

ATTACHMENT DISORDER

Students with attachment disorder often go unnoticed in the school or are constantly seeking overindulgent attention from staff or other students. Counselors can use the following guidelines to assist parents, teachers, and other school staff to help this student adjust and succeed in school.

Symptoms

1. No significant bond with any caregiver. A general detached manner toward everyone.
2. Resists accepting care from others. Insistent that he/she doesn't need help from anyone.
3. Becomes friendly too quickly. Shows indiscriminate affection toward others.
4. Excessive clinging to primary caregiver. Distraught when out of caregiver's presence
5. Little sign of conscience development.
6. Frequent lying. Stealing items without a need for them

Possible Causes

1. Brought into family through adoption from an abusive, neglectful biological family
2. Has experienced disregard for her/his emotional and physical needs
3. Has been subjected to frequent changes in primary caregiver

Goals

1. Form bond with parents
2. Build a conscience
3. Have a desire for and initiate connections with others
4. Eliminate frequent stealing and lying
5. Keeps appropriate distance from strangers
6. Tolerates reasonable absence from parent without panic

How to Help

1. Arrange for psychological testing/may need to refer to outside agency
2. Refer parents and student to family counseling
3. Actively build a level of trust with student through eye contact, empathy and listening
4. Teach student that his/her detachment is normal reaction to painful experiences

5. Encourage family to engage in social/recreational activities together
6. Support parents in maintaining firm controls to stop manipulative behaviors
7. Encourage student to openly express thoughts and feelings
8. Use art, play or role-plays to practice expressing emotions
9. Discuss and confront lying and stealing when it occurs
10. Explore the student's talents, traits and accomplishments
11. Be dependable