

## A Tightrope Walk: Attachment Theory & Parenting: Video Course

Dr Gwen Adshead

Video Course  
CPD/CE credits: 5

Price: £135



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*“Parenthood...It’s about guiding the next generation and forgiving the last.” – Peter Krause*

The attachment bond is known to have significant influence on child development; specifically, on the origins of self-experience and the relational mind. Secure attachment for a child is known to be influenced by the parental state of mind, and there is now increasing evidence for the transgenerational transmission of attachment. At this intellectually stimulating and practically oriented seminar, relevant for therapists working with children, adults or families, Dr Gwen Adshead explains **how the parental state of mind is the key ‘environment’ that influences child development in the first 1000 days.**

However, there is also evidence (such as the *orchid-dandelion* hypothesis of child development: *Ellis, 2008*) that **there are ‘environments’ that can damage even the most resilient children.** Parental harshness, chronic hostility and a rejecting stance might form part of such hazardous environments; such **‘maladaptive parental behaviour’ is not just associated with high rates of child and adolescent psychopathology; but also, with higher manifestations of conduct and / or oppositional defiant disorders in children.**

**Harsh or abusive parenting may be related to a parent’s own attachment system i.e., how the parent ‘sees’ the child and mentalises their behaviour.** There is evidence that insecurity of adult attachment in parents does influence parental behaviour; and may also influence the development of parental mental health problems such as personality dysfunction, substance misuse, depression and the tendency to make dysfunctional relationships with partners. Our challenge in working with such parents and families however, is that parents with insecure attachment systems may be hard to engage; and may feel defensive and reluctant to building a trusting relationship over time with therapists.

At this seminar Dr Adshead draws on her extensive clinical experience, recent neurobiological findings and relational thought to help us comprehend:

- How insecurity of attachment persists across the lifespan into adulthood
- The evidence of insecurity of attachment in parents and its relevance for offspring attachment



- The importance of mentalising skills and attachment
- Attachment insecurity in adults and mental health problems: personality disorders, substance misuse, domestic violence, anxiety
- How core parenting skills are affected by adult insecurity of attachment
- The evidence that shows the risk to child development, both in terms of genetic vulnerability and environmental stress factors
- **Clinical interventions for parents with insecure attachment**

Maintaining the view that therapeutic interventions for parents with attachment problems are both effective and preventive, Dr Adshead explains how therapists can apply these learnings in clinical settings and allow for provision of relational security at multiple levels.

#### About the speaker

**Dr Gwen Adshead** is a Forensic Psychiatrist and Psychotherapist. She trained at St George's Hospital, the Institute of Psychiatry and the Institute of Group Analysis. She is trained as a group therapist and a Mindfulness-based cognitive therapist and has also trained in Mentalisation-based therapy. She worked for nearly twenty years as a Consultant Forensic Psychotherapist at Broadmoor Hospital, running psychotherapeutic groups for offenders and working with staff around relational security and organisational dynamics. She is the co-editor of *Clinical topics in Personality Disorder* (with Dr Jay Sarkar) which was awarded first prize in the psychiatry Section of the BMA book awards 2013; and she also co-edited *Personality Disorder: the Definitive Collection* with Dr Caroline Jacob. She is the co-editor of the *Oxford Handbook of Forensic Psychiatry* (2013) and the *Oxford Handbook of Medical Psychotherapy* (2016). She is also the co-editor of *Munchausens's Syndrome by Proxy: Current issues in Assessment, Treatment and Research*. Gwen was visiting professor at Yale School of Psychiatry and Law in 2013; and also honoured with the President's Medal for services to psychiatry that same year for her work on ethics in psychiatry. She was awarded an honorary doctorate by St George's hospital in 2015; and was Gresham Professor of Psychiatry 2014-2017. She now works in a medium secure unit in Hampshire in a service for high-risk offenders with personality disorder; and in a women's prison. Her new book: *The Deluded Self: Narcissism and its Disorders* is out now with *nscience publishing house*.

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[customerservices@nscience.co.uk](mailto:customerservices@nscience.co.uk)

US: +18337161044

UK/Europe:  
+44(0)2070961722

Australia:  
+1800861953



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