

## Syllabus

### Attachment and Relational Resilience Across the Lifespan

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#### **Course Overview**

This course will explore how relationships shape our development and well-being across the lifespan. We will highlight the central role that attachment plays in shaping our inner experience and social relationships. This will include an in-depth view of how attachment impacts the development of our sense of self, mental states, and personality. We will draw from research and theory to discuss clinical implications and offer practical applications. This will include expanding definitions of attachment, dispelling misconceptions, and outlining a clear pathway to integrative transformation toward security.

From an interpersonal neurobiology lens, attachment can be understood as relational integration. Many of the challenges that arise from non-secure attachment patterns involve impaired integration in the self, brain, mind, and relationships. We will explore the specific cause and impact of non-secure attachment for each of these domains. Further, we will explain the corresponding mechanism of integrative change that can enhance functioning in these areas. You will learn to utilize the flexible nature of the brain and mind to access more integrative states of mind.

We will also explore the notion of relational resilience and the role it can play in increasing integration in the many relational systems we are a part of — personal, professional, public and planetary. The stability of these systems depends on the ability to maintain equilibrium even in the face of challenges. The skills that promote relational resilience can be learned at any point across the lifespan. This course will provide practical tools to increase the ability to navigate relational challenges with integrative harmony and a sense of wholeness in life.

## **Course Objectives:**

1. Summarize the history of attachment as well as advancements in research, theory and clinical applications.
2. Describe the relationship characteristics that correlate to each attachment pattern.
3. Explain how attachment experiences impact the development of a sense of self.
4. Define the scientific underpinnings of attachment from an interpersonal neurobiology perspective.
5. Utilize a methodology for clinical assessment of attachment patterns.
6. Identify specific impairments to integration associated with each attachment category.
7. Explain the scientific mechanisms of change that can be used to increase attachment security.
8. Utilize tools for therapeutic intervention to build relational resilience.
9. Summarize a model for how attachment impacts the development of personality and discuss the clinical implications.
10. Apply strategies to enhance the integrative flexibility in developmental pathways of personality.

## **Segments 1-3: Introduction, Attachment and Foundations of Attachment Research**

### **Description:**

In the first three segments, you will learn about the branch of child psychology that examines how parent-child relationships inform how an individual develops and emerges into adult relationships. This will include a timeline of relevant cultural and scientific developments that have come to shape our modern understanding of attachment. This historical overview will lay the groundwork for a deeper understanding of attachment beyond the limited notion of attachment as a fixed category. In this expanded view, we will explore attachment as patterns of learned behaviors and strategies that are context-specific and changeable. These segments will introduce the IPNB concept of integration as a pathway toward increased attachment security.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- List the four main areas of application of a lifespan view of attachment
- Identify the limitations of reducing an individual to a fixed category of attachment
- Discuss the origin and key figures of early attachment research

## **Segments 4- 6: Foundations of Attachment Research Part 2, The Infant Strange Situation, and The Infant Strange Situation and Patterns of Parent-Child Interaction**

### **Description:**

The next segment highlights how neuroscience has supported advancements in the understanding of how a child develops. With these foundations in mind, the research method and significant findings of the Infant Strange Situation paradigm will be elucidated. In this process, you will learn to identify the meaning of the patterns of parent-child interactions and reunion behavior that correlate to secure attachment and the non-secure forms of ambivalent, avoidant, and disorganized attachment. Through interpreting these defining characteristics, you will gain knowledge about the specific ways that attachment patterns act as adaptive strategies based on the patterns of communication in the caregiver relationship. This will reinforce your understanding of how early attachment experiences come to shape patterns of neural networks that are activated in future relationships.

### **Segment Learning Objectives:**

- Discuss the timeline of cultural and scientific developments that shape our modern understanding of attachment
- Examine the method and findings of the Infant Strange Situation
- Classify the features of parent-child interactions that correlate with each attachment pattern

## **Segments 7-9: Disorganized Attachment, The Development of Self, and Self, States of Mind, and the Brain**

### **Description:**

In the following segments, we explore how an individual's sense of self is shaped through relationships and the implications for our clients. We will explore how and why secure attachment creates a coherent sense of self, while non-secure attachment can lead to a disconnected, confused, or fragmented sense of self during interactions with a particular caregiver. The definition of "self" will be explained as consisting of subjective experience, perspective and agency. We will differentiate and define the core self, relational self and

narrative self and assess how these are impacted by a combination of attachment and temperament. Next, we will build on these foundations to consider that attachment patterns are states of mind that emerge from and also create a particular form of relational field. It is essential to understand that attachment can be understood as context-dependent states of mind, defined as spatiotemporal states of self-organization. This notion highlights that individuals contain the potentiality to have different attachment states of mind that arise depending on the context.

### **Segment Objectives:**

- Define the biological paradox of disorganized attachment
- Describe the nature of the development of self as it is impacted by each attachment pattern
- Differentiate between the concept of core self, relational self and narrative self
- Define four facets that comprise a state of mind from an IPNB perspective

## **Segments 10 - 12 – Patterns of Development, Adult Attachment, and The Adult Attachment Interview**

### **Description:**

In the following segments, we will expand on the important notion of attachment as patterns of self-organization referred to as states of mind. Building on this perspective, you will learn how avoidant, ambivalent and disorganized attachment can be viewed as self-organizing outcomes with turning up, turning down, or fragmenting the fundamental drive for attachment.

Attachment as states of mind can be understood as self-organizing, self-reinforcing neural firing patterns which shape developmental patterns of interaction and connection that are likely to be induced in future relationships and situations.

We will also explore the nature of adult attachment and the lifelong capacity we all possess to cultivate greater attachment security and well-being, regardless of childhood trauma or loss. We will examine the landmark Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACES) study, which confirmed that poor mental and physical health outcomes are associated with adverse childhood experiences. Learn how to utilize three pillar practice (focused attention, open awareness, kind attention) to improve physical and mental health and integration.

### **Learning Objectives:**

- Compare the outcomes to the attachment drive in ambivalent, avoidant, and disorganized attachment patterns.
- Analyze the role of unresolved trauma in adult attachment and parenting
- Discuss the implications of the ACES study
- List four physiological benefits of three pillar practice

## **Segments 13-15: The Adult Attachment Interview in Detail, The Questions of the Adult Attachment Interview, and Responses to the Adult Attachment Interview**

### **Description:**

In these segments, you will get an in-depth exploration of the significant meanings and measures of the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI). Learn how the protocol and insights available through the tool of the AAI can be adapted in a clinical setting and tailored to match your therapeutic approach. You will discover the role of integrating memory into a coherent narrative, and the way this can be blocked by non-secure attachment. Gain the skills you need to guide your client in this process of exploration to reveal attachment states of mind.

### **Segment Objectives:**

- Describe the clinical significance the Adult Attachment Interview
- Identify key principles of the Adult Attachment Interview as they can be applied in a clinical setting
- Discuss how each attachment state of mind impacts memory and narrative

## **Segments 16-18: Integrative Transformation, Exploring Non-secure Attachment as Impaired Integration and the Process of Growth as Integration through the Lens of Ambivalence and Preoccupied Attachment**

### **Description:**

In the next three segments, we will explore the notion of integrative transformation as including two consistent principles: (1) change requires consciousness and (2) integration is the basis of health. Using the interpersonal neurobiology definition of integration as linkage without losing differentiation, we will explore how secure attachment can be understood as integration. You

will learn how presence, attunement, resonance and trust create an integrative relationship with your client as a vital foundation for therapeutic growth. These sections will go through each non-secure attachment pattern and describe how the specific adaptive strategy impacts both state of mind and integration in the brain. This will provide a helpful framework to assess and understand the treatment needs of a client.

**Segment Objectives:**

- Describe how secure attachment can be thought of as an integrative relationship
- Identify the components of PART as they manifest in an integrated relationship
- Explain how attachment is both experience-expectant and experience-dependent
- Discuss how left-mode and right-mode brain states are correlated to attachment patterns

**Segments 19-21: Exploring Secure Attachment as Integration through the Lens of Disorganized Attachment, Consciousness and Change, and The Plane of Possibility**

**Description:**

These segments will continue to explore the concept of integrated consciousness as a pathway to increased attachment security. This essential component of secure attachment will also be applied to relational resilience, understood as the ability to maintain equilibrium in the face of challenges. You will discover how transformation is connected to energy flow, and the Plane of Possibility is a tool that can be used to shift energy and information flow in relationships. Learn how to conceptualize non-secure attachment patterns as states of mind that create certain forms of plateaus, and how accessing the Plane of Possibility can allow for integration to arise.

**Segment Objectives:**

- Describe the main neurological effects of disorganized attachment
- Identify two consilient principles that can be utilized to increase attachment security
- Apply the plane of possibility framework to clinical treatment of non-secure attachment

## **Segments 22-24: Awareness as the Portal for Integration, Developmental Pathways toward Wholeness, and Patterns of Developmental Pathways**

### **Description:**

In the following segments, you will discover how awareness corresponds to the Plane of Possibility as a pathway to increasing attachment security. You will gain a deeper understanding of how avoidant, ambivalent, and disorganized attachment patterns are adaptive strategies that create a sense of safety by decreasing uncertainty. Learn to identify when a client is stuck on a plateau created by a non-secure attachment state of mind and how the Wheel of Awareness allows energy to come into the Plane of Possibility. Additionally, you'll discover how temperament and attachment interact to create personality. With this groundbreaking new model, one which can be applied personally and professionally to enhance integration, you will learn how the central drive for wholeness and connection creates distinct developmental pathways.

### **Segment Objectives:**

- Describe how awareness can be a portal of optimal self-organization
- Explain the impact of non-secure attachment patterns on developmental pathways
- Explore the relationship between attachment and temperament in the development of personality

## **Segments 25-27: Wholeness and the Journey of Personality, Temperament and Attachment in the Cultivation of Personality, Pathways of Development Driven by Vector and Orientation of Attention**

### **Description:**

These segments will expand on the notion that the fundamental drive of the development of personality is to belong and be in a state of connection. Since non-secure attachment impedes the ability to feel belonging, it can challenge this natural direction of our lives. The developmental pathways of personality will be explored in-depth, including how they are driven by one of three primary vectors (anger, sadness or fear) combined with an orientation bias of attention (inward, outward, or both). You will learn to utilize this framework to deepen your

understanding of your client as well as apply it as a therapeutic intervention that can enhance integration, belonging and well-being.

**Segment Objectives:**

- Identify three main drives of the human nervous system according to the PDP Model
- Describe the role and developmental origin of wholeness in the formation of developmental pathways
- Discuss the clinical relevance of developmental pathways

**Segments 28-30: Working with your Growth Edge, Attachment Meets Temperament in the Cultivation of Personality and the Movement toward Integration, and Conclusion**

**Description:**

In the final segments, we reinforce the frameworks and therapeutic tools that can be used to increase attachment security and promote relational resilience. In the IPNB framework of secure attachment as a relational field that is integrative, we can understand how to apply a deeper understanding of attachment patterns as states of mind, not rigid categories. Non-secure attachment can not only impede our imperative toward belonging and connection, but it can impact our states of mind, brain integration in structure and function, sense of self, relationships and the development of our personality. By learning to create the connection, open awareness and love that the Plane of Possibility offers, we can utilize neuroplasticity to increase our attachment security.

**Segment Objectives:**

- Utilize the Wheel of Awareness to access the Plane of Possibility as a method to increase attachment security
- Explain how attachment security can increase integration of different developmental pathways
- Describe how attachment and relational resilience can be applied toward cultivating personal, professional, public and planetary well-being