

## **ATTACHMENT DISORDER WORKSHOP: DEFUSING STRATEGIES**

### **A One-Day Workshop**

Children who are exposed to trauma are at a 65% increased risk of developing Post Traumatic Stress Disorder compared to adults. The younger the child is at the time of the trauma, the greater the potential impact. Their limited experiences alter their ability to process and heal from trauma, creating possibly permanent brain damage and behavioral difficulties. Understanding the impact of trauma, abuse and neglect on the young child is imperative in treating or parenting children who have been wounded.

The problem with just understanding this trauma experience for children, rare enough, even among professionals in the field, is that it does not provide the caregiver or professional with any specific strategies for addressing the impact of trauma on the developing child.

This workshop will focus on expanding the knowledge gained in earlier attachment trainings provided by AABA, and will focus on the practical and fundamental strategies of defusing difficult situations that are frequent and typical of the child with an attachment disorder.

Participants will be assumed to have a basic knowledge of attachment issues, brain differences in the child with an attachment disorder, and the difference between therapy for a child who has experienced trauma and therapy with a child who experiences an attachment disorder.

They will learn more about how to handle the sibling relationship of a child with a reactive attachment disorder difficulty and one who does not experience these same difficulties; strategies for defusing difficult situations; practical tools for dealing with typical issues presented by a child with an attachment difficulty; and therapeutic interventions for a child with an attachment difficulty.

## **PART I: REACTIVE ATTACHMENT DIFFICULTIES WITH SIBLINGS**

Attachment Disorders impact not only the child who has this diagnosis, but deeply and fundamentally impact the family system as well. Siblings, step-siblings, and foster siblings, frequently have the burden of being targeted by the child with an attachment disorder. Often, the targeted and abusive behaviors are done in secret, and the child thus targeted does not have the power, skills, or efficacy to protect himself from the attacks, and is often not believed even when he is able to adequately seek help. An understanding of this relationship as well as ways of positively impacting it will be shared. This presentation will be in PowerPoint/lecture format. A PowerPoint projector and laptop will be required for this quarter-day workshop.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Increase the knowledge base of participants in understanding the sibling relationship and its implication for children and adults who live with an attachment disordered child.
2. Learn how and when to intervene in the sibling dynamics.
3. Understand the impact of the parent or other adult's reaction to the sibling relationship and dynamics.
4. Realizing the practical solutions to this sibling difficulty.

## **PART II: HOW TO DEFUSE SITUATIONS**

Parents and other caregivers often struggle with intense and violent situations at home, while professionals and other outside helpers witness the best behavior of the child with an attachment problem. Defusing situations that can actually put the parent/caregiver in physical and legal danger need to be reviewed with care. This workshop will address ways of assessing and defusing situations such as these. PowerPoint/lecture will be utilized, as well as a flipchart with markers in this quarter-day workshop for professionals and caregivers.

### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Understand a number of specific intervention strategies for defusing volatile or intense situations.
2. Understand how the above impacts a child's ability to attach to others.
3. Increase the capacity to parent or work with individuals who experience attachment difficulties based on improved understanding.

### **PART III: PRACTICAL TOOL STRATEGIES**

Effective parenting principals are the absolute fundamental structure of treating the child with an attachment disorder. Both parents and professionals must familiarize themselves with the specialized techniques and skills that are necessary to parenting this population. This workshop will provide participants with specific principles and techniques that are necessary to help a child with trauma-attachment disorders develop a healthier and more secure attachment to parents/caregivers. PowerPoint/lecture, DVD video, and small group work will be utilized in this quarter-day presentation.

#### **Learning Objectives:**

1. Specific skills in facilitating attachment-focused parenting strategies with children who fit the diagnostic category of Reactive Attachment Disorder.
2. Increased efficacy in carrying out those strategies necessary to improve the connection between parent/caregiver and the child with an Attachment Disorder.

### **PART IV: THERAPEUTIC INTERVENTIONS**

The Alaska Early Childhood Comprehensive Systems Report (2006) states that “There is increasing anecdotal evidence that...clinicians lack the training necessary to meet the needs of children with mental health and social/emotional issues....specific skills are needed to identify mental health problems and to serve children with these issues in their natural environments. Skills are also required to support their families and make appropriate referrals”

Therapy for the child with an attachment disorder therapy is sometimes intense, but should always be respectful of the child and family. The therapy is family focused, with an emphasis on the parent or caregiver, *not the therapist*, attaching to the child. Parents must understand the inner workings of their particular child, learn the child’s history, understand their own attachment history, and learn specific intervention skills. It is the therapist’s job to help facilitate all of these as well as intense, therapeutic, diagnosis-specific emotional work with the affected child. The therapist who undertakes this work must be self-reliant, but with the ability to work well within a team; posses the ability to connect, but remain within therapeutic boundaries; care deeply for the child and family, but maintain a therapeutic distance. In order to do this, the professional must understand his/herself, the presentation and appropriate interventions for children with attachment disorders, and possess the ability to provide a holding environment for the entire family.

In addition, the non-therapist who is providing respite care, skills training, or other practical education, may have need for therapeutic interventions that are not necessarily therapy. These interventions will focus on those interventions that can be used by a wide variety of individuals. The presenter will use PowerPoint/lecture, small group work, and flipchart as techniques of learning.

**Learning Objectives:**

1. Be able to identify specific interventions that are appropriate to this population.
2. Be able to employ a variety of specific interventions.

OUTLINE OF THE DAY

7.5 CEU's

Registration/Breakfast	08:00 a.m. - 08:45 a.m.
Welcome & Housekeeping	08:45 a.m. - 09:00 a.m.
<b>Presentation</b>	09:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
BREAK	11:00 a.m. - 11:15 a.m.
<b>Presentation</b> /Evaluations	11:15 a.m. - 1:15 p.m.
LUNCH	1:15 p.m. - 2:00 p.m.
<b>Presentation</b>	2:00 a.m. - 3:45 p.m.
BREAK	3:45 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.
<b>Presentation</b> /Evaluations	4:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.