

# Creating Loving Relationships

Children do not come alone;  
they come as part of a family,  
with complex and intersecting  
relationships.

Being a parent isn't so much a  
job as a set of intersecting  
relationships.

# The 'Couple'

They have a  
'relationship'

- Together
- Apart
- In contact
- Not in contact
- Never really had a relationship
- Happy to be apart
- Happy together
- Not happy to be apart
- Not happy together
- Some contact
- Never want to see each other again
- Etc. etc.

## The key elements of a 'good' relationship:

- Communication
- Compromise
- Negotiation
- Dealing with difficult situations
- Dealing with change
- Intimacy
- Being open
- Asking for what you need
- Being vulnerable
- Trust
- Respect for self and other

How did we  
learn to do all  
that?

# Our experience of relationships

- Which includes.....  
past relationships and  
our earliest relationships

And that links back to .....

# Our earliest attachment experiences.

Which relates to how we deal with both being close to and apart from those we care for in terms of:

# Attachment, separation and loss

# Why is understanding attachment and loss in adult relationships important?

Because when we enter intimate adult relationships we invoke at our deepest level our need for attachment and belonging. With all the fears, delights and trepidations that holds.

It can be a wonderful place.....

However, it can also be  
pretty scary!

We go into  
relationships with hope  
(usually)

And fear  
(often)

- Hope for repair
- Fear of repeat

## Hope for repair of:

- Past hurts
- Damage
- Deficits
- And even make up for what never was

# Fear of repeat

- that how it has been and that's how it always will be

At every change or new development in a relationship such as....

- Birth of a child
- Affairs
- New job
- Redundancy
- Debt
- Children leaving home
- Illness or disability
- Etc.

Is likely to reactivate our attachment responses.

# So what has this got to do with Creating Loving Relationships?

- Being a couple or in relationship, in whatever capacity is a part of parenting
- If the couple relationship isn't right then it will leak into parenting roles
- Children are learning how to be in a couple from how they see their parents as a couple
- However, we also need to recognise that whilst developing good attachment in children is vital it might be that the parent has little to draw on themselves

And as is the nature of relationships when one ends another often begins which we enter with our hope of repair and fear of repeat.....

Supporting the couple to understand the difficulties or difficult things they experience in their relationship can:

- Improve communication
- Develop increased trust
- Improve how they deal with difficulties
- Negotiate and respect each others viewpoint
- Help them understand the influences of their past in their present relating

And it can help them remember the elephant behind them and choose what to hear, what to carry forward and what to change and help them create new and different futures both in their relationships and their roles as parents.