

SECURE ATTACHMENTS AND COUPLES

Kathy Egan October 2008

As I have commented many times previously counselling couples who want to strengthen and improve their relationship is such a joy and privilege.

Recently I learned about some new ideas regarding couples relationships.

The idea was that in all long term relationships couples desire to have a secure attachment to their partner. We know children need secure attachments to their principle caregiver for healthy growth, security and well being. So too do couples yearn for this attachment.

Secure attachment in couples is evidenced by:

- Genuine greetings, hello and goodbye
- Sharing in some special way before sleep
- Feeling safe to ask for needs to be met, saying what it is they like and don't like.
- Able to see the other's perspective, sharing decision making.
- Wanting the best for the other.
- Feeling OK when the other is away, eg out with friends, away on business.
- Feeling secure and confident in their personal life. The more securely dependent we are, the more separate and independent we can be.

"Dependency is an innate, healthy part of our beings and not something we grow out of"
(Bowlby, 1988)

When attachment is not secure, trust has gone from the relationship, fear, anger, sadness and shame/disgust enters thoughts, feelings and actions. Misinterpretations occur frequently.

Couples can be seen at the Family Centre's Accord psychological and counselling service as fee paying clients. We are also approved by the Family Court to see couples who can apply for up to 6 sessions at no cost.

Accord psychological and counselling service has a registered psychologist, child psychotherapist, psychotherapists, counsellors and family therapists who are available at reasonable fees to see any one in the community. They are trained in working with people through attachment issues.

Self referrals are happily accepted.

Don't let your financial situation prevent you seeking help. Subsidies are available and fees are negotiable.

Some problems which can be worked through are:

Low to medium mental health issues

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| •Depression | •Anxiety | •Stress |
| • Separation, parenting plans | •Strengthening relationships | • Grief |
| •Parenting difficulties | •Attachment disorders | •Loss |
| •Trauma | •Teenage difficulties | •Domestic Violence. |

Some feedback we have received from former clients says:

"Big change for me, thank you.

Great experience, well needed, thanks.

Compassionate, in tune, constructive and healing. I have learned a lot about who I am.

Counsellor helped me to think more clearly and to realize I am not a bad person. I now know how to get on with my life in a more positive way and to like myself.

Our relationship is now back on track. We are just so much happier, thank you. We were lost and have now found each other and like what we see.

Counselling has helped us to be better separated parents, see the children's needs not just our problems."

All the clients who filled in evaluation forms stated that counselling had made a difference in their lives and relationships.