
Improving Patient Treatment with Attachment Theory

Jonathan Hunter • Robert Maunder
Editors

Improving Patient Treatment with Attachment Theory

A Guide for Primary Care Practitioners
and Specialists

 Springer

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Preface

In 2001, as consultation-liaison psychiatrists working ‘in the trenches,’ we were trying to understand why patients behave the way they do, and how we could help our colleagues in medicine, surgery, family practice, and all disciplines of health care with the struggles that ensued when their patients experienced their care to be unsatisfactory or threatening. We found attachment theory to be immensely useful in this challenge. A PUBMED search for new articles that year on ‘Attachment and Medicine’ would have turned up 23 articles. In 2013, the same PUBMED search generates 91 new articles in the preceding year. The field has built continuously over time, with increasing momentum, so that now it feels like we are at the cusp of general acceptance of the relevance of an attachment perspective. To capture the breadth of this activity, in *Improving Patient Treatment with Attachment Theory*, we have engaged leading researchers from North America, Europe, and Australia to apply this new perspective to the practical work of caring for patients.

In our work we have been generously supported by colleagues at Mount Sinai Hospital, both in the department of psychiatry and the hospital as a whole. Bill Lancee was crucial in supporting our early focus on attachment and collaborated on several studies. Molyn Leszcz as our Chief, colleague, and friend has been unwavering in his interest and pragmatic support. Consultation-liaison team members Ellen Margolese, Lesley Wiesenfeld, and Mary Preisman have been generous with their time and flexibility, and our colleagues Gary Newton, Susannah Mak, David Tannenbaum, Peter Ferguson, Hillary Steinhart, Gordon Greenberg, Mark Silverberg, and Janice Halpern welcomed us into their teams to do this work. In the wider scope of the University of Toronto, Gary Rodin and Susan Abbey encouraged this work with parallel work of their own on attachment and health. We cannot overstate the value of our students, who have, through their enthusiasm for this perspective, and incisive questioning, clearly contributed to the development of these concepts, and we are delighted to have had some part in supporting a next generation of attachment researchers, including Thao Lan Le, Christina Maar Andersen, and Andrea Lawson.

Lastly, in a book about the significance of relationships it would be an oversight not to emphasize the importance of those closest to us – Nancy, Lynn, and our kids – they have not only supported our efforts and tolerated the time away from family

spent on this task, but brought their own reflections, experiences, and queries to bear in a way that deepened our focus on the subjective experience of being ill and hospitalized, reminding us from close to home of the inevitable fears and challenges of being a patient.

Toronto, ON, Canada

Jonathan Hunter
Robert Maunder

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