Chapter 4

Early Social and Emotional Development I

University of Guelph
Psychology 3450 — Dr. K. Hennig
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Chapter 4 in outline

- Emotional Development
- Temperament and Development
- What are Emotional Attachments?
- How do Infants Become Attached?
- Two Attachment-Related Fears of Intimacy
- Reactions to the Loss of an Attachment Object
**EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

**What is an emotion?**

- Defn. “episodic, relatively short-term [vs. moods], biologically based patterns of perception [of an internal or external stimulus], [subjective] experience, physiology, action, and communication that occur in response to specific physical and social challenges and opportunities.... more flexible... than reflexes” (Keltner & Gross, 1999)

- antecedent -> emotional experience -> expression (stimuli/situation -> subjective experience -> behavior)

- e.g., anger as a blocked goal (frustration) -> mobilized energy (adaptive if you break the frustrating object?)

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**What are emotions? (contd.)**

- subjective experience of emotion - e.g., “when afraid our senses are sharpened, our muscles primed to move us quickly out of harm’s way, and our cardiovascular system tuned to provide increased oxygen and energy to large muscle groups that may be called upon to flee [or fight]” - e.g., high spinal chord damage

- Emotions are:
  - intrapersonal - used in judgment, decision-making (good-bad), values and morals, physical safety (heights)
  - interpersonal - expression/communication (e.g., audience effects, grief mobilizing community, well-being, cultural guidelines or display rules)
Experience and expression/recognition of emotion (e.g., anger) - interpersonal aspect

- Communication of emotion to species members
- Does the wolf have direct, subjective access to the corresponding emotional state?
- How do you know what others feel?
- anger-appeasement conjunction

- Cross-species similarity?
Basic emotions
Do babies have subjective feelings?

- **fear**: brows level, drawn in and up, eyelids lifted, mouth retracted
- **surprise**: brows raised, mouth rounded in an oval
- **joy**: smile, cheeks lifted, twinkle in eyes
- **sadness**: inner corner of brows raised, mouth corners drawn down

Primary emotion displays (contd.)

- Primary emotions (2.5 - 7 mos.): interest, disgust, anger
- Universal and thus hard-wired
- Experience of control over people, object, and events elicits surprise and joy displays
Self-conscious and -evaluative emotions

- Damage or enhancement to our sense of self
  - embarrassment - requires self-recognition (SR)
    - SR at 18 mos. in mirror/photograph (see C. 6)
  - shame, guilt, envy, pride - require SR + knowledge of rules & standards of evaluation (by age 3)

- But, what kind of self-awareness is involved?
  - emotional display depended on the mothers’ reactions to outcomes (Alessandri & Lewis, 1996)
  - yet, displayed only in their presence (anticipated reactions of adult evaluators)
  - internalization of rules not until early childhood
  - thus SR at 18 mos. = a “present self”

Social construction of complex emotions

- complex emotions - constellations of several distinguishable elements that typically accompany such episodes; often turn on subtle differences in situations (may co-occur)

- envy - feeling of inferiority, longing, resentment, disapproval, as well as self-disapproval of the ill-will one holds towards achievements, possessions, etc. of the envied other

- jealousy - fear of loss, distrust, anxiety, and anger in the context of close relationships

- historical shift away from the term “envy” in favour of jealousy, owing to envy’s moral tone
What are emotions for?

- Two views (Read Gross avail. on the website)
- Emotions as nonfunctional, even disruptive (Freud), also Plato, Buddhism, Christianity(?)
  - vices: pride, lust, envy, gluttony, anger, sloth are considered emotions but not avarice, greed
  - cardinal virtues: prudence, fortitude, & temperance (resisting emotional temptations) but not justice
- Perhaps once adaptive but no longer (Darwin)
  - our physical and social environments have changed
  - technology amplifies consequences of expression (e.g., irritable swipe: where scarcely raised a welt, now a fatal car accident or gun-related homicide

The adaptive function of emotions

- Emotions are solutions to survival-relevant problems - e.g., forming attachments, maintaining cooperative relationships, that’s why we have them!
- intrapersonal functions
  - facilitate decision-making
  - prepare the individual for rapid motor responses
  - give clues as to whether something is good or bad
- interpersonal functions
  - provide information about behavioral intentions, i.e., an expressive-communicative function
  - flexibly script complex human behavior
Emotions and the self

What is love?

- emotions are evaluations, judging the relevance of events to the self and its goals/projects
- emotions are about what the self is about
- guided by social norms and display rules, conventions re. what events go with what emotions
- emotion -> expression in context of a culture -> alters behavior of others
- role of mastering one’s language
- having a self extends the range & complexity of one’s goals & projects (vs. a sublinguistic organism)

THE FEAR RESPONSE

Unusual and Ugly (1979) proposed a computational model of emotional experience. The idea is that the brain is a network of interconnected nodes that process information about the environment. The network includes nodes for visual input, auditory input, and motor output. The nodes are connected by weighted edges that represent the strength of the connection between them. The strength of the connection is determined by the frequency and intensity of the input that activates it. The output of the network is determined by the activation of the motor output nodes, which are activated based on the strength of the connection between the input nodes and the motor output nodes.

Conscious OR unconscious (automatized) emotional responses? BOTH!
Affects and their regulation

- What is missing in the Terminator & Spack?
  - What it is to be... blind, a bat, a conscious person
    (Optional reading: Searle on consciousness)
- affect (or emotion) regulation - the capacity to control and modulate our affective responses
  - overall goal of flexible functioning
  - do we have conscious control over our emotions?
    - hiding our disappointment when receive an unattractive gift; cracking a joke when anxious
  - “the ways individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions” (Gross, 1999, p. 557)

Historical perspectives

The rationality of emotionality

- Western tradition of rationalism as an ideal standard to guide behavior meant that affects were devalued (Spock, Piaget?). Two views:
  1) Stoic ideal of the sage - acts on right reason and is free from the (corrupting) passions
    - associated virtues: emotional detachment and self-sufficiency
    - emotions beyond control
  2) Aristotle (Goldilocks principle) - affects have value but need cultivation, i.e., regulation
E.g., Controllability?
What is it to be in love?

- we “fall” in or are “struck by” love, they “clicked” - something that happens to us and over which we have little control (i.e., an automatic response)

Understanding who we are:
The possibility of self-alienation

Constitutional Self

Self-Understanding / Interpretation
Socialization and self-regulation

- Cultural emotional display rules specify what circumstances under which various emotions should/not be expressed
  - smile & say thanks when grama gives you underwear
- At 7 mos. mothers serve as models, mainly displaying joy, interest, and surprise; and respond selectively to their infant’s emotions
  - initially most attentive to baby’s expressions of interest or surprise; less responsive to baby’s negative emotions
  - babies are trained to display more pleasant and fewer unpleasant faces

Regulating emotions

- defn. -
- American babies learn that intense emotional expression is valued, so long as positive
- Kenyan babies learn to restrain both positive & negative emotions
- Babies develop strategies to control their emotions:
  - turn bodies away from unpleasant stimuli
  - sucking objects
Regulating emotions (contd.)

- Most often depend upon caregivers for soothing
  - note. 6-mo-old boys have greater disregulation and express more negative emotion
- By end of first year develop other strategies:
  - rocking themselves, chewing on objects, moving away from unsettling people or events
- By 18-24 mos. more likely to try control the actions of people or objects that upset them
- begin to cope with the frustrations of waiting for snacks, gifts by distracting themselves

Regulating emotions (contd.)

- Fear is difficult to regulate; likely to learn how to obtain soothing from caregivers
- Parents can talk with preschoolers and help them devise effective strategies
- 2-to 6-yr-olds improve by directing attention away, thinking pleasant thoughts, reinterpreting the cause of their distress
- Children that express a lot of neg. emotion and/or do not learn to regulate are at risk for alienating their caregivers when they “act out”
- May seek to intensify one’s emotions
Acquiring emotional display rules

- Socialization requires we regulate emotions (i.e., suppress the unacceptable) but also replace them (outwardly) with the display called for
- By 3 yrs limited ability to hide true feelings
  - Lewis et al. found 3 yr-olds that had lied about peeking showed subtle signs of anguish detectable when viewed in slow motion but not for uninformed judges to discriminate from non-liars
- Preschoolers typically display it like it is
- Girls are esp. encouraged to act "nice" - more motivated and skilled at compliance with rule

Emotional displays (contd.)

- Increasing ability to display pos. emotional reactions after receiving a disappointing gift
- Esp. communal cultures

![Graph showing frequency of positive emotional behavior over time for boys and girls.](image)
Recognizing and interpreting emotions

- Shortly after birth respond to another infant’s cry (responsive contagion)
- Expression (display) -> recognition: babies prefer to look at happy faces than neutral, sad, or angry - but may be due to ease of discrimination
- Some evidence that 3-mo-olds can discriminate mother’s happy, sad, or angry expression when paired with their respective vocal tone; become gleeful at mom’s happy expression and distressed at mom’s anger

Major milestone:
Towards end of first year

- Joint attention - occurs when adult and infant are attending to a third entity (and each is aware that the other is similarly attending); shared mental state
- Stranger anxiety and attachment proper
- Social referencing - between 8 and 10 mos. begin to monitor parents’ emotional reactions
  - Will typically approach and play with unfamiliar toys if a nearby stranger is smiling, but avoid if stranger appears fearful
  - Vocal expressions convey similar meaning
  - In 2nd year look to companions after their appraisal
Conversations about emotions

- Toddlers begin to talk around 2 yrs, including emotion words
- Families that talk about emotions have 3-yr-olds that are better at interpreting others’ emotions and settling disputes 3 yrs later
  - relationship between emotional understanding and social competence
- Steady improvement in recognition and interpretation (causes) of others’ emotions
  - at 4 - 5 yrs can correctly infer a person’s state from expressive body movements, and offer interpretations (typically external vs. internal)

Emotional understanding (contd.)

- Grade school children increasingly rely on internal (needs, desires, moods, motives) and situational information to interpret emotions
  - the same situation (e.g., big dog) will elicit a different emotional response from different individuals
  - 9-yr-old can understand a person can have more than one emotion at once and beginning to integrate contrasting facial, behavioral, and situational cues
- Emerge at Piaget’s Concrete operational phase - can integrate more than one piece of information at a time
  - emotional development depends on cognitive development?
Communicative role of emotions

- smile or interest = “I am eager to have a relationship with you”
- fear or sadness = “I need your attention and comfort”
- anger = “stop what you are doing!”
- joy = “keep interacting with me”

- Emotions are adaptive in promoting social contact and helps caregivers to adjust their behavior to the infant’s needs; get to know each other
- Infants ability to infer emotion enables them to infer how to feel/behave in situations

TEMPERAMENT & DEVELOPMENT

- Temperament (defn) - an individual’s tendency to respond in predictable ways to environmental events that many believe are the building blocks of adult personality

- Attributes:
  - activity level
  - irritability/negative emotionality
  - soothability
  - fearfulness
  - sociability
Thomas & Chess (1977) profiles

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Stability

- Is the “fearful” 8-mo-old who upset by a strange face likely to remain wary of strangers at 24 mos. and shun playmates at 4?
- E.g., behavioral inhibition (Kagan) - measured at 4 mos. were less sociable with strange adults and peers at 4, 5.5, and 7.5 yrs.
- greater electrical activity in rt. cerebral hemisphere of the brain (the center for negative emotions)
  - however, only those on the extremes are show long-term stability
Child rearing and temperament

- "Goodness of fit" between parent and infant
  - difficult baby (cranky, fusses a lot, difficult routine) - parents remain calm, exercise restraint, allow children to respond to novelty at their own pace
  - easy for parents to become irritable, impatient, demanding, and punitive; but in response infants will remain difficult and display problem behaviors

WHAT ARE ATTACHMENTS?

John Bowlby

- Attachments (defn) - "the strong affectional ties that we feel for the special people in our lives" (text, p. 116)
- Securely attached - take pleasure in their interactions and feel comfortable in partner’s presence during times of stress or uncertainty
- Reciprocal - mutual attachment
Early Studies: Ethology

- filial imprinting - the young quickly learn to recognize their parents, stay close, be wary of strangers
- importance of discriminating between own offspring and other young of same species, may attack young not their own

Emotional bonding (contd.)

- Traditional routine (1976) vs. extended contact moms (extra 5 hrs/day including 1 hr. skin-to-skin contact)
  - 1 mon. later extended-contact moms stood nearer, soothed their infants more, & held babies closer while feeding
  - 1 yr later - extended-contact babies outperformed the traditional group on mental & physical development
- Hormonal mediation hypothesis - but present fathers also become engrossed OR
- reinterpretation of emotional arousal?
BECOMING ATTACHED?
Three phases of attachment

- asocial phase (0-6 wks) - any kind of stimulation produces a favourable reaction
- indiscriminate attachments (6 wks - 6 mos) - prefer human company to talking puppets, enjoy everyone’s attention but prefer a regular caregiver
- specific attachments (7-9 mos) - begin to protest only when separated from one particular individual, usu. mom. Now crawling, will try to follow behind. Secure base for exploration
- multiple attachments - within weeks begin forming attachments with others (dad, sibs, grama); hierarchy or serving different functions?

Harlow’s monkeys

- Attachment vs. feeding systems
  - Freud - mother as primary object of security given that she feeds (satisfies the infant’s “oral” pleasures)
  - Learning theory - mother as a secondary reinforcer, becomes associated with pleasure (comfort, food, warmth)
Prerequisites

- Cognitive developmental contributions
  - attachment formation depends upon the capacity to discriminate familiar from stranger
  - object permanence (memory)
- Ethological theory
  - humans are born with a number of innate tendencies
    - reciprocal attachment seeking - caregiving system
  - contribute to the survival of the species
    - imprinting
    - [or long-range purpose of self-other understanding]

Ethological theory (contd.)

- Infants are “relationship seeking”
  - baby’s *kewpie doll* appearance makes infant appear cute and lovable to caregivers (large forehead, chubby cheeks, soft rounded features)
  - may help to elicit positive attention that will promote attachments (though a majority of unattractive babies become securely attached)
  - early smiling, cooing, sucking, & grasping reflexes may be strong signals to caregivers (also reinforce caregiving)
Happiness

- Happiness binds parent and baby and fosters competence.
- Social smile
  - Evoked by the stimulus of the human face
  - First appears between 6 and 10 weeks
- Laughter first appears around 3 to 4 months in response to active stimuli.

Attachment-related fears

- Stranger anxiety (peaks 8 to 10 mos)
  - keep familiar companions available
  - arrange for companions to respond positively to stranger
  - make the setting more familiar
  - be a sensitive, unobtrusive stranger
  - appear less strange
- Separation anxiety (peaks 14 to 18 mos) - gradually decreases
  - generalized anxiety disorders
- Reactions to loss: protest, despair, detachment
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