

# Understanding Adult Attachment within Supervision

A workshop for supervisors and supervisees



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Hopkins

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## Course Aims

1. Refresh your knowledge on the four functions of supervision and Morrison's '4 x 4 x 4' model of supervision
2. Understand how the reflective learning cycle (Kolb) relates to the Dynamic-Maturational Model of Attachment and Adaptation (DMM)
3. Understand how the attachment strategies of supervisor and supervisee impact on the process of supervision.
4. Understand the 'cascade effect' of supervision and the crucial role of attachment-informed supervision in helping practitioners to notice, process and make use of powerful feelings that emerge during work with clients.

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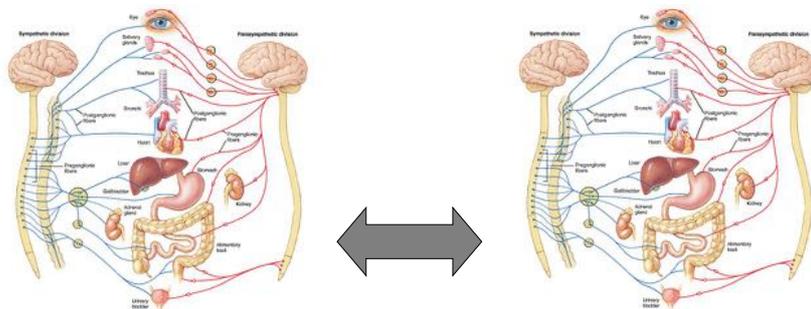
"If relationships are where things go wrong, then relationships are where they are going to be put right." (Howe, 2011, IX)



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## The *Bio-Psycho-Social* Approach (Interpersonal Neurobiology)

we affect each other



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## Four Principles of Interpersonal Neurobiology:

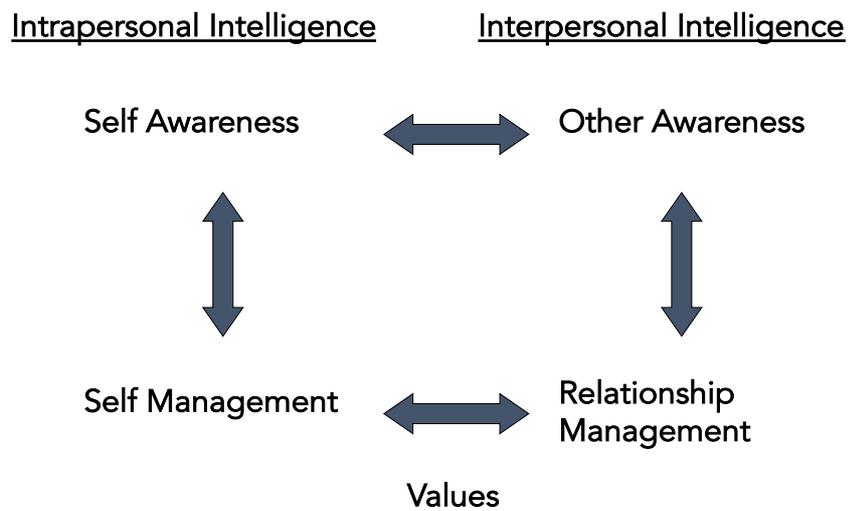
- The brain is a social organ linked to other brains.
- The brain is an organ of adaptation and change.
- Relationships are our primary (early) environment.
- The brain can only be understood in relation to other brains.

From: L. Cozolino,  
*The Healthy Ageing Brain*



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## The Emotional Intelligence Paradigm (Morrison 2006)



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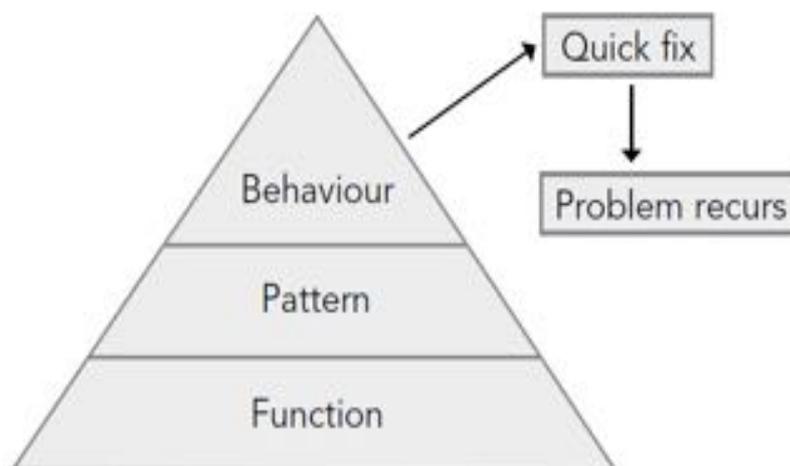
## Attachment & the Turbulent Workplace

- Attachment is a lifelong inter-personal strategy to respond to threat/danger which reflects an intra-personal strategy for processing information (Crittenden 2000)
- Attachment triggered by anxiety, threat, overload
- Attachment driven responses seek:
  - To find safety in the face of danger
  - Comfort in the face of distress
  - Closeness in the face of isolation
  - Predictability in the face of chaos
  - Role/job containment in the face of overload or conflict



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## Behaviour (symptom), pattern and function (meaning)



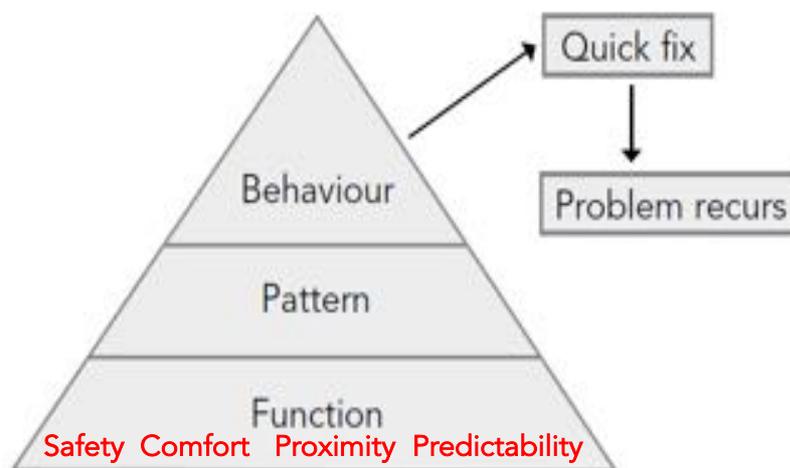
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Through the attachment lens, we can see most behaviour at times of stress, threat or danger (professional or personal) as an attempt to achieve comfort, find safety or avoid feeling abandoned, in chaos or in emotional distress.

*Safety, Comfort, Proximity, Predictability....*

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Behaviour (symptom), pattern and function (meaning)



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## Key Figures



John Bowlby

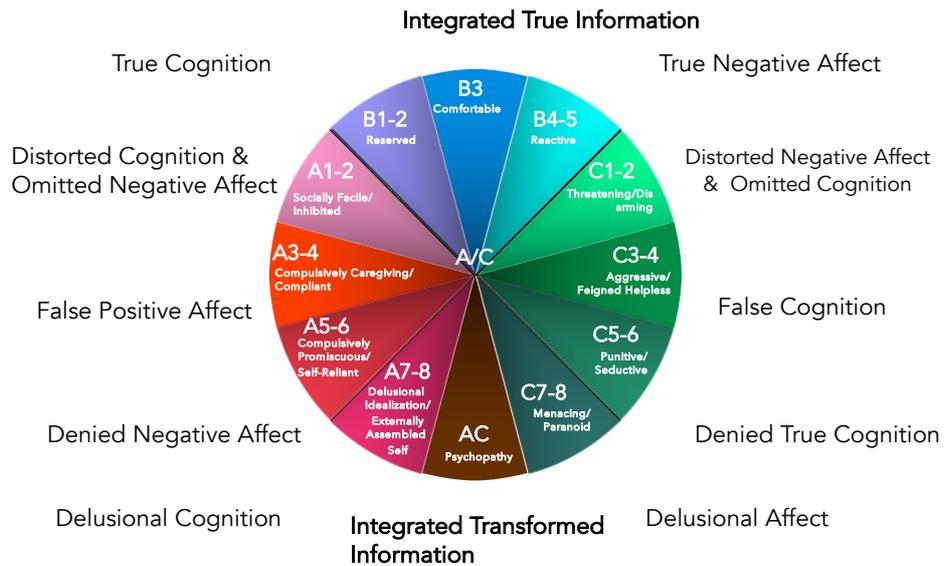
Patricia Crittenden

Mary Ainsworth

Mary Main

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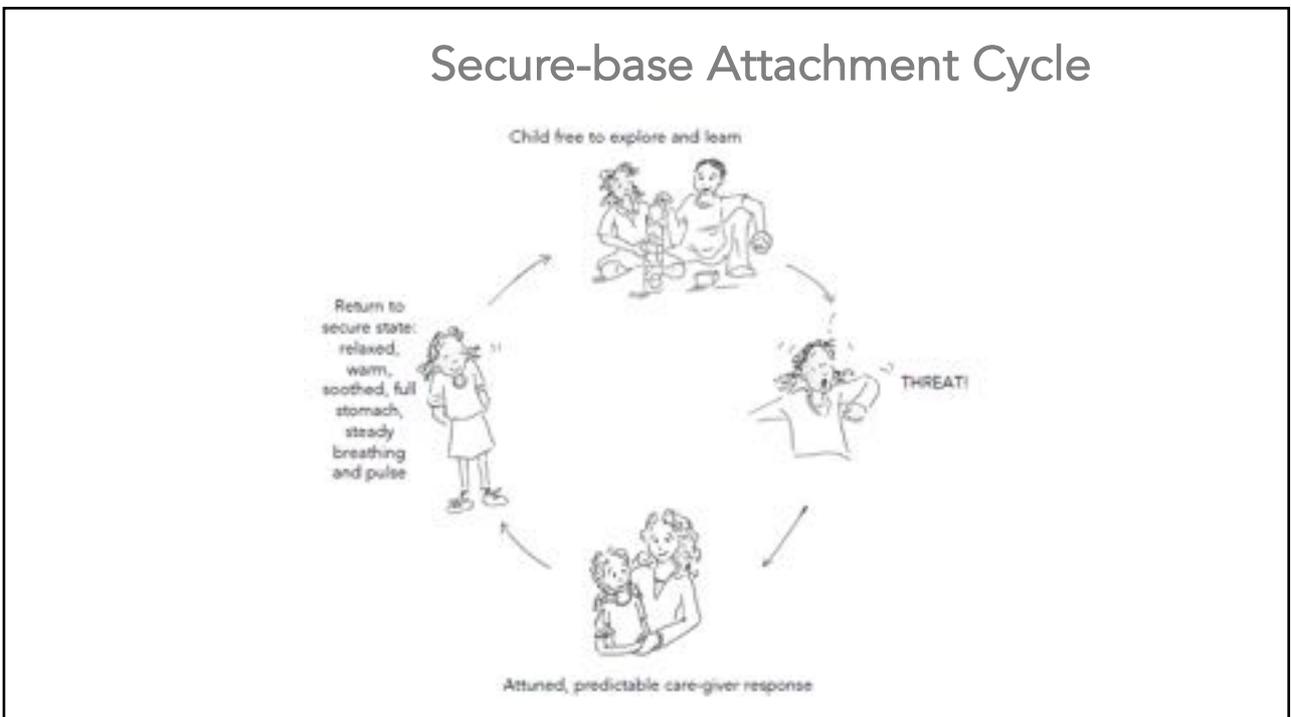
## Crittenden's Dynamic-Maturational Model of Attachment and Adaptation (DMM)



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### Type B – Secure folk

Expect protection and comfort

Integrate thinking and feeling

Feel confident to approach

#### Conditions that promote security:

- ✧ Available
- ✧ Sensitive
- ✧ Attuned
- ✧ Mind-minded
- ✧ Flexible
- ✧ Responsive
- ✧ Good enough



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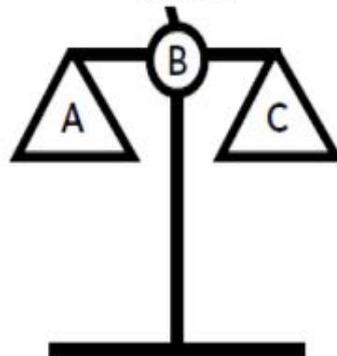
Cognition / Thinking

### 'B' Pathway

Affect / Feelings

Predictable and attuned  
caregiver response

Infant / child learns to  
integrate and give equal value  
to both thoughts and feelings  
(cognition and affect in  
balance)



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Type A / A+



Inhibit things that will displease others

Do things that will please or placate others

Occurs when supervisors are predictably:

- ✧ Rejecting
- ✧ Hostile
- ✧ Cold
- ✧ Conditional
- ✧ Intrusive
- ✧ Controlling



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Cognition / Thinking

**'A' Pathway**

Affect / Feelings

Predictable and unattuned caregiver response

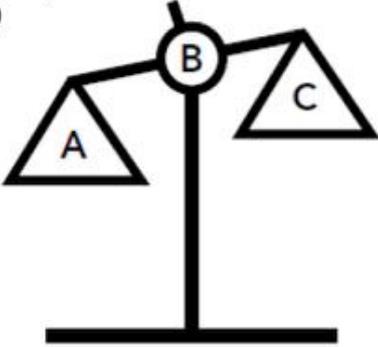
Infant / child learns to value to thinking and cut off feelings  
(becomes *cognitively* organised)

**Normative (age 0 +)**  
People-pleasing / Inhibited  
(adaptive in safe contexts)

**Concerning (ca. 3 +)**  
Compulsively care-giving / Compliant  
(adaptive when comfort is obtainable with contingent behaviour)

**Endangering (ca. 11 +)**  
Promiscuous / Self-reliant  
(adaptive when closeness = predictable danger)

**Delusional (ca. 18 +)**  
Delusional idealisation ('Stockholm syndrome') /  
Externally assembled self  
(adaptive when life-threatening danger is predictable and inescapable)



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“You could beat her and she wouldn’t cry....She could take the beatings and pain like anything.” Karl Manning



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### Type C

Cannot predict response to attachment seeking behaviour

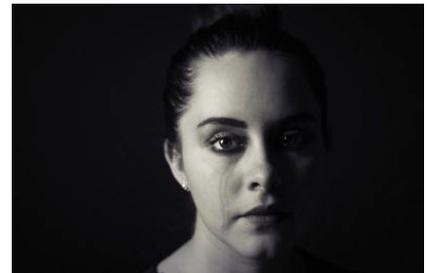
Use displays of emotion to try and regulate the behaviour of others

One feeling is on display and another is hidden



Occurs when supervisors are:

- ✧ Insensitive
- ✧ Under-involved
- ✧ Inconsistent
- ✧ Anxious
- ✧ Uncertain
- ✧ Preoccupied

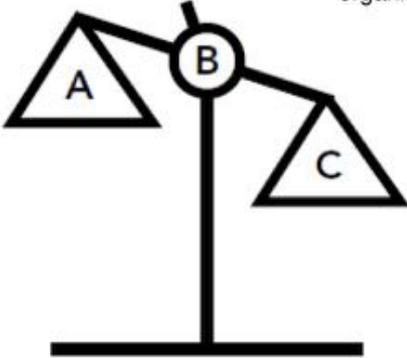


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Cognition / Thinking      **'C' Pathway**      Affect / Feelings

Unpredictable and variably attuned caregiver responses

Infant / child learns to value to feelings more than thinking (becomes *affectively* organised)

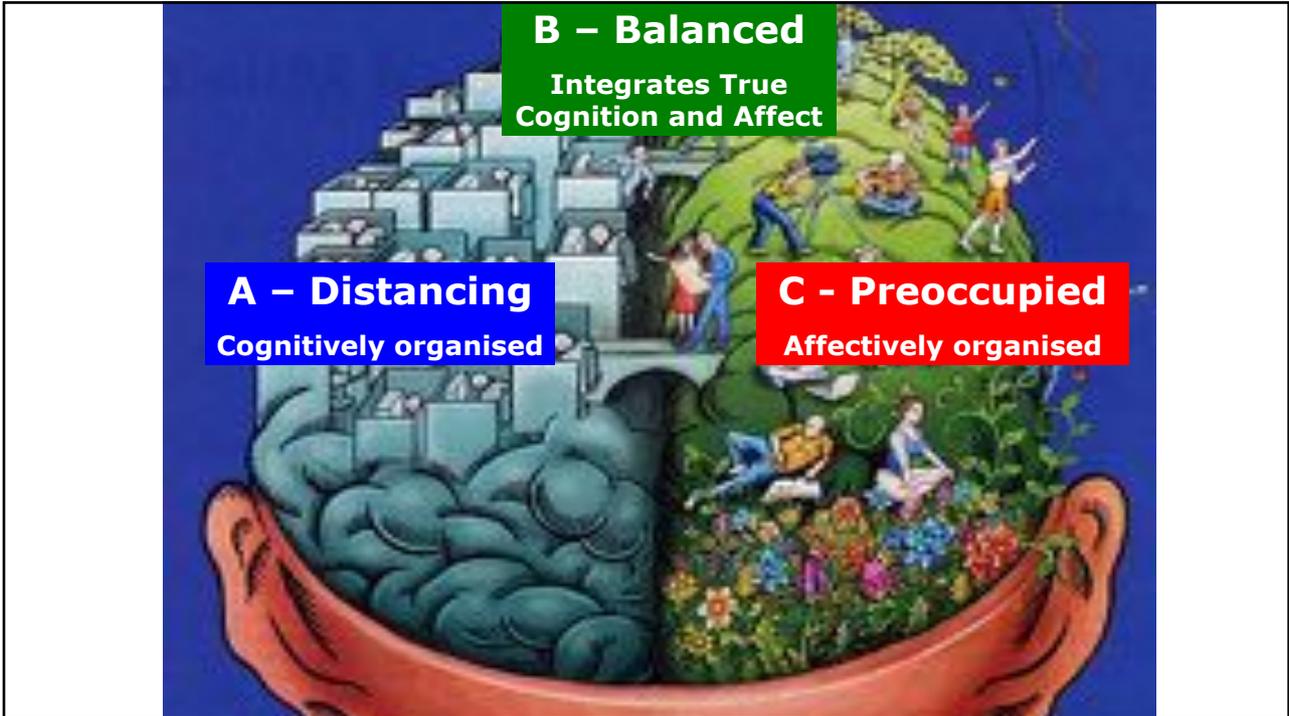


- Normative (age 0 +)**  
Threatening / Disarming  
(adaptive in safe contexts)
- Concerning (ca. 3 +)**  
Aggressive / Feigned Helpless  
(adaptive when comfort / protection is obtainable with exaggerated affect and ongoing struggle)
- Endangering (ca. 7 +)**  
Punitive / Seductive  
(adaptive when comfort / protection can be gained through deceptive / passive aggression and / or seducing rescue)
- Dangerous deception / Delusion (ca. 18 +)**  
Menacing / Paranoid  
(adaptive when life-threatening danger is ongoing, deceptive and unpredictable)

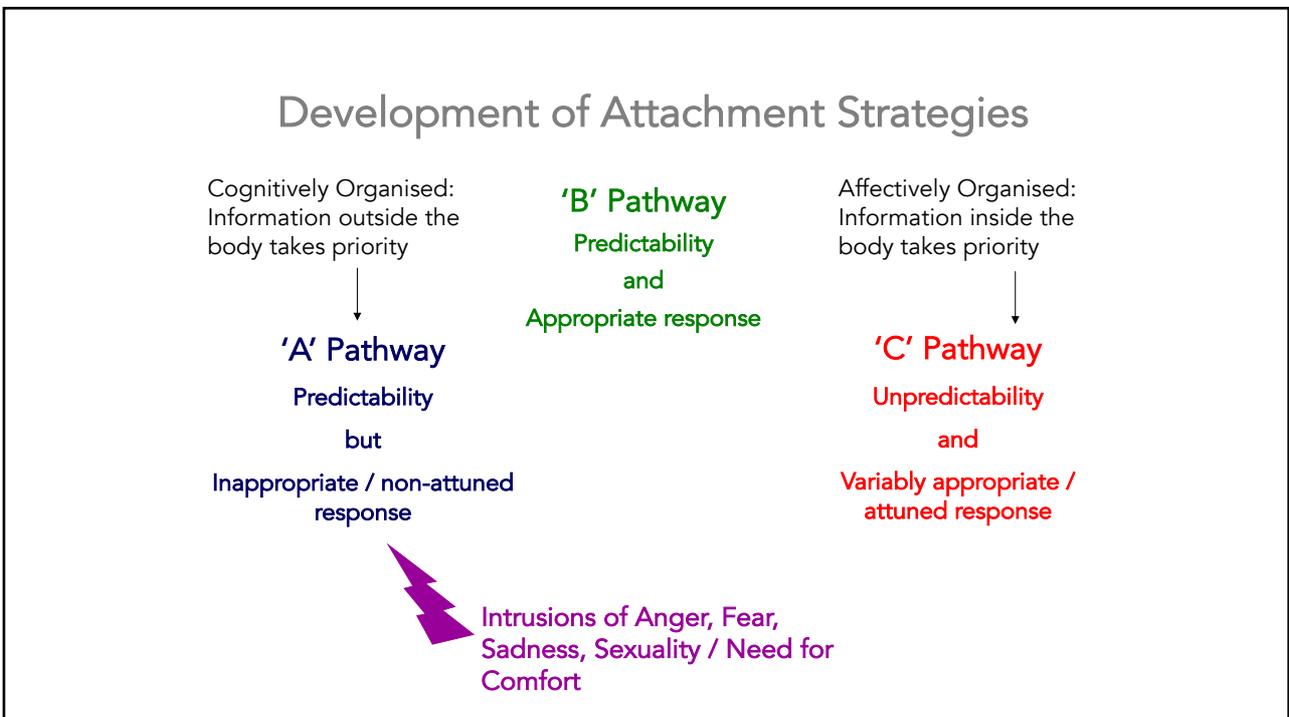
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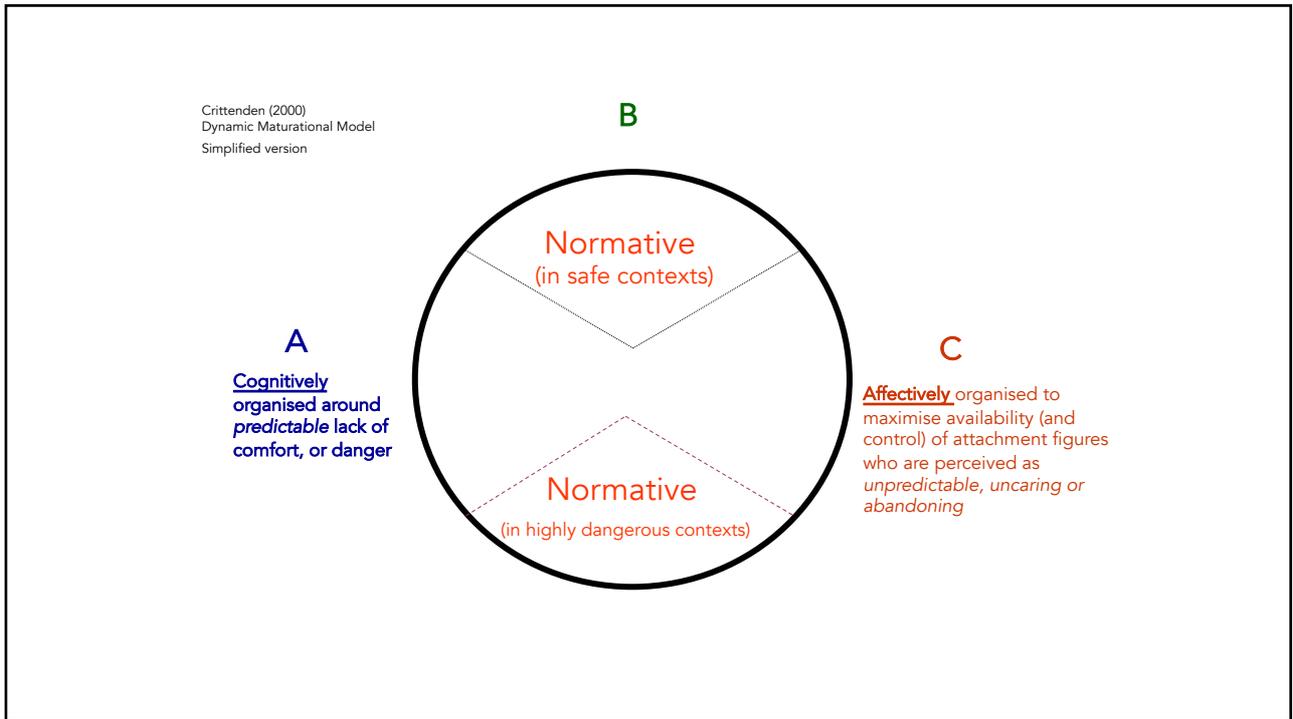
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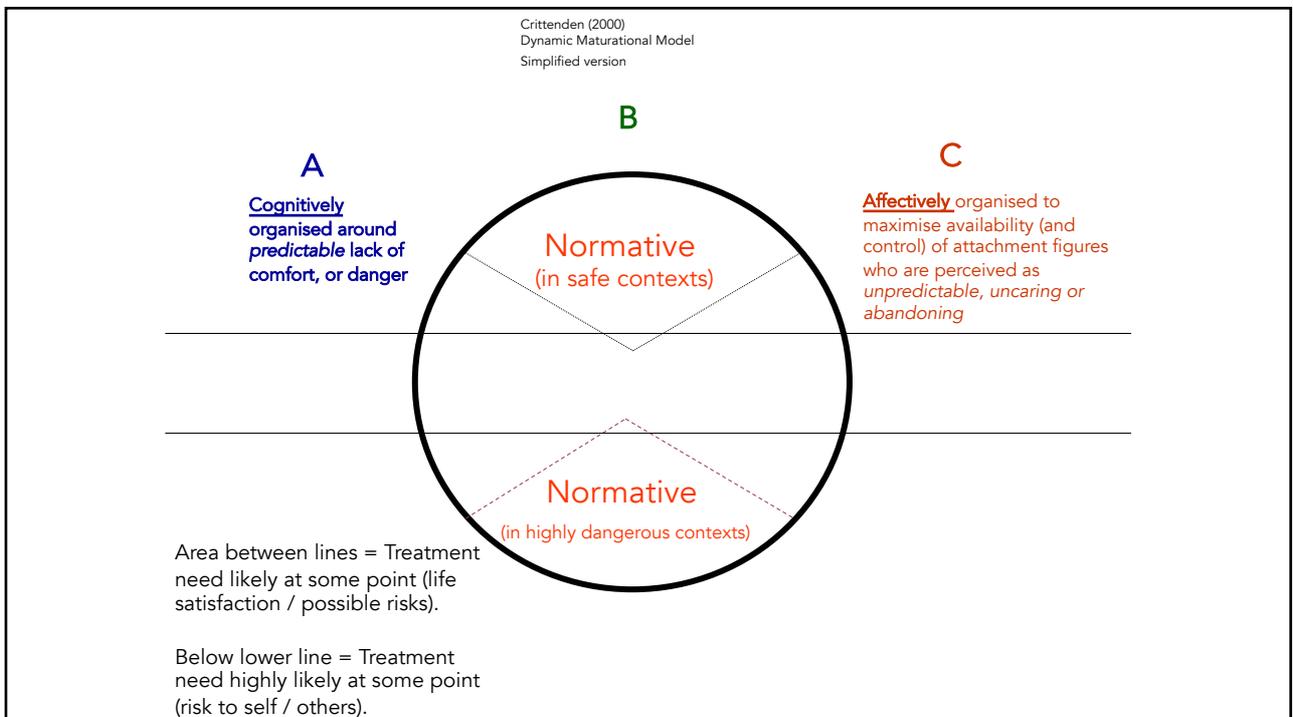
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## To summarise:

### What is attachment?

1. An enduring and important relationship - the who or what a person turns to when safety, comfort, proximity or predictability is needed;
2. A strategy for protecting yourself;
3. The pattern of information processing that underlies the strategies.

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## Seeing strategies as strengths

- Be careful of giving a 'good' or 'bad' label to an attachment style. Be aware of cultural variations and norms, and class/ social variations within cultures. From an ethological/ evolutionary perspective, all of the attachment styles have their place and value.
- What appears to us as a 'broken' strategy may at one time in the person's life have been the only strategy they knew to survive.

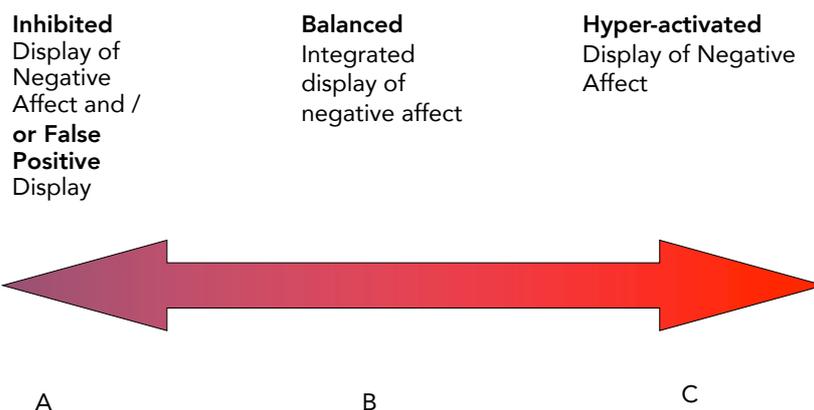
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## The Danger of Labelling

- Avoid use of labelling, as in 'he is avoidant' or 'he has a preoccupied attachment strategy.'
- Our strategies can change over time. Hence the term 'Dynamic-Maturational Model of Attachment and Adaptation' (DMM)
- The DMM is not based on *symptom*-based diagnoses, but rather on understanding the *function and meaning* of a person's self-protective strategies.
- It is a non-labelling, non-stigmatising, strengths-based approach to understanding people and developing ways to offer help/intervene.

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## What's your emotional coping style?



'Negative affect' = Fear, Anger, Sadness, Need for Comfort

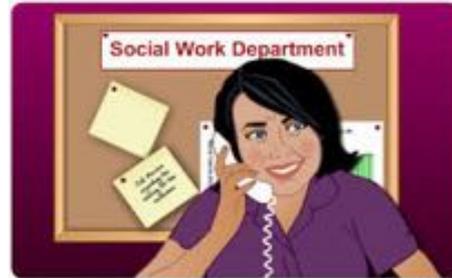
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What type of worker/supervisor strategy is optimum for working with families/workers?

**A, B or C???**

**A self aware one!**

Who understands the implications of their own bias in information processing and works actively to ensure it doesn't impact their practice



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## The B strategy helps the person to...

### **Internal / self-management**

- Correct discrepancies in perception (think logically)
- Trust own abilities, perceptions, ideas, instincts
- Cope with stress and frustration
- Handle fear and worry
- Attain full intellectual potential

### **Interpersonal**

- Develop a moral conscience and compass
- Develop and sustain relationships
- Balance trusting others with protecting the self
- Develop flexibility in interpersonal strategies
- Develop strategies for repairing ruptures
- Reduce jealousy

(Fahlberg, 1981)

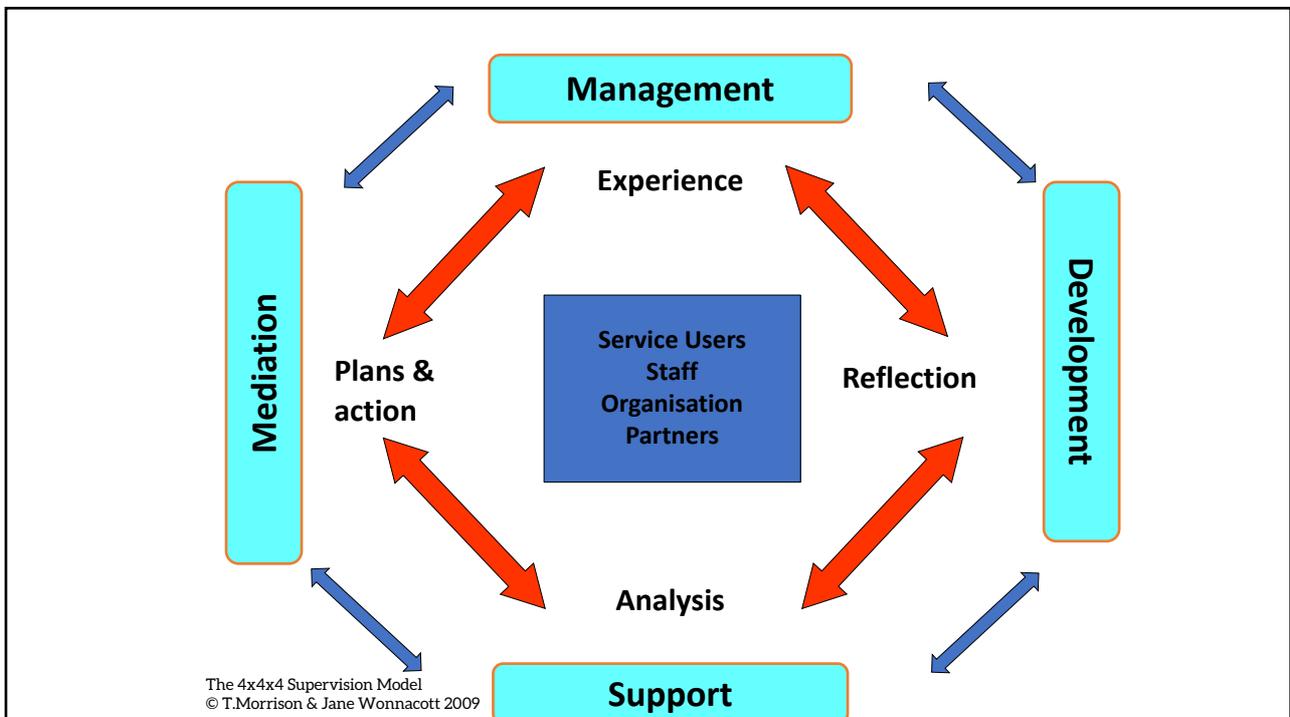
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## The 4x4x4 supervision model

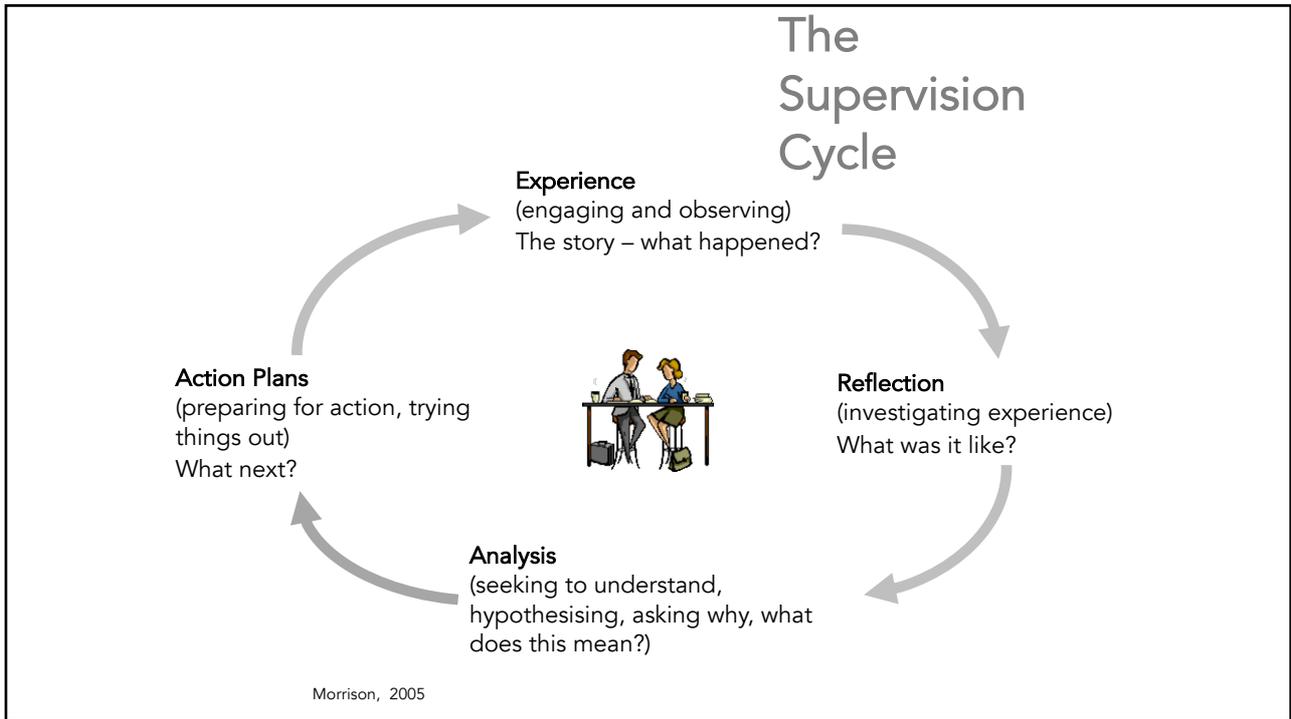
- Four functions of supervision
- Four stakeholders in supervision
- Four elements of the supervisory cycle

Morrison 2005 & 2009

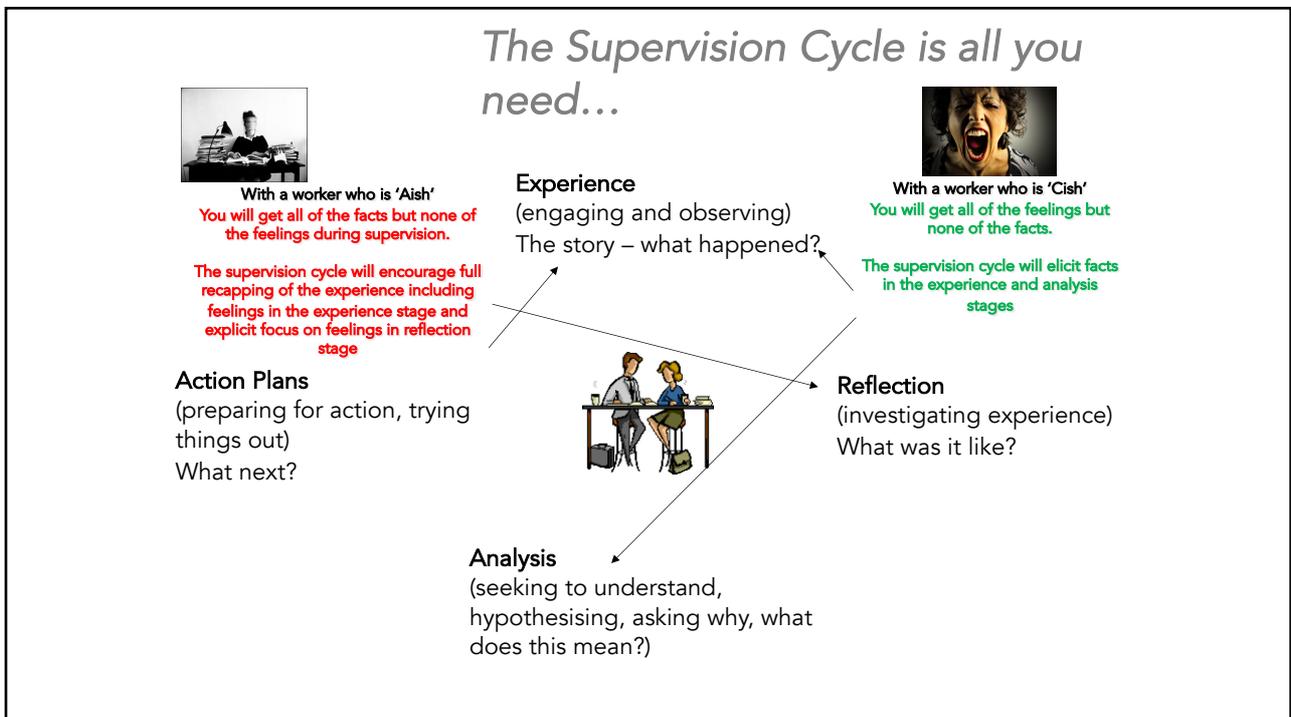
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You don't need to 'diagnose' your worker's attachment strategy

As long as you're using the supervision cycle you'll be compensating for it

The 4 stages of the supervision cycle is the tool you need to promote Type B supervision and practice

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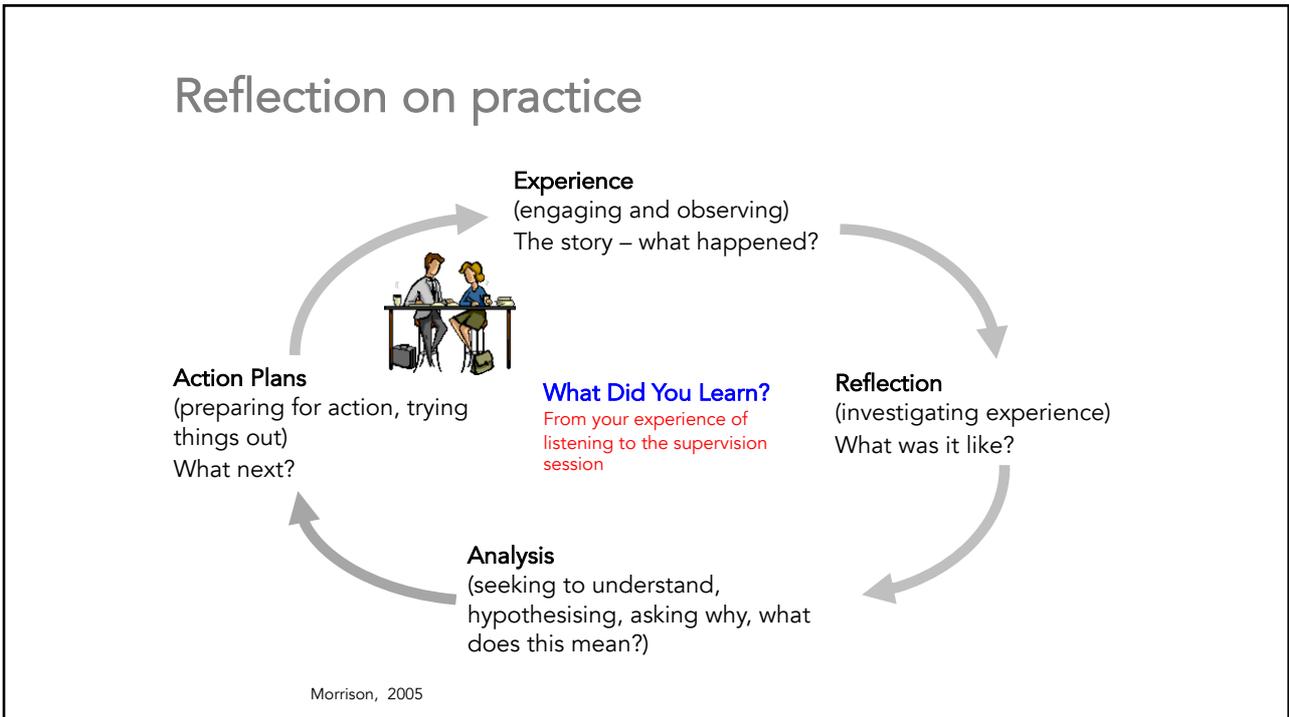
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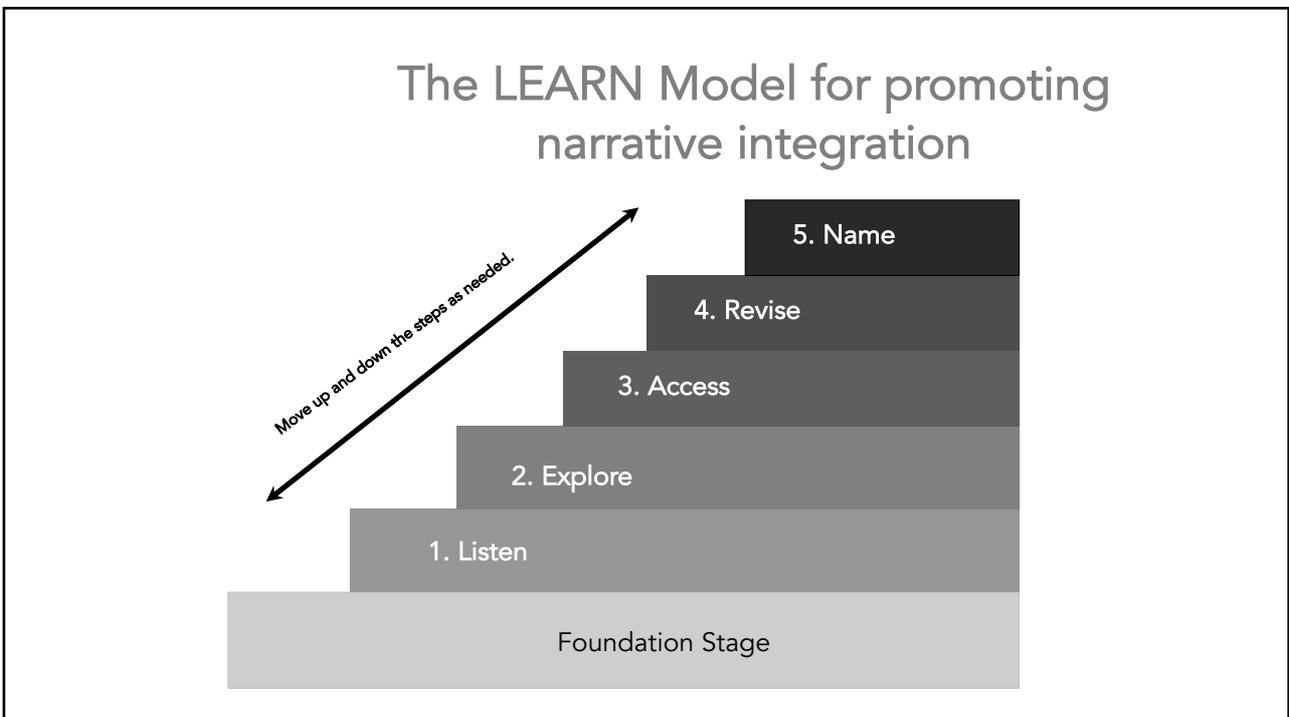


Welcome back to Day 2

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## The LEARN Model of Attachment-Based Interviewing

Foundation stage: build safety

**L**isten to the story

**E**xplore further details

**A**ccess 'blocked' parts of the story

**R**evise the story to include missing or distorted information. Integration and reflective function.

**N**ame the process between you

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## The Supervision Cycle is all you need...



With a worker who is 'Aish'  
You will get all of the facts but none of the feelings during supervision.

The supervision cycle will encourage full recapping of the experience including feelings in the experience stage and explicit focus on feelings in reflection stage

**Action Plans**  
(preparing for action, trying things out)  
What next?

**Experience**  
(engaging and observing)  
The story – what happened?



With a worker who is 'Cish'  
You will get all of the feelings but none of the facts.

The supervision cycle will elicit facts in the experience and analysis stages

**Reflection**  
(investigating experience)  
What was it like?



**Analysis**  
(seeking to understand, hypothesising, asking why, what does this mean?)

Morrison, 2005

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