

Improving Foster Parent Retention through Effective Training:

Attachment Theory

Jillian Anderson, Luisa Baldino, Maddy Galvin, Brenden Kelety,
Titan Mitchell, and Kacie Sakamaki

INTRODUCTION

Grand challenge: The shortage of foster parents causes decreased placement stability leading to negative impacts on foster children.

- At any given *day*, there are around 437,000 children in foster care.
- 67% of foster children are placed three or more times within the span of two or more years (Koh); Multiple placements leads to emotional and behavioral issues (Usher)

Attachment theory: Psychological, evolutionary, and ethological theory concerning relationships between humans (Fraley)

- Originated with John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth (Bretherton)

Why is this important?: Allows an understanding of the behaviors of foster children who have experienced placement instability

- Lack of permanency leads to disrupted sense of stability, trust issues, and difficulty forming new relationships

Our solution: attachment theory training module for foster parents

- Teach parents about attachment theory, giving them an understanding of their child's behaviors & how to approach it

APPROACH

Discussion with Foster Parent

A former foster parent agreed to discuss with us his experience in the foster system:

- Though he personally had a very positive experience as a foster parent, he has seen many people leave the community due to issues with the children
 - He emphasized the significance of **accessible** education to the parents, especially when it comes to dealing with children who have experienced **trauma**
 - "The more exposure to information, the better."

Learning Module (link)

Online, interactive learning module created in TalentLMS

Retention Quiz (link)

Used to gather feedback from student participants

RESULTS & CONCLUSION

10 participants assisted us by working through the entire module and providing us with feedback in the retention quiz:

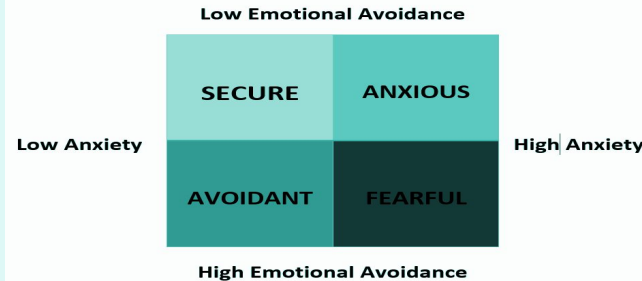
1. Technology (Difficulties advancing through module; Problems with scoring of quizzes)
2. Engagement (More visuals recommended; More examples recommended)
3. Effective at teaching the information: average rating of 3.1/5
4. Accurate and important information was presented in an organized manner

We have since revised the module according to the information given by the participants. Future Direction:

The most clear next step involving this grand challenge would be designing more learning modules (perhaps an in-person one) on other psychological concepts. Once those have been created, reaching out to local foster care workers/experts could assist us in taking action towards perfecting and implementing the modules in the foster system.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & REFERENCES (link)

ATTACHMENT TYPES



Graph showing the 4 different types of attachment organized by their levels of anxiety and emotional avoidance.