



# Domestic and Family Violence, Attachment and Complexity

**Practice-focused concepts and tools to address risk, perpetration and prevention.**

Domestic violence is often complex: the intersection of multiple lives, histories and contexts. When it comes to prevention/intervention, this *heterogeneity* presents formidable challenges. When viewed from a few selected perspectives the evident complexity offers new opportunities. One promising approach to such complexity has been research into the identification of developmental pathways and risks associated with domestic violence (DV) and family violence (FV). Such an approach provides at least two benefits: (1) an understanding of antecedents and possible risk (sometimes causal ones via longitudinal studies) and (2) a model to comprehend complexity in current experience.

Attachment Theory has been increasingly employed in mental health and forensic research contexts to better understand risk and resilience. This is also increasingly the case with domestic violence. Attachment Theory has demonstrated evidence for differences in how people experience close relationships and engage emotions more generally. The seminar will therefore look at attachment and DV from multiple perspectives: childhood exposure to family trauma (including DV), intergenerational risks for violence in romantic relationships, considerations of gender and sexual orientation, within couple dynamics, as well as perpetrator and victim individually.

The seminar will present a survey of the latest research on risks for DV including both the attachment relationship level as well as the more general attachment styles of emotion regulation. Indeed, attachment anxiety would appear to be the most cited risk factor for DV. Why might this be the case will be elaborated. Equally, particular focus will be given to new insights into maladaptive 'disorganisation' in romantic relationships, which may encompass the less secure responses including attachment anxiety but in a more chaotic volatile, disorganised manner. Participants will also be introduced to or provided a brief refresher on the expanding range of assessments and measurements—some now available on-line.

With concepts and tools in hand, the workshop will turn to a review of attachment informed preventions and interventions. First, light will be shown on how prevention work has been applied with children at intergenerational risk for violence—i.e., where violence between parents is present. Children's attachments to parents have been shown to be correlated with their own disposition to violence. Hence intervention options as future prevention research will be highlighted. The workshop next turns to work with adults in the context of romantic relationships. Participants will gain an understanding of how attachment differences may play out in terms of risk and perpetration. Clarification of contraindications for couple treatment and differentiation of mutual violence will be addressed. Additionally, practical insights will be offered from attachment work with individuals as well as insights from attachment-informed couple therapy. [N.B. This seminar is not formal forensic training but rather is focussed on expanding knowledge of the typical mental health to provide support and therapy for individuals and where appropriate for expanding couple interventions.

## Learning objectives of this training:

1. Understand possible impacts of attachment development for perpetrators and victims.
2. Grasp key relationship variables considered in the research.
3. Identify risks children may face who are exposed to DV and FV.
4. Differentiate attachment features in DV from more adaptive relationships.
5. Understand crucial safety requirements when working with DV.
6. Gain insights from EFT work with couples and individuals.
7. Support victims and their children via increased assessment capabilities, new avenues for clinical psychoeducation and skills for responding to trauma.



**Kevin Keith, PhD** is a counsellor, psychotherapist and supervisor. He splits time between private practice and education/academic activities. He is a lecturer in the Jansen Newman Institute (JNI) and Australian College of Applied Psychology (ACAP). In 2017, he completed his PhD at the University of Sydney (History and Philosophy of Science Unit) with primary research interests in Attachment Theory. His thesis—The Goal-Corrected Partnership: A Critical Assessment of the Research Programme—brings focus on attachment development post-infancy. This work rearticulates Attachment Theory in light of advances in the lifespan developmental sciences, especially approaches to biological complexity. Kevin presents regularly on

Attachment Theory to a wide range of audiences, including a May 2016 paper at the International Society for Philosophy of Psychiatry in Atlanta GA USA [on attachment within the NIMH Research Domain Criteria, an alternative model to the DSM-5]. He is acclaimed as an engaging and inspiring presenter whose seminars change the way therapists perceive and work with their clients in ways that surprise and delight.

**This training may qualify for Focussed Psychological Strategies (FPS) CPD. Please refer to the Dept. of Health <http://www.health.gov.au/internet/main/publishing.nsf/content/mental-ba-focus#cpd> for more information.**

**We'll bring this training to your team at your workplace anywhere in Australia or New Zealand. We can also deliver to your team by live webcast no matter where you and they are located.**

Our continuing professional development events meet the quality standard recognised by many relevant professional associations including psychology, social work, occupational therapy, mental health nursing, community work, counselling, psychotherapy and more. *We recommend checking with your association for the correct calculation of points for this event.*

A certificate of attendance for 6 hours of face-to-face training is issued to all participants.

### **Morning Session**

Includes a short morning tea break.

Two overlapping strands of research: Domestic / Family Violence and Attachment Theory (including discussions of 'traumatic bonding').

Application of a Developmental Pathways Approach for Understanding Risk: Implications for Abused, Abuser, Romantic Relationships, Children and Family Systems

### **Afternoon Session**

Includes a short afternoon tea break.

Attachment based family and couple interventions along with safety recommendations.

Working with individuals as alternative or compliment to couple work.

Evaluation and closing.

***"The seminar provides mental health practitioners who may lack current knowledge in working with DV with current evidence-based attachment considerations for working with couples, families, and children."***

Kevin Keith

### **How will you benefit from attending this training?**

- Gain an updated view on Attachment Theory including research evidence relevant for working with Domestic Violence, and enhance ability to support people impacted by DV.
- Be able to identifying diverse developmental pathways that may lead to risks for perpetration, victimisation and as well the impacts of childhood exposure to domestic violence.
- Understand newer approaches to treatment based in part on insights provided Attachment Theory research into Domestic Violence

### **Booking process:**

1. Choose face-to-face or online delivery.
2. Request a quotation.
3. Agree upon a date and venue.
4. Finalise booking with payment.
5. Let us make it easy for you!

### **We include:**

- Presenter travel and accommodation costs.
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**Contact our in-house program director 1300 887 622 or [info@PDPseminars.com.au](mailto:info@PDPseminars.com.au) for information, quotation or to have a helpful chat about the needs of your team.**

**This seminar has been designed to extend the clinical knowledge and applied skill of Counsellors, Psychotherapists, Coaches, Psychologists, Hypnotherapists, Social Workers, Community Workers, Mental Health Nurses and Psychiatrists.**

### **Here's what people have said recently about Kevin's training for PDP:**

*"One of the better presentations/seminars that I have attended in years. Well targeted, excellent pacing."*

*"Made it interactive and relevant to people attending."*

*"Very well done, valuable subject with application to today's profession."*

*"Thank you – I'd forgotten all the attachment stuff from formal study days – good new and helpful research, particularly dealing with 'difficult client groups', giving us and our clients hope."*

*"Very interesting, hopeful perspective."*

*"Very informative and stimulating! Made me want to explore the area of attachment more and more."*

*"Interesting references to the progression of this theory."*

*"One of the best seminars I have done! This seminar improved my understanding about attachment theory in a significant way. Kevin is an amazing presenter, he engaged participants from the beginning to the end of the seminar!"*

*"Always enjoy the high quality and clarity of Kevin's work. It is well researched, well structured, time is extremely well managed and consistent effort is made to meet the personal needs of all attendees. Gluten free food is good!"*

*"Kevin was an engaging and knowledgeable presenter who demonstrated an in-depth knowledge of his field."*

*"PDP staff were amazing, useful, so friendly. Kevin was really great, loved his passion and knowledge. Interesting content."*