

The brief report from *The 1st National Attachment Conference*
(*I Ogólnopolska Konferencja o Przywiązaniu*)
(29-30 October 2015, Bydgoszcz)

The 1st National Attachment Conference took place in Bydgoszcz on the 29th-30th October, 2015. It gathered 140 participants interested in issues of attachment and emotional bonds as a phenomenon important for developing and maintaining satisfactory and development supporting relationships. Prominent researchers from 13 Polish and 7 foreign research centers (the Netherlands, Ukraine, Great Britain, Luxemburg, Germany, Australia and the Republic of South Africa) and practitioners representing diagnostic-consulting centres, adoption centres providing psychological assistance in the area of attachment were invited to share ideas and own experiences. The Conference was organised by the Institute of Psychology of the Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz. The honorary patrons of the Conference were: prof. dr hab. Lena Kolarska-Bobińska – Minister of Science and Higher Education, Ewa Mes – Kujavia-Pomerania Voivodeship, Rafał Bruski – President of Bydgoszcz city, and prof. dr hab. Janusz Ostoja-Zagórski – Provost of Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz. The work of the Program and Organisational Committee was supervised by dr Katarzyna Lubiewska and dr Ewa Wojtyńkiewicz in collaboration with dr Magdalena Miotk-Mrozowska, dr Małgorzata Wójtowicz-Dacka,

mgr Karolina Głogowska, mgr Kinga Mickiewicz-Stopa, dr Marta Kosiol, dr Joanna Lessing-Pernak, dr Anna Kobierecka-Dziamska, dr Aleksandra Błachnio, dr hab. Helena Ostrowicka and other colleagues. The conference received sponsorship from many institutions and publishing houses.

The two-day Conference program included: 51 oral symposia presentations, 9 poster presentations, 4 plenary lectures (2 of which were given by foreign guests), 6 symposiums with the participation of invited guests, a poster session and 6 thematic sessions. In line with the conference program, there were also 6 conference workshops.

The Conference addressed various areas of attachment research, like attachment in family relations, attachment in clinical groups, relations between attachment and particular personality dimensions, and attachment in extrapersonal relations.

The formal opening of the Conference was made by the chairwoman of the Conference dr Katarzyna Lubiewska who addressed the aim of the Conference related with gathering researchers and practitioners in Poland to discuss the state of research on attachment in Poland and its contribution to the global stream of attachment research as well as creating the opportunity to share experiences and initi-

ate collaboration between research and practise centres nationwide.

During the inauguration lecture, titled „Przywiązanie, narracje przywiązaniowe w terapii rodzin i par [Attachment, attachment narratives in therapy of families and couples]” dr hab. Barbara Józefik, professor in the Jagiellonian University in Cracow stressed issues in therapeutic work in dyadic parent-child relationships depending on the phase of the life cycle. Reflection on the associations between the psychological knowledge of bonds in families, identification and analyses of destructive narration and reinforcement of reflexive function and processes of mentalization with research conducted in different subdisciplines of psychology became the reference point for presentations given during the next symposium, which was entitled “Attachment and mentalisation in the context of clinical practice” and was organised by the key-speaker prof. Barbara Józefik.

During the first day of the conference, participants could attend two more symposiums and three thematic sessions. The first symposium was titled “Przywiązanie a wybrane wymiary osobowości [Attachment and selected dimensions of personality]” and was organised by dr Marta Kosiol (Kazimierz Wielki University). The title of the second symposium was “Zaburzenia przywiązania u dzieci z FAS i innymi zaburzeniami neurorozwojowymi [Attachment disorders in children with FAS and other neurodevelopmental disorders]” and was organised by dr Małgorzata Klecka (Developmental Disorders Diagnostics and Therapy Center, Fundacja Fastryga). Three sessions took place concurrently discussing problems of attachment measurement, led by dr Katarzyna Lubiewska (Kazimierz Wielki University), analys-

ing the relationship between attachment and dimensions of self, led by dr Anna Kobierecka-Dziamska (Kazimierz Wielki University), and reflecting on perceptions of types of parental orientation led by dr Maria Kaźmierczak (University of Gdańsk).

The key-lecture of the conference was given by prof. Marinus H. van IJzendoorn from the Centre for Child and Family Studies, Institute of Education and Child Studies Graduate School of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Leiden University, the Center for Moral Socialization Studies, School for Pedagogical and Educational Sciences, Erasmus University Rotterdam in Holland. The key-lecture titled “Neurobiological and contextual perspectives on attachment” provided rich insight into the state of the art in attachment studies world-wide shedding the light on relations between attachment and genes, attachment and culture and ecological contexts of attachment development. During his lecture, prof. Marinus H. van IJzendoorn presented epigenetic research, hormonal research, and neural research conducted among both adults and toddlers in clinical and non-clinical groups, which shed new light on the constitutional and situational factors of the development of attachment. Photographs and videos were a valuable component of this lecture, as they gave an engaging, vivid image of the attachment relationship in both the human and animal worlds, and in subjects studied in various cultural contexts.

During the next day of the Conference, the key-speech titled “Effectiveness of the Video-feedback Intervention to promote Positive Parenting and Sensitive Discipline (the VIPP-SD): an attachment-based program” was given by dr Claudia D. Werner. The lecture summarized the basic assumptions and

the effectiveness of a short-term attachment-based family intervention program addressed to caregivers of small children developed at the Leiden University in the Netherlands. The goal of this method is the increase of caregivers sensitivity and to improve disciplinary strategies and, in doing so, to support positive parent-child interaction and prevent or reduce problematic behaviours in children aged between 1 and 5. The key-lecture of dr Werner was an extension of the pre-Conference workshops including 13 participants (from Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz, Gdańsk University and Poznań University) who were trained to be trainees in the VIPP-SD program. The key-speaker presented the efficiency of the VIPP-SD, confirmed in 13 randomised clinical studies in various countries. We hope that work on implementation of the VIPP-SD method in Poland will soon commence, and that this will culminate with clinical studies of the efficiency of this method in our country.

During the three following symposia a wide spectrum of research on attachment was discussed. The symposium devoted to the prenatal, perinatal, and birth-period was led by dr Magdalena Miotk-Mrozowska (Kazimierz Wielki University). Implications of attachment theory in the context of family problems were discussed during the symposium of dr Małgorzata Wójtowicz-Dacka (Kazimierz Wielki University). Parental therapies were analysed during the symposium held by dr Joanna Lessing-Pernak (Kazimierz Wielki University).

Based on empirical studies, dr hab. Barbara Tryjarska (professor of the University of Warsaw) gave another key-lecture giving the insight into the importance of attachment styles for marital satisfaction. Her research as

well as other researchers were analysed emphasizing that the relationship satisfaction depends on – low avoidance of intimacy, low fear of rejection, and the ability to show positive emotions and giving task-oriented communications in intimate relations.

In line with the character of the Conference, stressing the interdisciplinary integration of theoretical knowledge about attachment and practical activity, the three subsequent thematic sessions addressed: attachment in intimate and spiritual relationships in the session led by prof. Barbara Tryjarska, (University of Warsaw); attachment among individuals with mental disorders led by dr Monika Marszał (Adam Mickiewicz University); and attachment in non-human relations led by dr Aleksandra Błachnio (Kazimierz Wielki University).

Furthermore, six workshops took place during the Conference to bridge theoretical knowledge and psychological practice in various domains (e.g., adoptive families). The attendees had the chance to take part in three workshops before the beginning of the Conference, in particular in: the *VIPP-SD workshop* held by dr Claudia Werner; also *Analizy moderacyjno-mediacyjne w badaniach relacji rodzinnych [Moderation-mediation analyses in research on family relations]* provided by dr Katarzyna Lubiewska; and *Dziecko z zaburzeniami eksternalizacyjnymi w procesie integratywnej terapii relacji opartej na doświadczaniu miłości i wolności [Children with externalisation disorders in the process of integrative relational therapy based on experiencing love and freedom]* led by dr Joanna Lessing-Pernak. Three subsequent workshops took place after the end of the Conference. The first was titled *Interpretowania zachowań niemowląt (przy pomocy skali NBAS) w kontekście rozwoju relacji przywiązaniowej [Inter-*

preting the behaviours of toddlers (using the NBAS scale) in the context of the development of an attachment relationship] and was led by dr Małgorzata Wójtowicz-Dacka. The second workshop titled *Przywiązanie a somatyzacja – w świetle badań dotyczących relacji z matką dzieci z czynnościowymi bólami brzucha* [Attachment and somatization – in light of research on relations with a mother of children with functional abdominal pain] was provided by dr Izabella Grzankowska. The last post-conference workshop was titled *Uzależnienie od alkoholu z perspektywy teorii przywiązania* [Alcohol addiction from the perspective of attachment theory] was carried out by dr Ewa Wojtynkiewicz.

The 1st National Attachment Conference, due to its rich and conceptually consistent program as well as its exceptional organisation, facilitated the exchange of a wide range of ideas and experiences for both attachment researchers and practitioners who use this knowledge in various forms of therapy. The conference initiated many collaborations and gave a rich inside into the state of the art in attachment

research in Poland. One of the Conference outcomes address the broad dissemination of the insight into research on attachment conducted in Poland, through propagating a special online English-language issue of the journal *Polskie Forum Psychologiczne* [the Polish Psychological Forum], with sample reports from studies presented during the conference. An additional consequence of the Conference is the formal establishment of the Polish Chapter of the *The Society for Emotion and Attachment Studies* which is an international well-recognized society that connects leading attachment researchers world-wide, whose official journal is *Attachment & Human Development*. The Polish Chapter named *Polski Oddział Towarzystwa Badań nad Emocjami I Przywiązaniem* (SEAS-Polska) is located in Kazimierz Wielki University in Bydgoszcz (www.seaspolska.org) and is open for all researchers and practitioners interested in attachment studies.

Małgorzata Wójtowicz-Dacka