



AAPPS & Bereavement

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Ways people make sense of death

- ▶ **Look after yourself**

- ▶ What sense?

- ▶ What memorials?

- ▶ Religious: passed on, gone to heaven, joined other relatives in the afterlife ...
- ▶ Humanist: no longer in pain; gone to sleep (won't wake up)
- ▶ Local meanings: become a star in sky looking out for you
- ▶ Make memorials: photos, gravestone (but expensive - people with intellectual disabilities want to visit a gravestone that may not exist), book of remembrance at cemetery

Healthy & difficult bereavements

Clegg & Lansdall-Welfare (1995)

- ▶ Effective engagement with loss
 - ▶ prepares people to cope with other losses & for their own death, &
 - ▶ humanises services
- ▶ Complicated mourning more likely when attachment relationship insecure or disorganised: happens more often in ID (Schuengel 2013)
- ▶ Normalisation focus pressures staff to 'get the person to the funeral'
- ▶ Attempts to correct misunderstandings interpreted as an accusation person was lying

Mitchell & Clegg (2005)

- ▶ 15-20% people w ID (9% non-ID) intense reaction to bvt (*pretending to be dead*), often show mix of PTSD signs seen in adults & children
 - ▶ Adults: flashbacks, disorientation, nightmares, insomnia, angry
 - ▶ Children: omens, misperceive events, re-enact through play, guilt, struggle to understand why happened to them. Avoid reminders as if might activate a ghost.

The Adult Attachment Projective Picture System (George, West & Pettem, 1997)

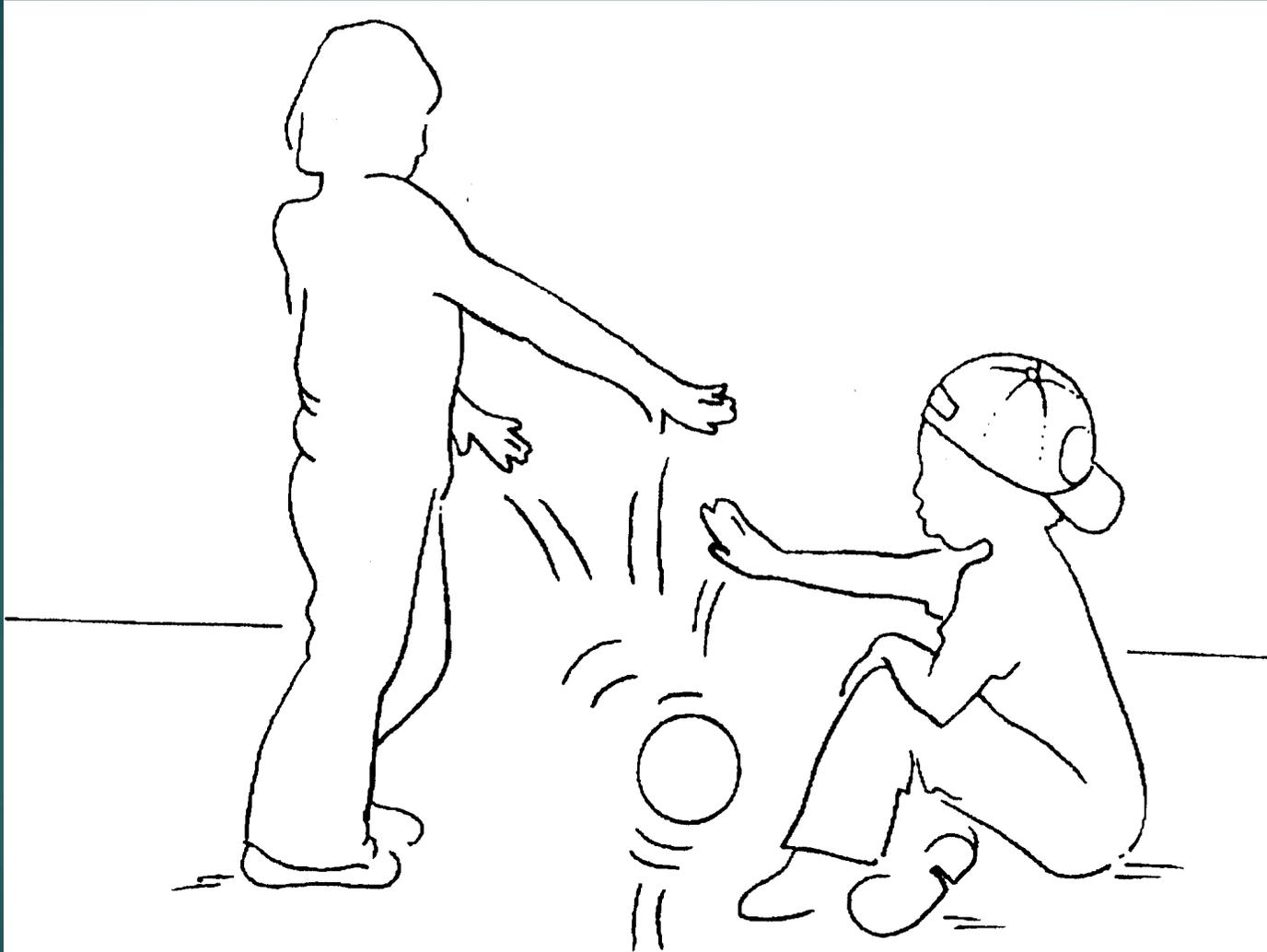
- ▶ Semi-structured responses to 8 black and white line drawings
- ▶ Recorded & transcribed verbatim
- ▶ Coded & classified by trained, reliable judge – takes a while
- ▶ Yields same 4 classifications as Adult Attachment Interview (AAI)

Attachment classifications

Child attachment to key figure	Adult state of mind about relationships
<i>Secure</i>	<i>Autonomous</i>
<i>Ambivalent</i>	<i>Preoccupied</i>
<i>Avoidant</i>	<i>Dismissing</i>
<i>Disorganised</i>	<i>Unresolved</i>

The AAP Scenes

- ▶ **Neutral** – *children playing ball*
- ▶ **Window** – *child at window*
- ▶ **Departure** – *adult man & woman face each other over suitcases*
- ▶ **Bench** – *youth alone on a bench huddled*
- ▶ **Bed** – *child & woman opposite each other on a bed*
- ▶ **Ambulance** – *woman & child watch as stretcher loaded onto ambulance*
- ▶ **Cemetery** – *man stands by a gravestone*
- ▶ **Corner** – *child stands in corner, head turned & hands raised*

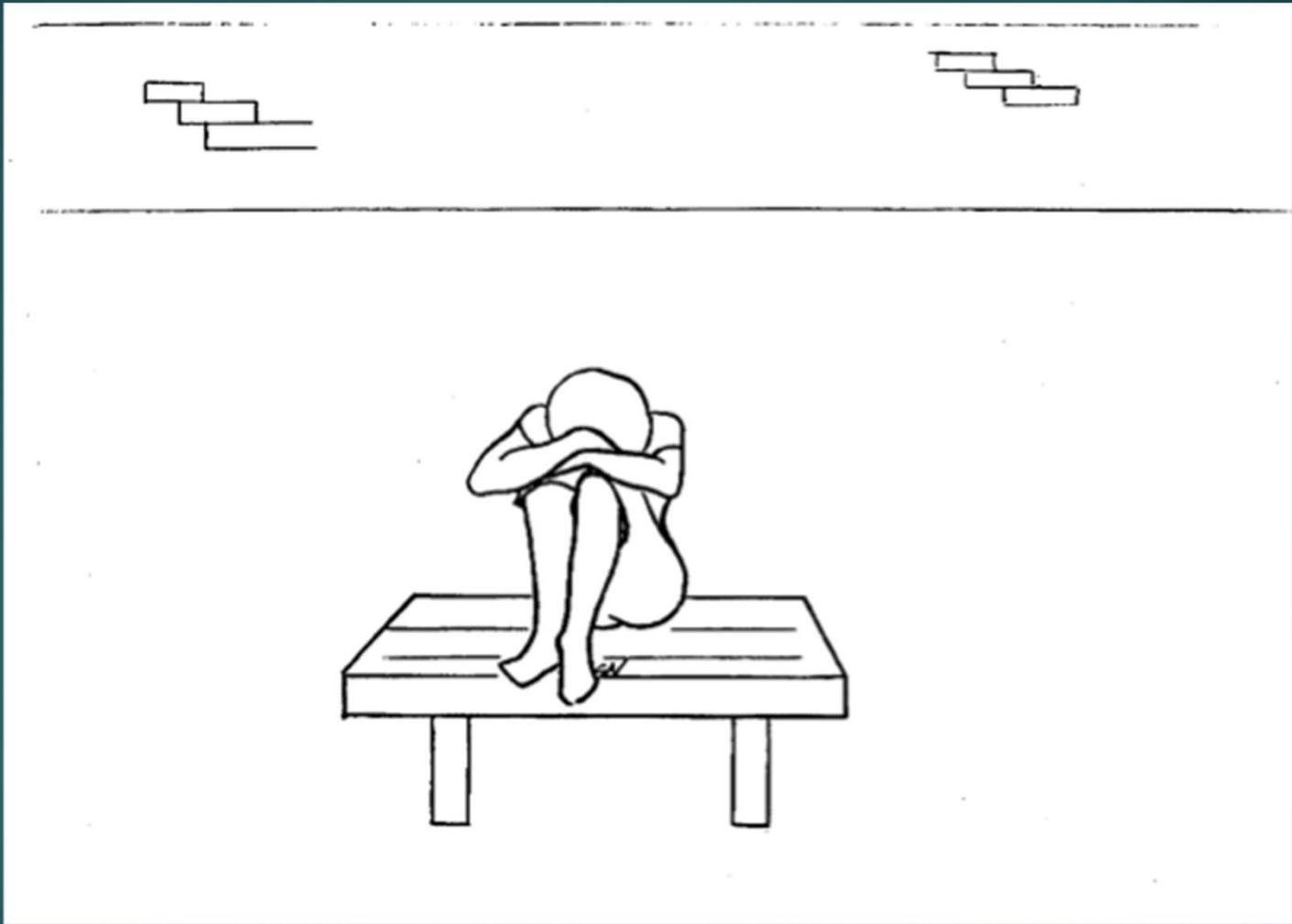


Modifications for ID

- ▶ 2 additional neutral scenes
 - ▶ Provide more practice at the story telling task



- ▶ Feedback during neutral scenes
- ▶ Repetition of response by administrator₈





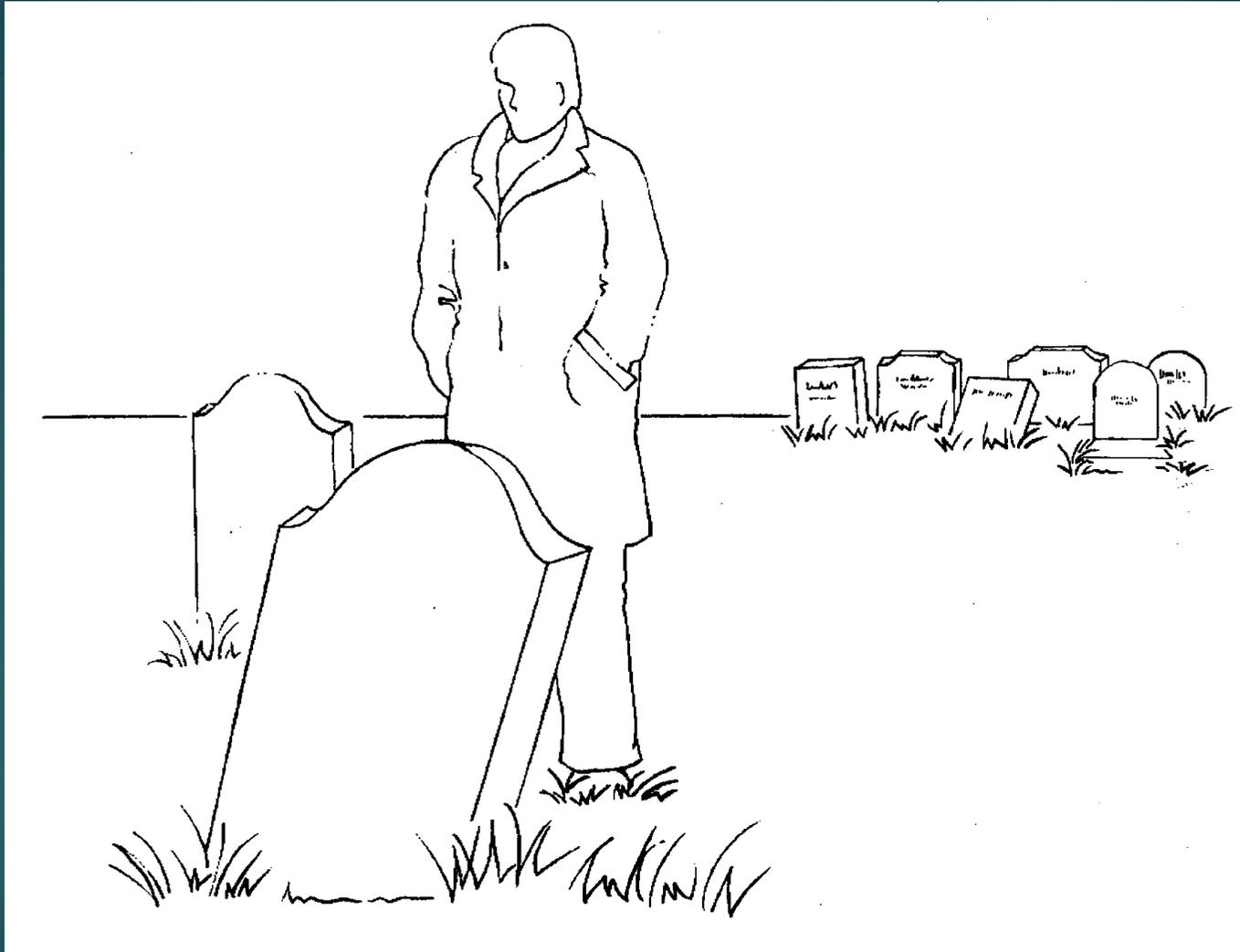
Review pictures in groups

Rating system

- ▶ Recorded & transcribed interviews
- ▶ Focus on how the story is told, comparing stories told about neutral pictures to loss pictures
- ▶ Does the account become fragmented?
- ▶ Is there catastrophising?
- ▶ Is there avoidance?

Gallichan & George (2016)

- ▶ Adults w/ID recruited from CLDT
- ▶ Attachment trauma in 18/20 - consistent with high levels (42%) of attachment disorders found in children with ID referred to psychiatric services in the Netherlands (Giltaij et al 2013)
- ▶ Stories marked by bullying involving helplessness, terror, or de-realisation
- ▶ Pathological mourning also problem for most (13): Chronic Unresolved Mourning most common source of distress, 1 case of Preoccupation with Suffering



June: Cemetery

“That man’s looking down on that grave there. It must be his wife or one of his family down there ...somebody done something to his family, or they were in, may, somebody reported a shot and that killed them and then he got buried ... they’ve brought the police and they’ve brought the ambulance ... yeah, but the man was dead already so the man who is there in the picture might go to his grave ... I think he’s going to do something wrong ... Yeah so I think he will go and, go and do something wrong ... yeah ... well either he’ll get killed or someone else will get killed. Well there’s a lot of graves there. There’s 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 of them so another would be 8 if he got killed.” Gallichan & George 2016: 210.

- ▶ June’s story about multiple violent deaths interpreted to reflect conflicted feelings about (1) death of her abusive father, (2) confusion between loss, danger and destruction, and (3) fears for her own death.
- ▶ Her clinical presentation was of two segregated selves

Attachment trauma

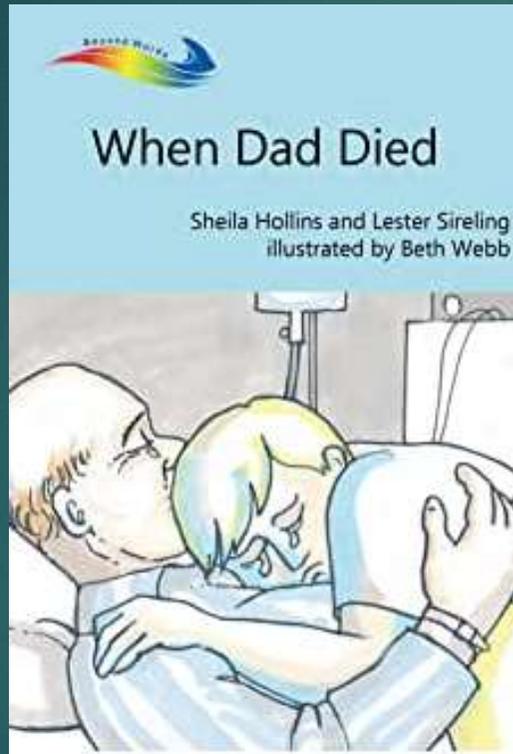
- ▶ Bowlby
 - ▶ **“Segregated systems”** brittle, unreliable
 - ▶ When break down get flooded and emotionally dysregulated
- ▶ George & West (2012) 3 types pathological mourning - evaluated by markers of traumatic segregated systems and derealization:
 - ▶ Failed mourning: numb, defended, avoidant ('don't say that word' Mitchell & Clegg 2005 PTSD) – relates to dismissing attachment
 - ▶ Preoccupation with personal suffering – form of preoccupied attachment
 - ▶ Unresolved chronic mourning – consumed with details of sorrow, pain grief (form of Unresolved attachment)

Gallichan & George 2016

Community ID Team referrals

- ▶ 18/20 (90%) showed attachment trauma
 - ▶ 12/20 (60%) bullying evoking helplessness & terror
 - ▶ 13/20 (65%) pathological mourning, nearly all chronic unresolved
- ▶ Gallichan & George 2018
 - ▶ Evaluating the method not the therapy – but following attachment therapy, some individuals showed positive change
 - ▶ promising & reliable method
 - ▶ formal outcome research needed

Hollins: books beyond words



Other resources
for working with bvt?



References

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