

The Latent Structure of the Adult Attachment Interview

Presenter: Lee Raby

Co-authors: M.L. Verhage, R.M.P. Fearon, R.C. Fraley, G. I. Roisman, M.H. van IJzendoorn, C. Schuengel, M.J. Bakermans-Kranenburg, A. Bernier, K. Ensink, A. Hautamäki, S. Madigan, S. Mangelsdorf, M. Oosterman, L. E. Priddis, M. S. Wong, The Collaboration on Attachment Transmission Synthesis (CATS)

The Adult Attachment Interview (AAI)

III. SECURITY IN INFANCY, CHILDHOOD, AND ADULTHOOD: A MOVE TO THE LEVEL OF REPRESENTATION

MARY MAIN AND NANCY KAPLAN

University of California, Berkeley

JUDE CASSIDY

University of Virginia

Traditional AAI coding system

Classification	Description
Autonomous	Coherently discuss childhood caregiving experiences
Dismissing	Idealization of caregiver(s), insistent lack of recall of attachment memories
Preoccupied	Anger toward caregiver(s), passivity of speech
Unresolved	Lapses in monitoring speech or reasoning when discussing experiences of childhood abuse or loss

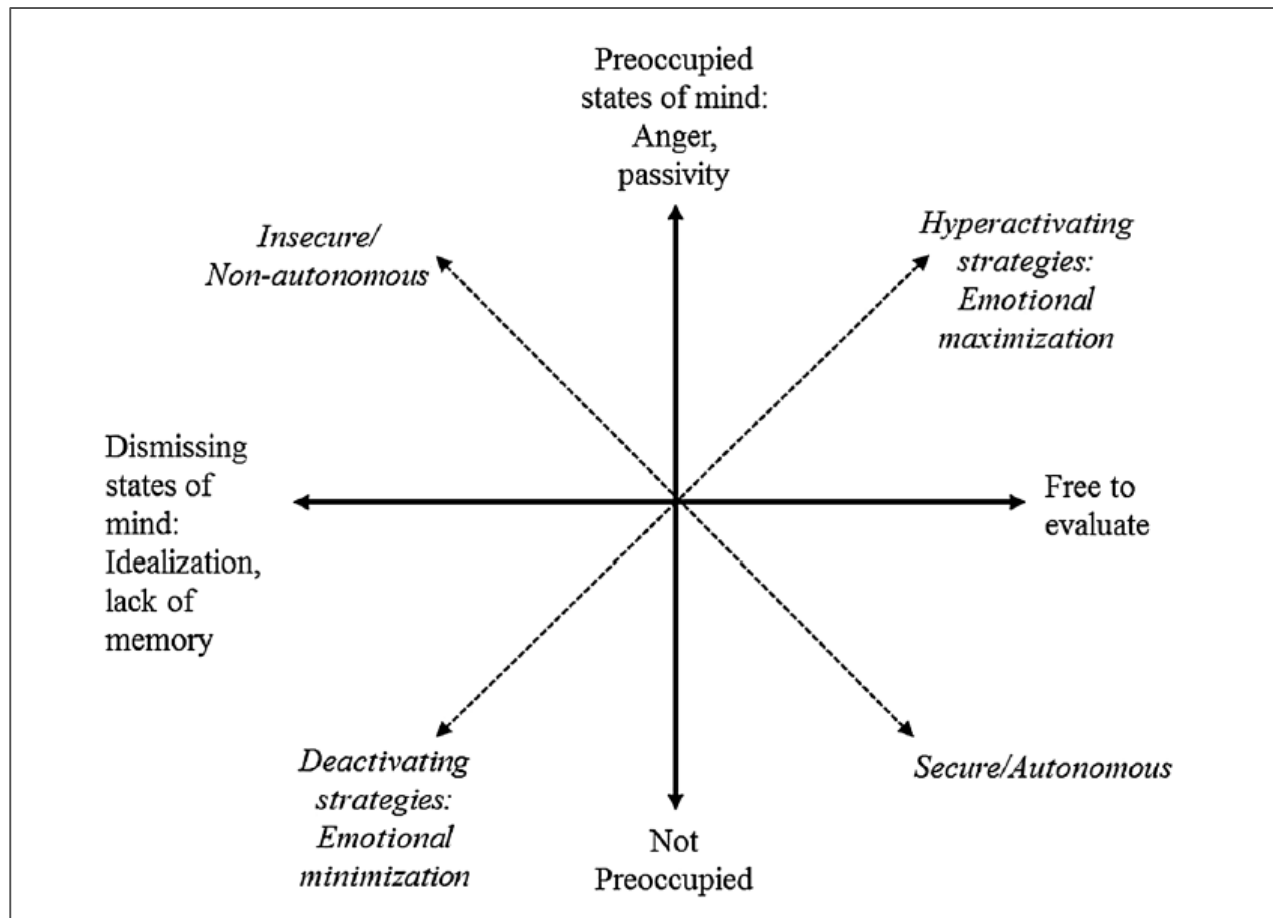
Two embedded assumptions about the latent structure of the AAI

1. The number of latent constructs.
2. Variation in attachment states of mind is distributed categorically.

These are distinct questions.

These are empirical questions.

Prior evidence for a 2 dimension model



Aims of the present study

1. Evaluate whether unresolved and preoccupied states of mind are distinct constructs
2. Test whether individual differences in attachment states of mind are categorical or dimensional using large-sample data

Collaboration on Attachment Transmission Synthesis (CATS)

CHILD DEVELOPMENT


Child Development, November/December 2018, Volume 89, Number 6, Pages 2023–2037

The title for this Special Section is **Meta-analysis and Individual Participant Data Synthesis in Child Development**, edited by Glenn I. Roisman and Marinus H. van IJzendoorn

Examining Ecological Constraints on the Intergenerational Transmission of Attachment Via Individual Participant Data Meta-analysis

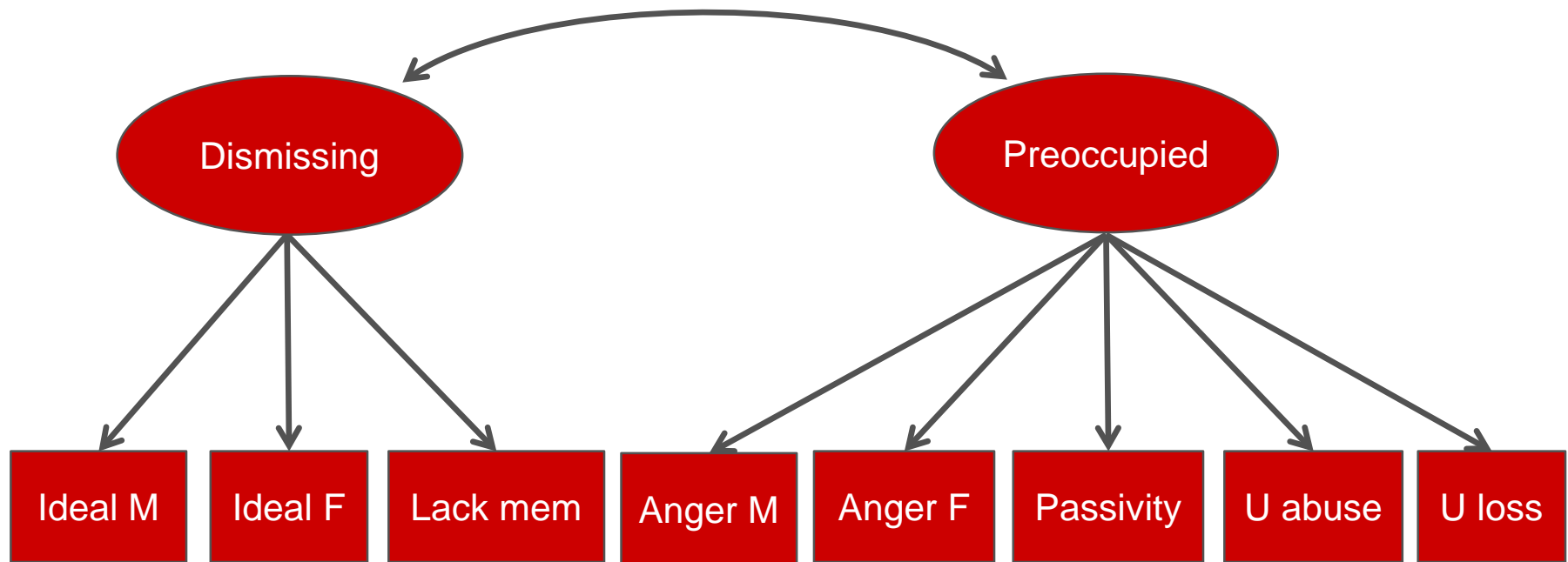
<p>Marije L. Verhage <i>Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam</i></p> <p>Carlo Schuengel  <i>Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam</i></p> <p>Marian J. Bakermans-Kranenburg <i>Leiden University</i></p> <p>Glenn I. Roisman <i>University of Minnesota</i></p> <p>Kazuko Y. Behrens <i>State University of New York Polytechnic Institute</i></p> <p>Sarah Mangelsdorf <i>University of Wisconsin–Madison</i></p> <p>Karl-Heinz Brisch <i>Dr. von Hauner Children's Hospital and Paracelsus Medical School</i></p>	<p>R.M. Pasco Fearon <i>University College London</i></p> <p>Marinus H. van IJzendoorn <i>Erasmus University Rotterdam</i></p> <p>Sheri Madigan <i>University of Calgary and the Alberta Children's Hospital Research Institute</i></p> <p>Mirjam Oosterman <i>Vrije Universiteit Amsterdam</i></p> <p>Maria S. Wong <i>Stevenson University</i></p> <p>Lynn E. Priddis <i>Edith Cowan University</i></p> <p style="text-align: center;">The Collaboration on Attachment Transmission Synthesis</p>
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- N = 3,218
- K = 40
- 10 countries

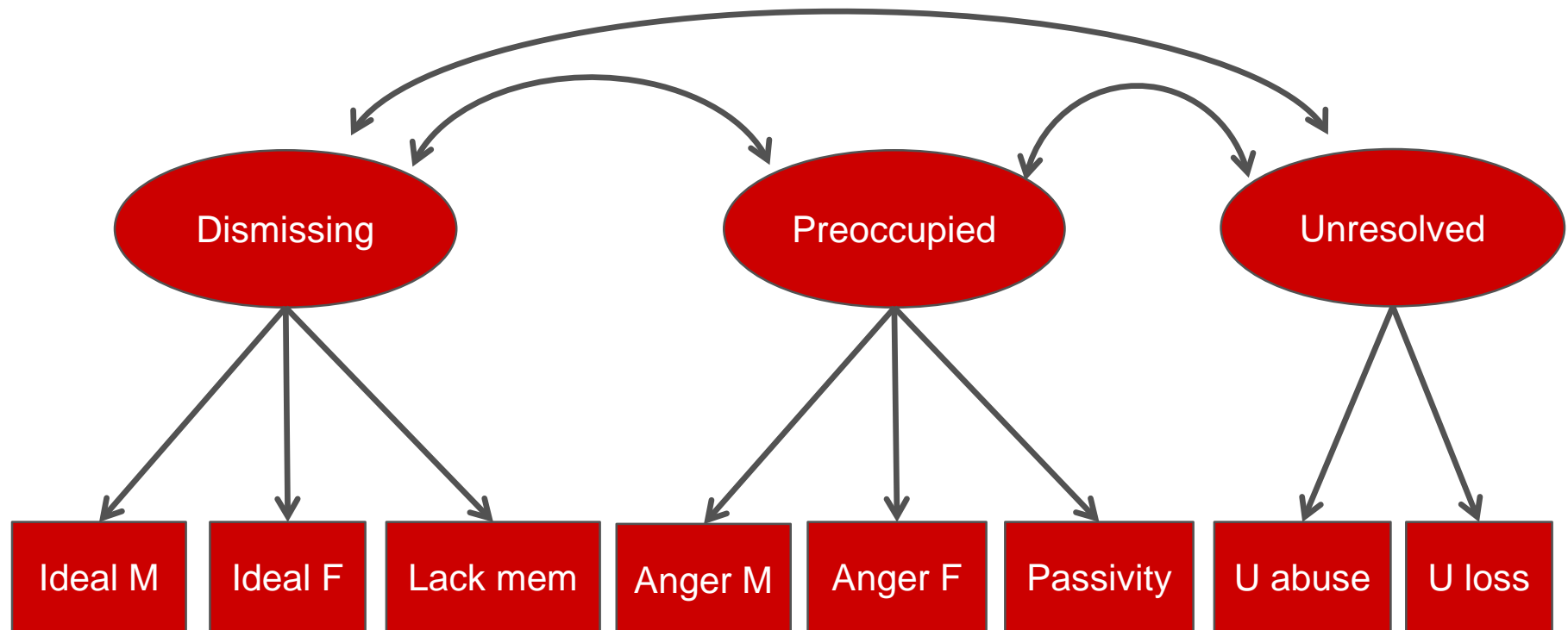
Question 1: How many constructs underlie the AAI state of mind ratings?

- We evaluated the 2-factor and 3-factor models with a set of confirmatory factor analyses

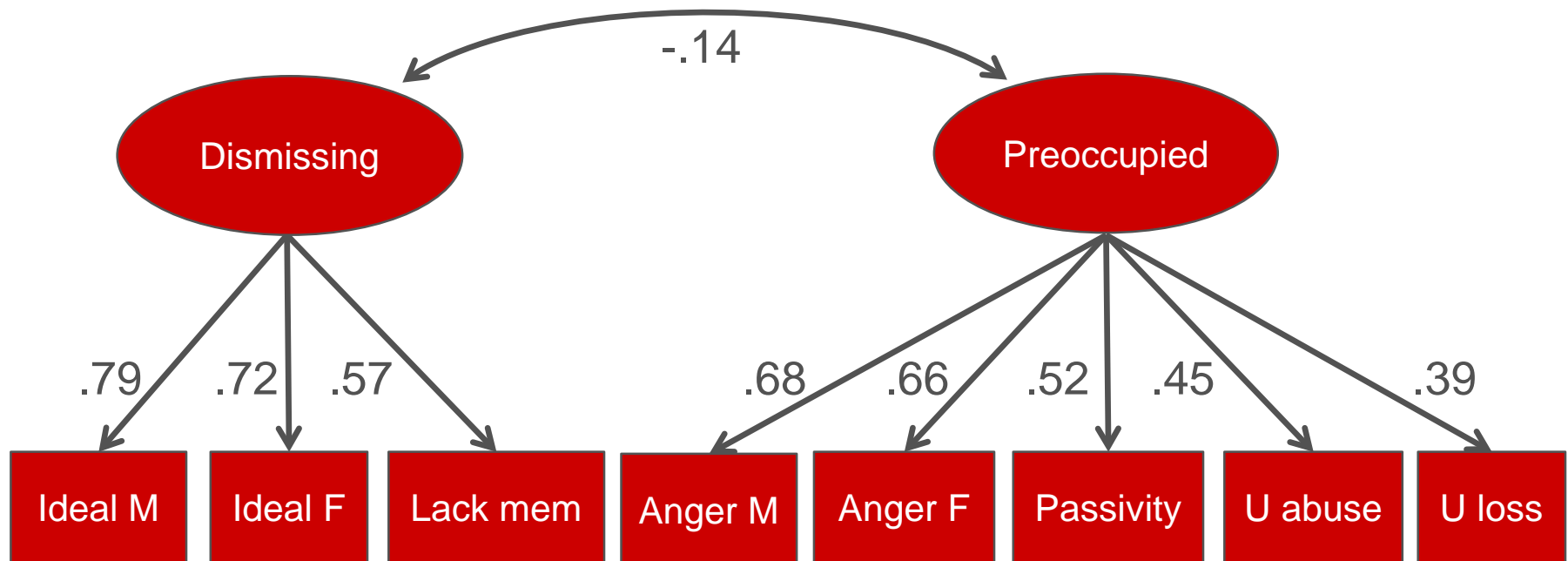
The 2-factor measurement model



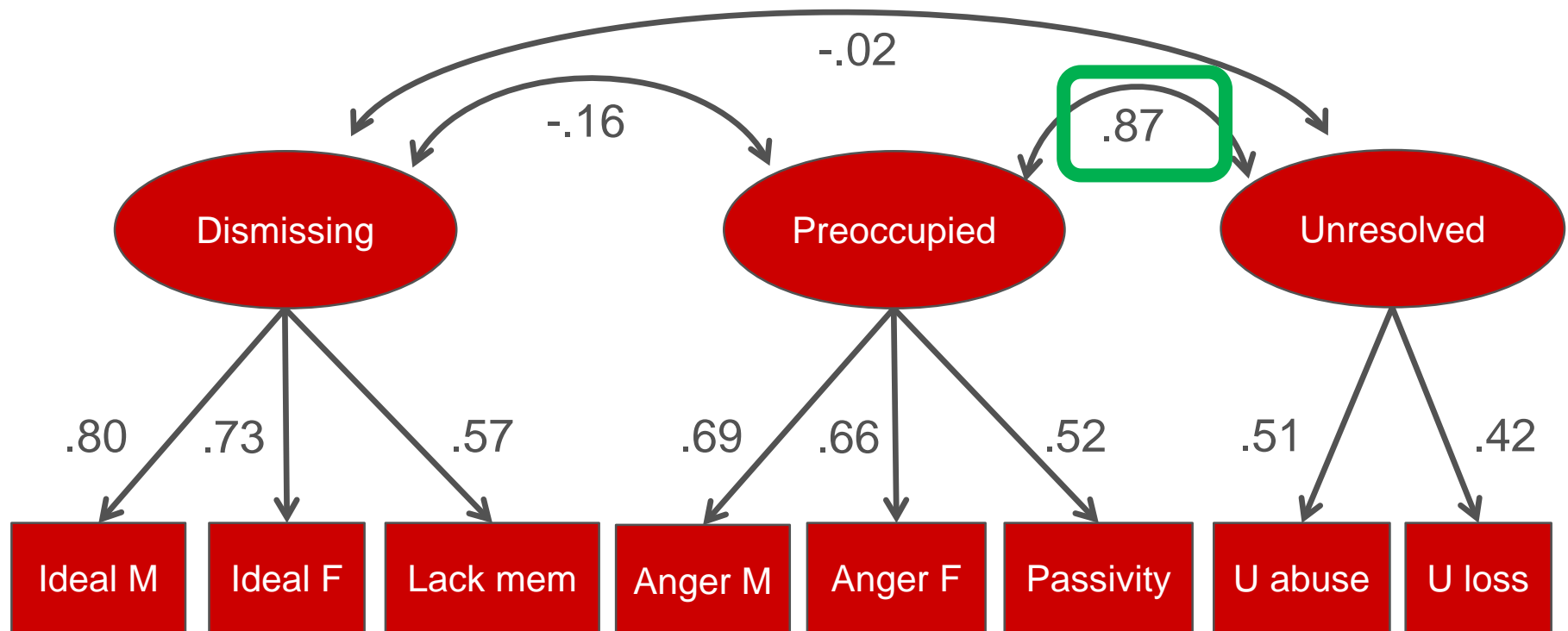
The 3-factor measurement model



2-factor model was an acceptable fit:
 $\chi^2(17) = 44.74$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .032



3-factor model also was an acceptable fit:
 $\chi^2(15) = 37.70$, $p < .001$, RMSEA = .031



Comparing the two models

- Results of the tests were not consistent
 - χ^2 difference test favored the 3-factor model
 - BIC values favored the 2-factor model
- In the 3-factor model, the correlation between the preoccupied and unresolved factors was large ($r = .87$).

Question 2: Categories or dimensions?

- 3 taxometric techniques were used
- Each technique generated a CCFI value that could range from 0 to 1
 - Values between .00 – .40 indicate a dimensional model
 - Values between .60 – 1.00 indicate categorical model
 - Values between .40 – .60 are indeterminate

Question 2: Taxometric results

	CCFI	CCFI average
Dismissing		0.41
MAXEIG	0.36	
L-Mode	0.35	
MAMBAC	0.52	
Preoccupied/Unresolved (2-factor CFA)		0.33
MAXEIG	0.28	
L-Mode	0.22	
MAMBAC	0.52	
Preoccupied (3-factor CFA)		0.33
MAXEIG	0.32	
L-Mode	0.17	
MAMBA	0.49	

Conclusion: Two or three factors?

- Evidence for both
- 2-factor model is a parsimonious explanation for the AAI.
- Results did not rule out a 3-factor model.
 - The large correlation between the preoccupation and unresolved factors indicates substantial empirical overlap

Conclusion: Categories or dimensions?

- A dimensional model provides a more plausible explanation than a categorical one.
- Individual differences in attachment states of mind reflect differences in degree, not kind.

Directions for future research

- Examining unique developmental precursors of these dimensional measures
- Testing whether there are distinct clinical and interpersonal outcomes
 - Especially the ability to predict attachment security in the next generation

COLLABORATION ON ATTACHMENT TRANSMISSION SYNTHESIS

Bronia Arnott
Ora Aviezer
Heidi Bailey
Marian J. Bakermans-
Kranenburg
Kazuko Y. Behrens
Johanna Behringer
Annie Bernier
Patrick J. Brice
Karl-Heinz Brisch
Rosalinda Cassibba
Jude Cassidy
Germana Castoro
Gabrielle Coppola
Alessandro Costantini
Elisabetta Costantino
Chantal Cyr
Mary Dozier

Karin Ensink
R. M. Pasco Fearon
Brent Finger
Carol George
Gabriele Gloger-
Tippelt
Sonia Gojman de
Millán
Susanne Harder
Airi Hautamaki
Nancy L. Hazen
Carolee Howes
Elena Ierardi
Heidi Jacobsen
Deborah Jacobvitz
Mi Kyoung Jin
Inês Jongenelen
Femmie Juffer

Miyuki Kazui
Simo Køppe
Esther M. Leerkes
Francesca Lionetti
Karlen Lyons-Ruth
Sheri Madigan
Sarah Mangelsdorf
Catherine McMahon
Elizabeth Meins
Salvador Millán
Lynne Murray
Mirjam Oosterman
Cecilia S. Pace
David R. Pederson
Lynn Priddis
K. Lee Raby
Cristina Riva Crugnola
Glenn I. Roisman

Avi Sagi-Schwartz
Sarah J. Schoppe-Sullivan
Carlo Schuengel
Alessandra Simonelli
Judith Solomon
Anna Maria Speranza
Howard Steele
Miriam Steele
George M. Tarabulsy
Doug M. Teti
Mette S. Væver
Marinus H. van
IJzendoorn
W. Monique van
Londen-Barentsen
Marije L. Verhage
Mary J. Ward
Maria S. Wong