

Attachment: Recent Seismic Developments in Research, Theory and Practice

Webinar Feedback and Early Impact Summary



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Webinar Overview

"This webinar has fundamentally shifted how I think about attachment – not as a fixed label to apply, but as a dynamic, relational concept that requires careful, ethical consideration in every interaction with children and families."

- Webinar Participant, Children's Services Professional

This webinar explored recent developments in attachment research, theory and practice. Conversations with Professor David Shemmings gave participants insight into the current debates in attachment theory, the risks of fixed or overconfident labels, and the importance of using attachment concepts carefully in assessments, reports and professional discussions.

This summary draws on immediate feedback from 224 participants. It presents the headline responses before exploring several themes that emerged particularly clearly from their written reflections: the relevance of the learning across different practice settings, the language used around attachment, what participants valued about the learning experience, and their intentions to share the learning with others.

The verbatim quotations included throughout this feedback summary have been selected to illustrate these themes. The final pages consider how the On Demand recording could support individual, team and organisational learning. The feedback provides evidence of participants' immediate learning, reflection and intended action; planned longer-term follow-up will provide an understanding of what subsequently changed in practice.

Key Indicators of Learning

The following figures are based on responses to the post-webinar feedback survey*.

We asked: *How would you rate the webinar overall?*

Response: Average **4.8 out of 5**, and **96.9%** rated the webinar **4 or 5 out of 5**

We asked: *In your opinion, did the session provide a meaningful learning experience?*

Response: **99.6%** said yes

We asked: *Did the session give you a clear understanding of current developments and debates within attachment theory?*

Response: **98.2%** said yes

What we asked: *Did the session prompt you to reflect on the use of attachment classifications in assessment and reporting?*

Response: **97.8%** said yes

We asked: *Did the webinar prompt you to consider the ethical implications of attachment language in professional decision-making?*

Response: **99.6%** said yes

We asked: *Did the webinar prompt you to reflect on your own practice, or practice you're responsible for?*

Response: **99.6%** said yes

We asked: *Do you intend to add your attendance at this webinar to your CPD log?*

Response: **77.1%** said yes. **16.1%** were unsure.

These responses provide strong evidence that participants experienced the webinar as meaningful and reflective. While they don't constitute evidence of changes in practice yet, they do indicate learning and intention to apply this learning.

*Data taken from 224 feedback survey responses.

Note: Percentages are based on valid responses to each question. One incomplete response is included in the overall response count but excluded from rating and indicator calculations.

Relevance across Practice Settings

"I work in supporting schools with early intervention and SEND, I think spreading the word about this to SENCOs, DSLs, HSLWs etc would be very useful."

Attachment ideas and terminology are used across social care, health, education, mental health and legal settings. The breadth of the audience and the written feedback suggest that participants were able to relate the discussion to substantially different professional contexts.

"I've found this fascinating... It has given me much to reflect on in terms of how we use attachment language in educational settings and the assumptions we sometimes make about children and families."

"This has been a very thought-provoking webinar. I rarely attend webinars that make me reflect deeply on my own practice and the language I use. The breadth of application across different settings was eye-opening."

The feedback confirms how relevant the webinar was to practitioners from a range of services and across levels of seniority. A recurring feature of the feedback was the way participants connected the discussion with their own assessments, conversations, reports and decisions. This indicates that the recording will be useful for multi-agency learning as well as profession-specific CPD.

This range matters because attachment language appears in many different professional contexts. The responses suggest that participants were able to connect the discussion with their own work, whether in direct practice, assessment, supervision, education, family support or legal processes.

A Key Theme: Language and Professional Judgement

Attachment terminology appears in assessments, reports, court documents and conversations across services. The words practitioners use can shape how a child's experiences and relationships are understood, how professional judgements are communicated and, potentially, how decisions are made.

Careful use of language was one of the clearest themes in the feedback. Participants described reconsidering the labels, assumptions and conclusions that can become attached to children and families when attachment terminology is used too quickly or with too much certainty.

"It got me really thinking about the language we use and the conclusions we come to without really thinking on individual cases..."

"The webinar made me stop and think about how I phrase things in reports and assessments."

"I will be more mindful of the language I use when discussing attachment with families and in my written work. Words carry weight and consequence."

These responses indicate a shift in thinking and a stated intention to use attachment language more carefully. Participants' responses demonstrated they were considering the relationship between language, interpretation and professional responsibility. Longer-term evidence would be needed to establish whether this reflection changed written or direct practice.

What Participants Valued

Participants valued the combination of research, practical examples and conversational delivery. Many responses linked the academic content with day-to-day professional judgement, especially in relation to assessment, report writing and discussion with families and colleagues.

"The subject matter was very interesting, academic based but the links to practice were clearly explained. It gave me a lot to think about in terms of how I approach assessments and write reports."

"Excellent combination of scholarly rigour and practical wisdom. This is exactly what professional development should look like."

"Really appreciated the balance between theory and real-world application. The examples helped me understand how attachment research translates into everyday practice decisions. I feel more confident now about discussing these concepts with colleagues and families."

The feedback suggests that participants particularly valued the relationship between current research and recognisable practice situations. Academic depth was experienced as useful because the conversational format and practical examples gave participants ways to question, discuss and apply the ideas.

Participants' Intentions to Share and Discuss the Learning

In feedback, participants described plans to share the learning with colleagues, including through practice meetings, supervision and team discussion. This suggests that the recording may also have value as a resource for group learning and reflective supervision.

Individual learning can gain wider organisational value when it becomes part of supervision, team discussion, induction or practice development. Participants' responses provide evidence of an intention to create that wider conversation.

"Thank you I will disseminate learning with colleagues. This has given me so much to think about and share with my team in our next practice meeting."

"I hope to pass on this learning in supervising newly qualified social workers. It's essential they understand these developments from the start of their careers and approach attachment with the care it deserves."

"This webinar has inspired me to bring these ideas back to my organisation. The way attachment theory was presented makes it accessible for team discussions and reflective supervision sessions."

The feedback provides a meaningful early signal of potential cascade. Several participants identified a setting and audience for sharing the learning, including practice meetings, supervision and support for newly qualified social workers. These specific intentions are stronger than a general willingness to recommend the webinar.

Why Engage with the On Demand Recording?

This webinar offers valuable learning for professionals across a wide range of roles and settings.

Participants' feedback suggests that the recording may be particularly useful for professionals who want to:

- Understand current developments and debates in attachment theory.
- Think more carefully about the use of attachment language in assessments, reports and professional discussions.
- Reflect on the risks of fixed or overconfident labels.
- Consider how attachment ideas can be applied in ways that are careful, relational and ethically aware.
- Support CPD, supervision, management discussions or team learning.

Engaging with the On Demand recording provides an opportunity to deepen understanding of attachment theory and its ethical application in professional practice.

The recording can be used for individual CPD or as the stimulus for supervision, a practice meeting or a facilitated team-learning session. CareKnowledge's accompanying resources can help teams move from watching the recording to discussing what the ideas mean for their own work.

The webinar's blend of academic rigour and practical relevance makes it an ideal resource for individual reflection or collaborative team discussions.

Why this learning matters for organisations now

"Excellent combination of scholarly rigour and practical wisdom. This is exactly what professional development should look like."

- Webinar Participant

This learning is particularly timely for organisations in England, where current reform places increased emphasis on earlier and more effective help, consistent relationships with children and families, evidence-informed multi-agency judgement, and the conditions practitioners need for critical reflection.

Attachment ideas can influence assessments, reports, discussions and decisions across services. Supporting practitioners to use those ideas carefully is therefore relevant to the quality of professional analysis, relationships with families and consistency across agencies.

Evidence-informed analysis and professional judgement

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2026 sets the expectation that assessment and decision-making will involve judgement, balance, collaborative analysis and critical reflection through supervision. It also expects managers to create opportunities for peer learning, knowledge exchange and group supervision. The webinar provides a strong stimulus for precisely those conversations.

Relationships and working with families

The 2026–27 *Families First Partnership* programme emphasises earlier help, more consistent relationships and a culture in which families experience services as working with them rather than doing things to them. Reflecting on labels, assumptions and the language used about families has direct relevance to that ambition.

Shared practice across agencies

The 2026 *Children's Social Care National Framework* identifies effective multi-agency working, evidence-informed practice, strong relationships and an equipped workforce as central enablers. A shared conversation about attachment language could help different professions examine whether they are using key concepts consistently and responsibly.

Policy context checked August 2026. References apply to England; the wider practice questions may also be relevant in other jurisdictions.

Using the Learning in your Organisation

The conversation with Professor David Shemmings gave practitioners space to reflect on how attachment ideas are used in professional practice, and how they shape the way children, families and care givers are seen and understood.

The strongest early learning signals were:

1. Reflection on more careful use of attachment language.
2. Greater awareness of the ethical implications of terminology and labels.
3. Consideration of attachment as relational and contextual rather than fixed.
4. Intended discussion of the learning in supervision, team meetings and professional development.

Questions for teams

- Where does attachment terminology appear in our assessments, reports and decision-making?
- Are any terms being used as fixed descriptions rather than as starting points for further enquiry?
- How do we test our interpretations with colleagues from other professions?
- How might children and families experience the language we use about them?
- What opportunities do supervision and practice meetings provide for examining these questions?

The replay of **Attachment: Recent Seismic Developments in Theory, Research and Professional Practice** is available On Demand for CareKnowledge members [here](#).

Not yet a member? Visit CareKnowledge at www.careknowledge.com or drop as an email at info@careknowledge.com to find out how a subscription could benefit your organisation.



About CareKnowledge

CareKnowledge strengthens reflective and ethically confident practice across care, safeguarding and support systems.

We create learning spaces and resources that help practitioners engage seriously with evidence, ideas and lived experience, and consider what these mean for their relationships, decisions and practice.

Also available now On Demand

CareKnowledge On Demand brings together recordings from CareKnowledge Live webinars with resources designed to support individual reflection, supervision and facilitated team learning. Depending on the subject, these may include reading lists, reflective questions, seminar materials and guidance for running an in-house seminar or peer reflection circle.

A growing collection of On Demand replays of previous CareKnowledge Live webinars are available exclusively to members.



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