

What next?

working with families where anything can
go wrong, and often already has

Dr Sebastian Kraemer
FRCP FRCPsych FRCPCH
Honorary Consultant, Tavistock Clinic,
Consultant Child and Adolescent Psychiatrist
Whittington Hospital, London N19 5NF

kraemer@doctors.org.uk

Warm words are not enough.

Some people need help but don't ask for it or, if they do, misuse it.

This is our problem, not theirs.

Inequality affects *every part of your life*, not just wealth: the capacity to learn, to manage oneself in any task - parenting, working, leisure, giving and getting help ['the relationship to help'] - and of course to love.

Families with serious problems have experience of neglect and abuse - verbal, physical or sexual - going back several generations.

A Jerry Springer show is always going along in the background of most families, and in the foreground of some.

Working with family as it is created: a new baby, the most effective time to intervene in the cycle of insecure attachment.

key points

nice people can be very disturbed

skilled staff can be very anxious

it's very difficult (or impossible) to control professional hyperactivity, which often mirrors family's

so grab your opportunity when you have it

for discussion

Adult Attachment Interview (AAI)

5. To which parent did you feel closest and why? Why isn't there this feeling with the other parent?
6. When you were upset as a child, what would you do?
7. What is the first time you remember being separated from your parents? How did you and they respond? Are there any other separations that stand out in your mind?

8. Did you ever feel rejected as a young child? Of course, looking back on it now, you may realise that it wasn't really rejection, but what I'm trying to ask about here is whether you remember ever having felt rejected in childhood.

9. Were your parents ever threatening with you in any way - maybe for discipline, or maybe just jokingly?

10. How do you think these experiences with your parents have affected your adult personality? Are there any aspects of your early experiences that you feel were a set-back in your development?

11. Why do you think your parents behaved as they did during your childhood?

12. Were there any other adults with whom you were close as a child, or any other adults who were especially important to you?

13. Did you experience the loss of a parent or other close loved one while you were a young child?

14. Have there been many changes in your relationship with your parents since childhood? I mean from childhood through until the present?

15. What is your relationship with your parents like for you now as an adult?

16. How do you respond now, in terms of feelings, when you separate from your child?

17. If you had three wishes for your child twenty years from now, what would they be? I'm thinking partly of the kind of future you would like to see for your child.

18. Is there any particular thing which you feel you learned above all from your own childhood experiences? What would you hope your child might learn from his/her experiences of being parented?