There are a growing number of practitioners who provide groups and individual services based in Attachment concepts and language. Child Welfare agencies are increasingly aware of the importance of attachment, and even the justice system is becoming more informed about the impact of attachment trauma on children and on families.

At the Parenting Centre (a program of New Directions), attachment now informs all of our services. The importance of early attachment experiences reverberate throughout the lifespan and impact a person’s ability to enter positive relationships, find a caring partner, parent effectively and feel good about themselves. Attachment informed services do not look much different from other service models. We work with individual families and with groups. We see parents and children apart and together as required. Attachment informed services have more to do with the way in which relationships are consciously nourished. One of the most important lessons that all the training in attachment has provided is: when we create safety in relationship, and when families feel heard and valued, good things happen.

As someone who recalls sitting at the initial Network meetings where members brainstormed ideas for raising community awareness about attachment and for accessing more training, I have to commend the Network. I believe that all the dreams we listed a decade ago have been actualized, and that many other ideas we could not even imagine at that time have been actualized.

Congratulations to the Attachment Network on your first decade.

Surely, two of the most satisfying experiences in life must be those of being a grandchild or a grandparent.

Donald A. Norberg



Csilla Przbislawsky: DramaTherapist,
Aulneau Renewal Centre

It is hard to believe that it has been 10 years already since I was first invited to attend a meeting for what was in the process of becoming the Attachment Network of Manitoba. I was enticed to join the network because I had been inspired by Diane Benoit in her first appearance in Winnipeg in October, 2001, and I was looking for ways to gain more training in assessment and intervention techniques in Attachment. Fast forward through ten years of countless hours of training, coding, studying, travelling, then later offering trainings,

continuing my own training, coding, studying, ... you get the picture. My professional degree was a Masters degree in Drama Therapy, in which Attachment theory was a theoretical component. Some time in the possibly near future I will be returning to my Alma Mater to give a three day training in Attachment assessment to Drama Therapy students and more specifically, how it informs our work as Drama Therapists. I am amazed at how this has come full circle. I was introduced to Attachment theory through Drama Therapy, and now I am introducing Drama Therapists to Attachment assessment. These two entities are now inextricable in my clinical practice. As I reflect on how this came to be over the last ten years, I am reminded of several remarkable individuals without whom this would not have happened. Yvette Savard-Preston for spearheading the Attachment Network, Jean MacKinnon and Mary Warmbrod for writing the grant application for bringing the MIG training to Winnipeg, Irmie Nickel for envisioning Attachment as a major focus at the Aulneau Renewal Centre, Joanne Brown for bringing us the Circle of Security training, all of the international trainers that we have had the opportunity to learn from, and countless others. Thank you to all of you for your vision, time, energy and commitment.



I can remember what flavor of ice cream cone my grandmother and I shared at Disneyworld; but most of the time, I can't remember what day it is. I guess it depends on what you think is important.

Katherine, age 13

Julia Wellwood,

FASD Outreach Program, Winnipeg

When I look back over the last ten years and think about my work with children and families affected by Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder, I realize how far we have come: individually, as a program, and in our community. The introduction of accessible attachment theory and informed practice has brought about change across my work community as we begin to share a lens and common language which leads to a shared understanding of goals and outcomes for children and families. Three key things happened for me in the time leading up to the formation of the Network. First, I heard the definitive statement made at a clinical case conference that children with FASD don't attach (so just move the child). I couldn't accept that! In this same period, I watched a child on my caseload transform from a disregulated, disorganized toddler in one home to a noticeably organized and engaging child in her new adoptive home. In six months! Something important was happening for her and it was connection. Thirdly, in 2002, my colleague Karen Johnston and I attended the Dr. Dianne Benoit Conference "The Importance of Nurturing Babies". We were transfixed, along with hundreds of other attendees, by the lens that was offered for understanding what we were seeing in these children and their families. And better yet, there was a third day that was all about what to do about it! You could feel the excitement and the readiness in our

community for this kind of information and it was from this energy that the Network was born. I am profoundly grateful for the efforts of the Network over these ten years, for creating the opportunities for training, and for the Network's big picture vision of always seeking ways to improve the lives of children and families.

Jean MacKinnon,

Therapist, Aulneau Renewal Centre

When I was asked to reflect on the last ten years, what comes to mind is that I've noticed is how committed everyone in the Network is, how professional they are, and that they are the leaders in their agencies. They come from a wide variety of settings, hospitals, daycares, non-profits, and government agencies, and are pulled together by attachment. Even if someone is only involved for a year, they easily adopt the philosophy, the key points of attachment. They carry it back to their workplaces and apply it and so the knowledge has spread and broadcast in wider circles. What I have observed is that the attachment theory, the gist or core concepts are so easily applied, which I have done in my work with parents. I have also experienced on a personal level what a difference attachment theory has made in the rearing of my own daughter.



If you think my hands are full you should see my heart!



Anne-Shirley Clough

It is hard to believe that it has been 10 years since I had the privilege with 11 others to train in Attachment Therapy. I was so excited to see this training in Winnipeg because I had already been introduced to a form of attachment work 5 years earlier in Toronto. I was willing to do the 6 month training even if my workplace would not sponsor me and pay for my time. The reason that I was so interested and excited is that in my 30 year career working with "people problems" this is the most effective work I have experienced to improve relationships in our world. The beginnings of the problems we humans have in the teenage and adult years all start in our childhood relationships with our early caregivers. Many of our current beliefs about how to take care of and show love to children are still outdated. All people need this information and these techniques. Thank you to my fellow classmates for carrying on this excellent work. Congrats Attachment Network.

Leslie Johnston,

Chairperson, Attachment Network of Manitoba

As this issue of the newsletter goes to print, we are just days away from fulfilling our long-time dream of hosting a national conference on attachment. The excitement is palpable, and in some ways it is hard to believe that after all the months of planning and organizing, this coming Tuesday we will welcome hundreds of delegates to our 10th Anniversary Cross-Canada Attachment Conference! Wow. In ten years, this network has grown from a small grassroots group of



people who felt strongly about the issue of attachment, to an organization that has sponsored conferences with some of the biggest names in the attachment world, including Ellen Moss, Bill Whelan, Gabor Mate, Daniel Hughes, Bruce Perry and now – Daniel Siegel! Along the way, we have funded training for clinicians, offered free workshops to community groups, produced two first-rate educational DVD's, and provided a gathering place for people to come together and share ideas and expertise on the topic of attachment. There have, of course, been highs and lows; times of turmoil and uncertainty, and times of celebration and success. Through it all, this network has been steadfast in holding true to the core values in our mission statement; we continue to work toward the goal of promoting and supporting practices that enhance secure attachment across the life span.

Thank you to everyone who has played a part in this important work. And welcome to anyone who is contemplating becoming involved in the network. The work continues, and we welcome all the fresh ideas and energy you have to offer!

RESOURCE HIGHLIGHT

Healthy Baby Healthy Brain Website



The Best Start Resource Centre has launched a new website for parents: www.HealthyBabyHealthyBrain.ca. This website offers parents many suggestions to help them support their baby's brain development. The website has 15 short videos on topics such as nutrition, sleep, play, literacy, physical activity, attachment, self-regulation, discipline, stress, etc. The website is for future parents and for parents of children aged zero to three.

The videos show real-life situations. Some of the videos include expert commentary on the parent-child interactions. The website also contains links to useful additional resources. All the videos can be shared through online social networks.

The website is organized using the following key messages:

- *“Start early.”* Outlines the importance of prenatal health and of early interaction with babies.
- *“Love builds brains.”* Focuses on attachment, on baby's needs and on developing self-regulation in young children.
- *“Playing builds brains.”* Provides suggestions of ways to boost baby's brain with everyday fun and games.

- *“Health builds brains.”* Offers health and wellness tips related to nutrition, physical activity and sleep.
- *“Baby's world matters.”* Emphasizes the importance of creating good environments through routines, child-proofing and reducing stress for young children.

The website will be promoted through the Ontario Early Years Centres and through health care providers. Parents have indicated that they receive most of their parenting information through these sources. This website was developed by the Best Start Resource Centre of Health Nexus, a not-for-profit organization based in Ontario.

*I do not love him because he is good,
but because he is my little child.*

Rabindranath Tagore



PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

Our Stories



Our Journey with Attachment

As told by Lorna Sherlock ECE II,
Strathmillan Children's Centre, Winnipeg

When Mary* would be playing, she would make all kinds of little noises and flit from one thing to another. As she played with others, everything would go pretty good until a child did not do exactly what she wanted them to do. As she got more and more disorganized and not sure of things she would get louder and louder to the point of screaming. Her episodes would get to the point that she was throwing whatever was next to her, pushing over furniture and hurting whoever was next to her. These could last from anywhere from fifteen minutes to over an hour.

Mary never had contact with her birth mother and her dad lives with a serious mental illness. Although, her grandparents ended up being foster parents for her there was a lot of back and forth between them and the Dad. At five years old, this little girl had been in a chaotic and frightening situation for most of her life.

At five, Mary was very creative and knew all her numbers, letters and even could read quite a few words. BUT, at five, her emotional development was more like an 18 month old. When things did not go quite right, she would break down, cry and scream and throw things. We knew that relationships were important and that she needed some control over her chaotic life but we felt we were missing something.

We came to realize that Mary has never had someone to make her feel safe and secure. Think how frightening and scared this little girl is most of the time. We needed to build a circle of security, and used the model of the Circle of Security graphic to guide us in understanding Mary's needs and not be tricked into reacting to her behaviours.

We had one or two staff put the effort into developing a relationship with her, someone to go to or someone that would come to her when she did not feel safe. Mary didn't need someone to get angry with her for making noises, or make her clean up everything she had just messed up or put her in a 'corner' when she hit someone. She needed someone to help her feel safe; to show her caring, empathy and social skills. She needed a relationship that met those needs that she couldn't express herself. She needed a relationship that would support her regulation even when her own body felt chaotic or deregulated. She needed someone else to say "I am here for you no matter what".

We had a paradigm shift that had us thinking more about our own behaviour than this little girl's behaviour and what we needed to change to support her. As we spent more time with her just enjoying who she was and not worrying about her cleaning up every mess she made and mostly just being there for her, things did improve somewhat. We got to the point that most of the time we could meet her needs prior to her falling apart.

It has been a journey of hard work that has taught us a new level of relationship building we can use with all of our children.

*name has been changed



Our Story of Joy and Delight

As told by Brigitte Inshall, Executive Director, 7 Oaks Child Care Centre, Winnipeg

In the winter of 2012 we began to examine the room with staff working with a group of sixteen 4 year olds, many of whom had challenges with self-regulation. As we observed the children and adult interactions, there were a number of situations where children's play broke down and staff stepped in to help with co-regulation.

As we observed, we asked a very simple question as we observed a child playing by herself, "Do you think that child is delighting in her play"? From there.... we wondered if staff bring joy and delight into the room....yikes!! Of course they do I wanted to shout! Is it that invisible that one has to ask? As it happened the staff in the group we were in had been video taping as a means of better understanding the children. The Team Leader in the group and I sat down one afternoon to watch the tapes....I suggested that we shift our goal of observing the children to observing the adults in the room and specifically look for sounds/body language of

joy and delight. Well, much to our surprise and dismay, we saw very little....maybe because staff were on edge due to the video camera....maybe I'm grasping at straws....I know!!

Now what? Well, we decided to take a small portion of video in which the Team Leader was taped....brave soul that she is, and show it at a staff meeting, inviting discussion about joy and delight. Over the past year we have had many discussions about the importance of body language and the message it sends for both children and adults. We showed the snippet of video and opened the floor for discussion and reflection. We talked about the tones we use with each other and children, we talked about those amazing moments of discovery that children have....and how we show our delight in their findings.....and how we delight in each other's successes....I'm sure that you can just imagine how the conversations grew from there.

Is there more? We continue to remind each other about "being in the moment" and to celebrate the excitement of children's wonder with our own sense of delight, and I dare say wonder! Our staff have fired up their documentation by making visible their interpretations of children's discoveries and how sharing with families the reflective thinking of staff in expanding children's play and learning. We continue the adventure of consulting children in making our emergent curriculum rich with observation through the Thinking Lens tool and balancing our own delight with that of the children.

Through being guided by these simple attachment concepts, we have become more aware of how children regulate themselves in the face of the challenges in a child care environment and how vital our role is in helping to co-regulate when children need support. Perhaps more importantly we are learning to better understand and respond to children's varying styles of attachment and how vital we are in setting a tone of joy and delight. We are in charge!

TRAINING OPPORTUNITY



Circle of Security
INTERNATIONAL

Early Intervention Program for Parents & Children

Circle of Security Parenting Course Facilitator Training

Submitted by Joanne Brown and Sandra Franz

Three of the founders of the Circle of Security concept have developed a parent course that is suitable to be delivered individually or in groups, to parents, or to workers. The course comes with a manual and a DVD, which is divided into 8 chapters. This course guides the parent toward an understanding of the "going out and coming in" concepts of how children make use of their parent, to the needs they have as they go around the circle, to the trademarked concept of shark music, miscues and finally repair. Each chapter is approximately 12-15 minutes in length, offering plenty

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of time to promote discussion, and engage the parent in reflective thought. The DVD is visually stimulating; with many moments of real parents and children displaying the concepts, a chapter can often take 1-2 hours to complete.

We have had the opportunity recently to take the 4-day training for this from Bert Powell, when it was offered in St. Cloud, MN. There were participants from all over the United States, some who did licensed home visiting, some who worked as therapists, and people who work with many different populations. The Attachment Network of Manitoba is interested in bringing this training to Winnipeg, perhaps in the next year, and we wanted to give



Bert Powell

you a heads up to start looking for funding. The 4-day training costs \$900 USD, and participants receive the license to use the material, the DVD, the manual and handouts. Bert Powell, Glen Cooper or Kent Hoffman would be delivering the training. Since the training is so thorough, the DVD and manual so comprehensive, and since their resources are small, they do not require any supervision after the training. Participants are good to go. We are thinking this would be suitable for Families First, school staff, daycare staff, clinicians, and more. If you know you'd be interested in taking this course, please contact the Network at attachmentnetwork@shaw.ca. In the New Year, we will see if we can bring that training here in spring or fall, 2013.

Sandy and I have now run two groups with this model and I have completed running it with daycare workers. We've had fabulous responses from participants. The visuals really make it come alive, it "holds" the parent through their learning and makes it safe to explore not only their children's behaviours, but theirs in response. We're hoping to continue to offer 2 groups a year at the New Directions Parenting Centre, and I hope to offer 2 or perhaps 3 groups to daycare workers throughout the year.



Joanne Brown (L) with Bert Powell and her colleague Sandra Franz (R)

LITERATURE REVIEW

Through the efforts of the Attachment Network, we have had such an amazing array of attachment gurus come to Winnipeg over the years. They have imparted their wisdom, have helped to deepen our understanding, and have taught us new skills. The following is a little sampling of quotes pulled from their various books to remind you of the learning received or to entice you to read more. Plan on buying a book? Please consider going to Amazon through our website and help the network earn a percentage of the sales!

Julia Wellwood



Daniel Siegel

Quotes from *The Developing Mind: How Relationships and the Brain Interact to Shape Who We Are* and *Parenting From The Inside Out*

"Stories are universal—they are found in every human culture on the planet. Stories are found throughout the human life span—they are present in interactions between adults and children early in life and continue to play a role in relationships into maturity. Stories may be uniquely human—no other animal appears to have the narrative instinct and storytelling drive. Stories involve logical sequencing of events, but they also play a powerful role in regulating emotions; in this way, stories are a good example of how emotion and analytical thinking are intertwined".

"We are always in a perpetual state of being created and creating ourselves."



Gabor Mate

Quotes from *In the Realm of Hungry Ghosts: Close Encounters with Addiction*

"At heart, I am not that different from my patients—and sometimes I cannot stand seeing how little psychological space, how little heaven-granted grace separates me from them"—so I wrote in the first chapter.

"One of the greatest difficulties we human beings seem to have is to relinquish long-held ideas. Many of us are addicted to being right, even if facts do not support us."

"I've remarked before, even for my addicted patients, their greatest shame and regret is their failure to parent their own children, a sorrow that rarely fails to bring tears to their eyes."

"A key factor triggering the stress response is the way a person perceives a situation. We ourselves give events their meaning, depending on our personal histories,

temperament, physical condition, and state of mind at the moment we experience them. Thus the degree to which we're stressed may depend less on external circumstances than on how well we are able to take care of ourselves physically and emotionally."

"We may not be responsible for the world that created our minds, but we can take responsibility for the mind with which we create our world."



Dr. Bruce Perry

Quotes from *The Boy Who Was Raised as a Dog: And Other Stories from a Child Psychiatrist's Notebook--What Traumatized Children Can Teach Us About Loss, Love, and Healing*

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

"Fire can warm or consume, water can quench or drown, wind can caress or cut. And so it is with human relationships; we can both create and destroy, nurture and terrorize, traumatize and heal each other"

You are the bows from which your children as living arrows are sent forth. Khalil Gibran



Dr. Daniel Hughes

Daniel Hughes is the author of *Building the Bonds of Attachment: Awakening Love in Deeply Troubled Children*.

The quotes below are paraphrased from his website:

"The following represents some general principles that are characteristic of my treatment and parenting model and, I believe, congruent with attachment and trauma literature:

Eye contact, voice tone, touch, movement, and gestures are actively employed to communicate safety, acceptance, curiosity, playfulness, and empathy. Opportunities for enjoyment and laughter, play and fun, are provided unconditionally throughout every day with the child.

The adult's emotional self-regulation abilities must serve as a model for the child. The child's resistance to parenting and treatment interventions is responded to with acceptance, curiosity, and empathy. The child's avoidance and controlling behaviors are survival skills developed under conditions of overwhelming trauma and they will decrease as a sense of safety increases."

Perfect love sometimes does not come until the first grandchild. - Welsh Proverb



BABY BLUES
THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2012



The Attachment Network is very grateful for the excellent support provided by Guy Dugas at Spright.ca. You have been generous with your time and your expertise and have always been very accommodating of our needs. Thank you!

