

Risk Assessment Process

The work of Cambridge Centre for Attachment differs from Independent Social Work assessments through the use of psychological measures that examine the attachment relationships of the adults and children. These interviews are recorded and transcribed verbatim. The interviews are then coded / classified, which requires subjecting the text of interviews usually about 20-30 pages to in depth analysis according a standardised procedure in which we have been trained. In terms of the measures with the children, we would usually video the CARE- Index, story stem task, or other child attachment measure, which again gives rise to a process where a DVD video is analysed and classified.



Cambridge Centre for Attachment

This classification process is at the heart of our family risk assessments, and the use of properly conducted validated assessment procedures allows us to offer both the depth of analysis and evidenced based assessment of risk and resilience in relationships. The use of transcripts and videos also mean that our evidence is verifiable by other trained professionals should that need arise. It is our experience that mistakes are made by even the most qualified and trained professionals observing and interviewing with the 'naked eye' (including ourselves!) that can be corrected by the use of procedures that involve the analysis of transcripts or videos – put more simply, things are not always what they seem. This is especially the case with the most 'at risk' pattern of attachment and relating, where children and adults have learned to behave in ways that mask what is going on, for their own safety.

We then need to pull the results of the different procedures together and formulate an understanding of family and individual functioning that takes account of all the evidence, including the case history and other other interviews. Our report also will include a full analysis of each of the procedures we use (rather than just outlining the 'results' in terms of a score or classification), and their implications, as our feedback over the years is that professionals find the depth of understanding of the adults and children concerned useful in decision making, as well as providing the court with evidence for our conclusions and recommendations. However, this does take time, but again our experience is that this reduces the need for litigation by making the evidence clear and open to all, as well as making the report more useful in respect of planning for the children generally.

For further information on the work of CCA, together with CV's and brochures, please visit www.attachment.services

Adult Attachment Interview (AAI)

Recorded,
Transcribed, Classified

- Parents' **overall level of risk and/or resilience** in close relationships
- How do **trauma and experiences of threat** distort an adult's thinking and relationship functioning?
- AAI and PDI classified through **detailed discourse analysis** of interview transcript

Parent Development Interview (PDI)

Recorded,
Transcribed, Classified

- Assesses level of **risk in the parent child relationship**
- **Reflective Functioning Score (RF)**: Can the parent see the child as a separate person and understand child's experience in safe and appropriate ways
- **The Meaning of the child (MotC)**: parental perceptions of their children may be distorted by the parents' own experiences, placing the relationship at risk
- Measures **warmth, hostility, neglect, and the capacity to resolve problems** in the parent-child relationship

CARE-Index (or Child Attachment Measure), Videoed and Classified

- Assesses **risk in parent child relationship and child attachment behaviour**
- Detailed micro analysis of videoed face to face interaction

Risk Assessment Process

Case History, Interviews, Observations

- **Integrate analysis of attachment procedures with history** and wider evidence
- **Overall formulation of risk and resilience** in family relationships,
- **Potential for change**: likely impact of therapy upon risks
- **Recommendations for intervention**