



What is RAD?



RAD is an acronym for a childhood disorder known as "Reactive Attachment Disorder." In order to be able to fully understand the disorder, it would be helpful to begin with the knowledge of the meaning of attachment and its development in children.

What is Attachment?

- Attachment is the deep connection that grows between a child and a caregiver. - This connection greatly influences the child's development and ability to express feelings and develop relationships. - It usually develops around 7 to 9 months when the infant begins to protest separation from familiar caregivers. - Familiar caregivers are adults with whom the infant feels "safe," i.e. he can rely on them for comfort and protection when distressed. - These familiar caregivers are usually limited in number. - A child could develop a secure or insecure attachment style, depending on the interaction between the infant and the primary caregiver (s), in the first year of life.

What Causes RAD?

Children develop attachment problems as a result of negative experiences in their early relationship with primary caregivers. If an infant continues to experience isolation and neglect, he will learn not to depend on others and will see the world as an unsafe place.

Developing RAD may be avoided if early interventions are made to help the infant unlearn distrust and learn to trust the world, by replacing negative relational experiences with positive ones. Children who end up developing RAD have difficulty relating to others and are usually developmentally delayed.

How Can RAD Be Treated?

Effective treatment for RAD should include a combination of counseling, therapy and parenting education;

- The first step is to ensure that the child is placed in a safe and secure environment, i.e., a nurturing and supportive environment.
- Therapist works with the Parents/caregivers and teaches them how to develop positive interactions with the child.
- The therapist works with the parent/caregiver and the child, engaging them in activities that enhance the attachment bond.
- The therapist then involves the whole family in therapy. This allows for the other family members to learn about RAD and also be supportive in strengthening the bond that has been newly developed between the child and parent/caregiver.
- Lastly, the therapist works with the child alone, monitoring his/her emotions and behavior.

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