Task One

The term emotional well-being covers many areas; relationships, how we see ourselves and also how we cope under pressure or if we are put into a difficult environment.

Psychologists believe that children’s emotional well-being comes from relationships that were formed or not formed in the earliest years (new-born-onwards). The relationships formed are known as attachments. If a child feels loved and is nurtured by those who play a significant part in their lives for example; mum or dad they can go onto develop positive relationships with others in a later in life and also be able to handle difficult situations that might happen in life. Having a strong and positive relationship with a main person in their life can be a way of developing a child’s self-esteem and resilience.

John Bowlby’s theory of attachment was based on his belief that babies needed to form one strong attachment which was usually the mother in the first year of their lives. If they didn’t have this Bowlby showed that they were serious side effects on children if they were separated from their main carer so young. Usually the mother. John Bowlby along with other eminent doctor’s during the Second World War wrote a letter to protect children from being evacuated and separated from their families before they were the age of five. Evacuation during The Second World War meant that children were sent away from their parents and taken to families that would take care of them until the war was over. This had a big impact on many children as they didn’t understand what was happening and why they had to be taken away from their families.

Mary Ainsworth who was a colleague of Bowlby, went onto investigate whether “the quality of attachment matters to children’s well-being than others” Ainsworth and a colleague focused on the babies’ reactions during each part of the experiment and noted how distressed the baby became but also how easily they could be comforted by the returning parent/stranger. This experiment was to see if a baby was anxious-avoidant: baby ignores parent, shows little sign of distress when the parent or other main carer leaves the room. Securely attached: baby plays whilst parent is in the room but when the parent leaves he or she stops playing all together and becomes visibly distressed. However when the parent returns the baby is easily comforted and can carry on playing. Anxious-avoidant: Baby is wary and explores less than other babies. The baby is very easily distressed when the parent leaves and resists comfort from a stranger, when the parent returns they are angry and show frustration alongside clinginess, they may want to be held but struggle to get down. From this Ainsworth came to the conclusion that some babies are more secure than others because it depended on parenting that the baby received; whether the parent is able to predict their babies’ emotions and how they handle their babies’ emotions.

For example, in the church I go to there is a baby who is one year four months old and he started to get upset and cry, and then he started breathing heavy when his mother left the room but he went over to his father who was able to comfort him until the mother returned and he was able to carry on playing with the two other children. This is a sign of Type B securely attached as the one year four-month-old
was upset when his mother left the room he went over to his father who was able to comfort him but when she returned he was able to carry on playing.

When babies are born, there is a strong need for a baby to form strong relationships with their parents or other key people in their lives to support their emotional well-being. These bonds are what help make emotional pathways in the brain. Going back to the statement of “If they didn’t have this Bowlby showed that they were serious side effects on children if they were separated from their main carer so young. Usually the mother.”

The process of developing secure relationships starts from around six weeks and to eight months, a secure attachment bond teaches your baby to trust you, to communicate their feelings to you, and eventually to trust others as well. A secure attachment causes the parts of your baby’s brain responsible for social and emotional development, communication and relationships to grow and develop in the best way possible. Infants learn about empathy, understanding, love and the ability to be responsive to others during infancy rather than developing it in later life. When babies develop a secure bond, they are better able to:

1. Develop fulfilling intimate relationships
2. Maintain emotional balance
3. Feel confident and good about themselves
4. Enjoy being with others
5. Rebound from disappointment and loss
6. Share their feelings and seek support

The impact of a secure relationship on children is very significant. It can help them develop into secure adults and be able to lead a better life with the mentioned list above, if a secure attachment bond isn’t made there can be significant psychological damage that could lead onto attachment disorders, personality disorders, depression, can affect how a person deals with stress can mean they have problems forming friendships and relationships, as a child and teenager their behaviour might become challenging and they might suffer with low self-esteem. https://www.simplypsychology.org/attachment.html

However, the effect of not bonding doesn’t only affect a child it can also affect the parent as well. There are some factors that can affect early bonding:

1. Post-Natal Depression – Postnatal or Post-Partum meaning ‘afterbirth’. The cause of Post-Natal Depression isn’t clear but it has been associated with; a history of mental health problems especially before pregnancy and during, having no close friends or family to support you, having a poor relationship with the baby’s father, experiencing the baby blues. Post-Natal Depression can affect bonding with the baby because it affects the mother’s ability to bond with the baby. Fathers can also struggle ‘baby blues’ which affects their ability to bond with the child. “Depression in fathers is caused by extra pressures that can from having children, such as loss of sleep and increased responsibilities.” 21% of fathers experienced a depressive episode, with the highest risk being in the first after birth.
2. A difficult birth - Can affect the mother’s ability to respond to the child, especially if she is traumatised by the birth - Post-Partum Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. A traumatic childbirth can impair the relationship with both the baby and the partner. The mother may feel acute disappointment, feel angry, the mother may experience flashbacks especially if there were other shocking and expected events during the birth. A mother quoted “I had a traumatic birth. I was so petrified that my son would die that in my head it was easier not to love him just in case.”

3. Premature Birth - A premature baby being inside an incubator, being hooked up to wires, can mean the parents might not be able to touch or feel their baby as much as you would expect otherwise. Although normally parents can put their hands through the holes in the incubator to touch the baby, it isn’t the same as having the baby close to you and it can affect the bonding of the baby especially if they are in hospital for a long period of time.

4. Babies with additional needs - A baby with additional needs may not feed as easily, they may not be soothed as easily when the parents pick them up. It can cause them to lose confidence and they might become anxious, which in return affects the babies’ responses.

The importance of attachment hasn’t always been recognised but today they are seen as being central to children’s emotional well-being, linking back to the BBC news article “the pre-frontal cortex is the key part of the brain that has the most changes,” the pre-frontal cortex is the part of the brain located at the front of the frontal lobe. Which implicates a variety of complex behaviours including; planning which contributes greatly to personality development”.

The process of babies developing attachments with their parents and key family members is gradual. Primary and specific attachments are usually lifelong and very important to the child, such as relationships with parents and close family members. Secondary attachments include relationships with a key person as a well as friendships with other children. These attachments start from infancy this called “infant attachment”, infant attachment is the deep emotional connection that an infant form with his or her main attachment figure normally this is the mother. Infant attachment is a bond that binds the infant and main attachment figure together that overtime leads to the infant experience pleasure; joy and comfort in the caregiver’s company. Soothing, comforting and providing pleasure are the main elements of forming a strong attachment with an infant and attachment theory states that a primary caregiver being consistent is necessary for a child’s overall development. Attachment disorders happen if the primary caregiver does not respond consistently to a child’s needs such as showing love, being dependable, sensitive to the needs of a child and being affectionate. There are three types of
insecure attachments resistant attachment; avoidant attachment and disorganised attachment.

Dollard and Millar (1950) stated that attachment is a learned behaviour that is acquired through both classical and operant conditioning. It is a nurture theory; food produces pleasure and the child associates food and the mother together meaning the mother becomes a source of happiness and therefore the attachment is formed. Dollard and Millar explain that the attachment is a learnt attachment for both caregiver and baby, whilst Bowlby suggests that attachment is important for a child’s survival and that there can be significant psychological damage if an infant doesn’t bond with a main attachment figure it can later on affect the infant as they grow up into childhood and adulthood. [https://www.simplypsychology.org/a-level-attachment.html](https://www.simplypsychology.org/a-level-attachment.html)

Baby’s attachments develop in the following sequence:

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<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Stage of Attachment</th>
<th>Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero to Six weeks’ old</td>
<td>Asocial</td>
<td>Very young infants are asocial in that many kinds of stimuli, both social and non-social, they produce a favourable reaction such as a smile.</td>
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<td>(six weeks to seven months)</td>
<td>Indiscriminate Attachments</td>
<td>Infants enjoy human company and most babies respond equally to any caregiver. Infants get easily upset when an individual doesn’t interact with them. From three months’ infants smile a lot more at faces they recognise and can easily be comforted by a regular caregiver.</td>
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<td>Seven to nine months</td>
<td>Specific/Primary Attachments</td>
<td>The baby looks to particular people for security, comfort and protection. The baby shows fear of strangers (stranger danger) and unhappiness when separated from a main attachment figure (separation anxiety). This is evidence that a baby has formed an attachment that has</td>
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The impact of a secure person on a child’s life

Warm, trusting and secure relationships take time to develop, and the bond will grow through encounters and interactions. Children are very dependent on their caregivers for their needs. Children want and need to feel safe and need to experience positive responses in to build trust and form these relationships. Secure and trusting relationships matter as they can have a significant effect on a child’s development such as their emotional well-being. Secure relationships can shape a person a child will grow into. Stated earlier is how Mary Ainsworth’s showed that some children are more securely attached than others.

Analyse the role of the Key Person in promoting emotional-wellbeing

“A key person is someone who is tailored to meet the needs of an individual child, and it is to help the child become familiar with the setting, offer a settled relationship for the child and build a relationship with their parents” – Statutory Framework for the Early Years Foundation Stage, Page 21, 3.27 Key Person.
person these games help him with his emotional problems and there has been improvement. CACHE Level 3 Early Years Educator pages 58-60

Identify transitions and significant events that a child may experience

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<th>Transition or Event</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Loss of significant people in a child’s life</td>
<td>For example, a little girl in my setting recently lost her grandad, she has dealt with this significant event very well she has been able to function in school but has at times has wanted emotional and physical comfort from myself or another adult in school. One time she was rather upset and wanted to sit on my lap whilst feeling sad but another time she was role-playing what happened in hospital with her grandad. The little girl is four and a half and one day spoke to me about how her ‘pampie’ is talking to her, this is her processing what happened and she has processed the situation rather well in school with to be expected times where she hasn’t dealt with it well because of missing him. Losing a significant person can have a major effect on a baby and child’s life. If a parent is lost it can cause emotional problems in the future especially as they get older and go into puberty if a baby or child doesn’t have a mother figure around they might struggle to talk to their male figure about certain things. The child might not get the same amount of love they received from another significant figure and might miss what the figure they lost could give and therefore they might struggle to find that again, this could progress into adulthood and might struggle with forming relationships and might seek out what that lost care-giver could give, if they don’t find it a person could become depressed and become lonely.</td>
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<td>Living outside the family home</td>
<td>Some children live with their grandparents; some children may have gone into foster care. If the child has some children live with their grandparents; some children may have gone into foster care. If the child has</td>
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been moved at an age where they are aware of what’s going on living with strangers or grandparents will unsettle them rather badly; they might have to travel further to get to settings; they might have to change settings, living with grandparents might mean they might not get to do what they do at home, for example when I was younger I stayed with my nan and cousin a lot, there were times when I felt unwanted by my parents or I felt confused on what I could do and not do because of having unclear boundaries. Although I was well looked after by my cousin and nan it still unsettled me as I never really knew who was in charge. Therefore, this had a big impact on my emotional development, I found it hard to trust people even when I had support in secondary school I found it very hard to trust those who were trying to help me. Children who live with other carer especially foster carers will feel unsettled and not sure who they are with, child have significant trauma before going into foster care and could suffer some flashbacks. For example, I know someone who was placed into foster care as a child and she remembers the lead up to her going into care; she remembers entering her foster carer’s house, she remembers the lead up to this her mother having had her leg amputated and her dad struggling to look after her and her mum. The affects emotionally have caused her to have some mental health problems.

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<td>When a new sibling arrives, children have to adapt to the change in their routine for example ‘mummy might not read them bedtime stories because they’re up and down with the new baby and it might become daddy or a new partner to read to them instead’ even though it’s a rather small change having a routine changed such as bedtime stories being read by another person might cause the child to become</td>
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<td>Unsettled, a child might regress to a stage where they last felt they were getting attention from a parent/s or carer.</td>
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<td><strong>Changing settings</strong></td>
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<td>Children who go to nursery, pre-school might experience internal transitions as they move from one room to another. It is important to prepare the child for this transitions because they might be changing teachers or go to a different section of the setting such as moving from a nursery room to a classroom for reception, when the child is in nursery it is important to explain to a child who might not come in and sit nicely on the carpet why they have to, “You need to sit nicely because when you go into reception your teacher won’t be happy that you’re running and sliding down onto the floor, this isn’t acceptable for reception students therefore we need to be prepared for when you change teachers and classrooms” or it can be something positive like, “when you move into reception you’ll be able to sit on the special person chair and be able to go down into the office with Miss Frances to drop off the register” it’s all about that positive parts of transitions and also showing them that some behaviour they can do in nursery won’t be accepted in reception. For example, at my placement we are trying to teach the kids to sit independently some children like to be near us and sit on our laps, so I tell the children they can sit beside me but not on me. At the end of the day during story-time one child comes to sit on me and I usually allow her at the end of the day but during the day she has to sit independently with legs crossed and arms folded.</td>
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Significant life events and transition can have long term effects on children. They might suffer with depression later in life or struggle to form relationships with people throughout childhood and adulthood as some significant events can cause children to lose trust in adults or other children. Children might underachieve in school and might need extra support. It is important to make sure that children’s
emotional well-being is looked after because if they are looked after emotionally as children they are likely to grow into adults who are able to function normally.

A practitioner can support children during transitions by working closely with the families, even small transitions like going from nappies to pants families and practitioners need to work together to help the child with their transition from toddler to child and to keep in contact with the family and let them know how the child had done. Children who have lost family members practitioners can help put emotional support in place for example making sure that the child is given extra jobs to do to distract them, to make them feel like they can talk to you about how they’re feeling and also give them that time to process what has happened. It is important children process events in their life as it can help them later in life understand what happened to the person lost and what happens next with the family.

Practitioners can help support a child through a planned transition by:

Working with the family, most of the time families explain to them what is happening a person dying in the family they can sit the child down and explain to them to the best of the child’s understanding, but sometimes these changes might not be planned and it can have an effect on the child emotionally and physically, a practitioner can help a child go through unplanned transitions by working closely with the family. Practitioners can liaise with the family when helping a child who might be changing schools by spending time planning stories to tell about a child moving away, if there is another unplanned transition such as dad or mum who are military based might be suddenly deployed and therefore the practitioner can help the child with this transition by offering emotional support, spending one to one time with the child and explaining to them why this has happened, the practitioner can allow the child to release emotions in a safe environment and also if needed they practitioner might need to seek further support from professionals to help them understand more. It is important that through each transition planned or unplanned the child is supported emotionally and has support from family and the setting. - CACHE Level 3 Early Years Educator pages 61-63.