



### **Disorganized Attachment**

<http://www.drbarbarasorrels.com/podcast12/>

#### **Characteristics of parents**

- Their children are most at risk for abuse or neglect
- Often come from their own background of trauma
- Low capacity for patience, empathy
- Little ability to tolerate frustration and stress
- Very punitive in discipline, and use shaming
- They use fear in attempt to change behavior
- Inconsistent expressions of love, mixed messages and confusion
- Profoundly self absorbed—leave children for long periods of time
- Fail to protect their children—expose them to inappropriate experiences, movies
- No attunement to the child's needs—but very absorbed with their own

#### **Children**

- Bounce between anxiety, fear and anger—live in a constant state of stress and dysregulation
- Demonstrates characteristics of both the avoidant and ambivalently attached child.
- Kids will be very unpredictable and respond in different ways to different experiences
- They learn that the adults in their life can't be trusted to take care of them and keep their welfare
- They live in a chronic state of hypervigilance constantly checking the environment for threat
- They live in a chronic state of self protection the slightest threat elicits an overwhelming emotional response
- They protect their hearts by fighting for control—their thinking is that when you lose control bad things happen
- They often push others away and reject them before they can be rejected
- They can appear to be oppositional but what drives their behavior is fear of letting others in
- Tearing down the walls can be very challenging
- Can be very hard for foster or adoptive parents when all they want to do is love their children.
- Situation where mental health professionals are needed

## **Reactive Attachment Disorder**

- Profound abuse of the worst kind
- Institutional orphanages
- Lost capacity to form human relationships
- Toxic to the mind, body and soul
- Demonstrate bizarre behaviors at a very young age
- Mutilate animals, jumping off the roof to their house, harming other children , setting fire to their homes
- As get older can be very charming and endear themselves to people
- Trust bandit
- Dealing with these children requires specialized knowledge

**Resources mentioned:** Here are some resources for parents wanting to learn more about how to help children with disorganized attachment or RADS:

Building the Bonds of Attachment: Awakening Love in Deeply Traumatized Children by Daniel A. Hughes

Romania's Abandoned Children: Deprivation, Brain Development, and the Struggle for Recovery by Charles A Nelson