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**Attachment Type and Cognitive Status of People in Treatment
For Substance Use and Abuse**

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Abstract

This study demonstrates the importance of examining attachment issues, and the cognitive status of people in treatment for substance abuse. The participants were seven clients aged between 20 and 45 years of age, in treatment for substance abuse, and six of their counsellors. The Adult Attachment Interview (AAI: George, Kaplan & Main, 1996) was used as a therapeutic tool to uncover forgotten trauma and unresolved grief. Each of these participants was interviewed and portions of the transcripts are used to demonstrate the effectiveness of the instrument in use. These findings give examples of the richness of the client AAI transcripts which are then used in the counselling process. The second measure used was Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test (1976,1998) which was thought to show promise for indicating where people are 'stuck' in their thinking. In this study rather than being 'stuck' in an immature way of thinking, participants show evidence of mature thinking. Classification of the AAI gave support to findings in attachment research that reflect a substantial and enduring connection between attachment organisation and psychopathology, and was linked to a wide array of indices of psychosocial functioning. Intergenerational transmission of severe insecure attachment behaviours was evident with all clients, as expected, which suggests that further investigation of the use of the AAI in therapy is important.

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