

The School-age Assessment of Attachment (SAA)

The School-age Assessment of Attachment (SAA) is a clinical and research tool that identifies children’s self-protective strategies, dangers that elicit the strategy, and distortions in information processing that regulate the child’s behaviour.

**A 15 DAY TRAINING LED BY
Rebecca Carr-Hopkins**

**Week 1: March 18th-22nd 2019
Week 2: June 10th- 14th 2019
Week 3: September 9th-13th 2019**

Brighton

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£1650+VAT (£1500 if booked by 31 January)

With the exception of the first and final days of each teaching block, training days will begin at 12.30pm and end between 5-6pm. You will be required to read and classify a transcript before the training starts each day. Consequently, participants should be entirely free of other obligations during the training. The course will begin at 1pm on Day 1 and run from 9-1pm on the final day to allow for people to travel.

Overview

The School-age Assessment of Attachment (SAA) is appropriate for children between 6 years of age and puberty. It fits between the Preschool Assessment of Attachment (PAA) and the Transition to Adulthood Attachment Interview (TAAI). It is a clinical and research tool that offers reliable and valid assessment of children's attachment, taking into account the developmental implications of children's behaviour at this stage in their lives. It is intended to provide information on (1) children's self-protective strategies,(2) dangers that elicit the strategy, and (3) distortions in information proceeding that regulate the child's behaviour.

The precise information offered by the SAA is different from a diagnosis. Knowing the strategy will be helpful for parents and professionals as they consider how best to respond to children, knowing the stressors can help everyone to prevent problems, and knowing how information is processed can help mental health professionals structure beneficial treatment (and avoid inappropriate interventions). The SAA consists of 7 picture cards that address threats that school-aged children frequently face or imagine facing. The interview protocol asks for an imagined story about the child on the card and then recall of a similar episode in the responding child's life. For each story, the child gives the sequence of events (cognition) and the child's feelings (affect), the child's thoughts about attachment figures' thoughts and feelings (perspective-taking and theory of mind), and reasons why the child did what he or she did and ideas about what they might do in the future (concrete reflective functioning regarding the self).

Trainees will learn interviewing skills and discourse tools. The techniques for interpreting speech can be useful even if the professional does not formally use the interview itself in practice. For those interested in research applications, the 15-day training is usually sufficient to establish reliability on the major classifications and subclassifications.

The interview is recorded and transcribed. The transcript is then annotated for specific discourse markers in six memory systems; the discourse markers are derived from the Dynamic Maturational method (DMM) for analysing the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI)(Crittenden, 1999a) adapted to fit the speech patterns of school-aged children. Using written guidelines, each SAA interview is assigned to one of the DMM classifications.

The basic training addresses the patterns found in normative and out-patient treatment populations. It involves 15 days of full-time effort coding transcripts. The first teaching block covers the non-risk Ainsworth-based patterns. The second teaching block covers most of the patterns in the dynamic-maturational approach-the compulsive A's and the obsessive C's. The third teaching block covers the A/C and AC combinations and some of the modifiers of patterns, e.g., preoccupied and dismissed lack of resolution of trauma and loss, depression, intrusions of forbidden

negative affect, expressed somatic symptoms, and reorganisation.

Following the basic course members may take an advanced clinical training that covers very complex patterning, other forms of lack of resolution and disorientation.

Health Warning

The SAA offers the opportunity to significantly further professional development but it is also very demanding. Achieving reliability for clinical use will take about nine months and for coding/research about eighteen months. You need to allow 2 to 3 hours a week for practice outside of the taught weeks.

Mandatory Course Requirements

It is essential that trainees attend all 15 days of the course. This can be in person in Brighton or virtually via web conference. This option will require self discipline! There will be homework transcripts following the 3 teaching weeks. A reliability test will follow on from completion of the final set of practice transcripts. Not completing the practice transcripts is likely to seriously impede the level of reliability that can be achieved. The Family Relations Institute issues participants with a reliability certificate stating the percent agreement with the standard. This reliability can be reported. Evidence of reliability should be requested if the participant will code data for others.

Competence in interviewing is also assessed and therefore course participants are required to submit 3 School-age Assessments of Attachment for feedback (two normative, 1 clinical). Feedback will be given after each interview and a certificate issued if interviewing skills are judged to be satisfactory.

Course timings

With the exception of the first and final days of each teaching block, training days will begin at 12.30pm and end between 5-6pm. You will be required to read and classify a transcript before the training starts each day. Consequently, participants should be entirely free of other obligations during the training (for attendance in person and online). The course will begin at 1pm on Day 1 and run from 9-1pm on the final day to allow for people to travel.

Includes

All teaching, weekly feedback on practice SAA's and registration with Dr Crittenden for the reliability test. Crittenden's Attachment and Psychopathology (A&P) course is a prerequisite to the SAA course. Course dates can be found [here](#)