Maternal Care and Mental Health, by J. Bowlby

a. Quotes:
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b. General Notes:
   - Chapter 1 - Some Origins of Mental Health (pg. 11)
     - "Among the most significant developments in psychiatry during the past quarter of a century has been the steady growth of evidence that **the quality of the parental care which a child receives in his earliest years is of vital importance for his future mental health…**For the moment it is sufficient to say that what is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother (or permanent mother-substitute) in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment. Given this relationship, the emotions of anxiety and guilt, which in excess characterize mental ill-health, will develop in a moderate and organized way. When this happens, the child's characteristic and contradictory demands, on the one hand for unlimited love from his parents and on the other for revenge upon them when he feels that they do not love him enough, will likewise remain of moderate strength and become amenable to the control of his gradually developing personality. It is this complex, rich, and rewarding relationship with the mother in the early years, varied in countless ways by relations with the father and with siblings, that child psychiatrists and many others now believe to underlie the development of character and of mental health. A state of affairs in which the child does not have this relationship is termed 'maternal deprivation'. This is a general term covering a number of different situations. Thus, a child is deprived even though living at home if his mother (or permanent mother-substitute) is unable to give him the loving care small children need. Again, a child is deprived if for any reason he is removed from his mother's care. This deprivation will be relatively mild if he is then looked after by someone whom he has already learned to know and trust, but may be considerable if the foster-mother, even though loving, is a stranger. All these arrangements, however, give the child some satisfaction and are therefore examples of partial deprivation. They stand in contrast to the almost complete deprivation which is still not uncommon in institutions, residential nurseries, and hospitals, where the child often has no one person who cares for him in a personal way and with whom he may feel secure. The ill-effects of deprivation vary with its degree. Partial deprivation brings in its train acute anxiety, excessive need for love, powerful feelings of revenge, and, arising from these last, guilt and depression. These emotions and drives are too great for the immature means of control and organization available to the young child (immature physiologically as well as psychologically). The consequent disturbance of psychic organization then leads to a variety of responses, often repetitive and cumulative, the end products of which are symptoms of neurosis and instability of character. Complete deprivation, with which we shall be dealing principally in this report, has even more far-reaching effects on character development and may entirely cripple the capacity to make relationships." (pg. 11-12)
   - Chapter 2 - Review of Evidence on Effects of Deprivation (pg. 15)
     - See text
   - Chapter 3 - Review of Evidence on Effects of Deprivation (pg. 30)
     - See text
   - Chapter 4 - Interim Conclusions (pg. 46)
     - See text
   - Chapter 5 - Theoretical Problems (pg. 52)
     - "**The development of the personality is a process whereby we become less and less at the mercy of our immediate environment and of its impact upon us, and more and more able to pursue our own goals, often over long periods of time, and to select and create our own environment**. Such a process implies, among other things, a capacity to abstract common properties, to think in symbolic terms, and to plan ahead —all attributes of what Goldstein & Scheerer 69 have termed the abstract attitude. Only when this abstract attitude is developed has the individual the capacity to control his wish of the moment in the interests of his own more fundamental long-term needs. One expects the child of three, or even five, to run into the road to seek his ball—at those ages he is still largely at the mercy of the immediate situation. As he grows older, however, he is expected to take more things into account and to think ahead. By 10 or 11 he is capable of pursuing goals some months distant in time. At 16 or 18 the more developed boy or girl is able to perform prodigious feats of abstraction in time and space. Using psycho-analytic terms, this is the process whereby the individual frees himself from slavery to his instincts and the reign of the pleasure principle, and develops mental processes more adapted to the demands of reality. **The psychic machinery which we develop within ourselves to harmonize our different and often conflicting needs and to seek their satisfaction in a world realistically apprehended is our ego**. Its functions are many and include appraisal of our long- and short-term needs, their arrangement in an order of priority, the inhibition of some and the acceptance of others, so that action maybe purposeful and integrated instead of haphazard and self-frustrating. Because one of our foremost long-term needs is to remain on friendly and co-operative terms with others, we must keep their requirements firmly in the front of our minds; and so important is this for us that we differentiate, within our ego, machinery specially designed for the purpose-our conscience or super-ego. It is evident that both ego and super-ego are absolutely dependent for their functioning on our ability to maintain the abstract attitude and it is not surprising that during infancy and early childhood these functions are either not operating at all or are doing so most imperfectly. During this phase of life, the child is therefore dependent on his mother performing them for him. She orients him in space and time, provides his environment, permits the satisfaction of some impulses, restricts others. **She is his ego and his super-ego.** Gradually he learns these arts himself and, as he does so, the skilled parent transfers the roles to him. This is a slow, subtle, and continuous process, beginning when he first learns to walk and feed himself and not ending completely until maturity is reached. **Ego and super-ego development are thus inextricably bound up with the child's primary human relationships**; only when these are continuous and satisfactory can his ego and super-ego develop. In dealing here with the embryology of the human mind one is struck by a similarity with the embryological development of the human body, during the course of which undifferentiated tissues respond to the influence of chemical organizers. If growth is to proceed smoothly, the tissues must be exposed to the influence of the appropriate organizer at certain critical periods. In the same way, if mental development is to proceed smoothly, it would appear to be necessary for the undifferentiated psyche to be exposed during certain critical periods to the influence of the psychic organizer - the mother. For this reason, in considering the disorders to which ego and super-ego are liable, it is imperative to have regard to the phases of development of the child's capacity for human relationships. These are many and, naturally, merge into one another. In broad outline the following are the most important: (a) phase during which the infant is in course of establishing a relation with a clearly identified person-his mother; this is normally achieved by five or six months of age. (b) The phase during which he needs her as an ever-present companion; this usually continues until about his third birthday. (c) The phase during which he is becoming able to maintain a relationship with her in absentia. During the fourth and fifth years such a relationship can only be maintained in favourable circumstances and for a few days or weeks at a time ; after seven or eight the relationship can be maintained, though not without strain, for periods of a year or more. The process whereby he simultaneously develops his own ego and superego and the capacity to maintain relationships in absentia is variously described as a process of identification, internalization, or introjection, since the functions of ego and super-ego are incorporated within the self in the pattern set by the parents." (pg. 52-54)
       - "Now it is these **vital growth processes which are impaired by the experience of deprivation.** Clinically, it is observed that the egos and super-egos of severely deprived children are not developed - their behaviour is impulsive and uncontrolled, and they are unable to pursue long-term

goals because they are the victims of the momentary whim. For them, all wishes are born equal and equally to be acted upon. Their capacity for inhibition is absent or impaired, and without this a limited, precise, and consequently efficient mode of response cannot develop. They are ineffective personalities, unable to learn from experience and consequently their own worst enemies" (pg. 54)
        - "The failure of ego development in deprived children is perhaps more easily understood when it is considered that it is the mother who in the child's earliest years fulfils the function of his ego and super-ego. The institution children studied by Goldfarb and by Bender had never had this experience, and so had never had the opportunity of completing the first phase of development - that of establishing a relationship with a clearly identified mother-figure. All they had had was a succession of ad hoc agents each helping them in some limited way, but none providing continuity in time, which is of the essence of ego functioning. It may well be that these grossly deprived infants, never having been the continuous objects of care of a single human being, had never had the opportunity to learn the processes of abstraction and of the organization of behaviour in time and space. Certainly their grave psychical deformities are clear examples of the principle that injuries inflicted early produce widespread disturbance of growth." (pg. 55)
- Chapter 6 - Research into Effects of Deprivation (pg. 59)
    - "Personality growth is the result of an interaction between the growing organism and other human beings. In some way the organism assimilates features of its social environment, and in so doing grows increasingly like its culture medium, though it is ever an unique synthesis of the social material of which it is made. How this process of psychic assimilation proceeds is not understood. Deprivation in infancy and early childhood is an experience which deranges it to a severe degree, and in the history of medicine it has often been the study of gross dysfunction which has most clearly illuminated the nature of the function itself. It may well be that in studying these grave derangements of the assimilatory process a clearer light will be thrown on this central process of personality growth." (pg. 59)
- Chapter 7 - The Purpose of the Family (pg. 67)
    - "**It was said at the beginning of the first chapter that what is believed to be essential for mental health is that the infant and young child should experience a warm, intimate, and continuous relationship with his mother or mother-substitute), in which both find satisfaction and enjoyment. The child needs to feel he is an object of pleasure and pride to his mother; the mother needs to feel an expansion of her own personality in the personality of her child: each needs to feel closely identified with the other**. The mothering of a child is not something which can be arranged by roster; it is a live human relationship which alters the characters of both partners. The provision of a proper diet calls for more than calories and vitamins: we need to enjoy our food if it is to do us good. In the same way the provision of mothering cannot be considered in terms of hours per day but only in terms of the enjoyment of each other's company which mother and child obtain. Such enjoyment and close identification of feeling is only possible for either party if the relationship is continuous. Much emphasis has already been laid on the necessity of continuity for the growth of a child's personality. It should be remembered, too, that continuity is necessary for the growth of a mother. Just as the baby needs to feel that he belongs to his mother, the mother needs to feel that she belongs to her child and it is only when she has the satisfaction of this feeling that it is easy for her to devote herself to him. The provision of constant attention day and night, seven days a week and 365 in the year, is possible only for a woman who derives profound satisfaction from seeing her child grow from babyhood, through the many phases of childhood, to become an independent man or woman, and knows that it is her care which has made this possible. It is for these reasons that the mother-love which a young child needs is so easily provided within the family, and is so very very difficult to provide outside it. The services which mothers and fathers habitually render their children are so taken for granted that their magnitude is forgotten. In no other relationship do human beings place themselves so unreservedly and so continuously at the disposal of others. This holds true even of bad parents—a fact far too easily forgotten by their critics, especially critics who have never had the care of children of their own. It must never be forgotten that even the bad parent who neglects her child is none the less providing much for him. Except in the worst cases, she is giving him food and shelter, comforting him in distress, teaching him simple skills, and above all is providing him with that continuity of human care on which his sense of security rests. He may be ill-fed and ill-sheltered, he may be very dirty and suffering from disease, he may be ill-treated, but, unless his parents have wholly rejected him, he is secure in the knowledge that there is someone to whom he is of value and who will strive, even though inadequately, to provide for him until such time as he can fend for himself." (pg. 67-68)
- Chapter 8 - Causes of Faily Failure (pg. 72)
    - "It is because a young child is not an organism capable of independent life that he requires a special social institution to aid him during his period of immaturity. This social institution must aid him in two main ways: first, by helping in the satisfaction of immediate biological needs such as nutrition, warmth and shelter, and protection from danger; secondly, by providing a milieu in which he may develop his physical, mental, and social capacities to the full so that, when grown up, he may be able to deal with his physical and social environment effectively. This demands an atmosphere of affection and security." (pg. 72)
- Chapter 9 - Prevention of Family Failure (pg. 84)
    - See text
- Chapter 10 - Illegitimacy and Deprivation (pg. 93)
    - See text
- Chapter 11 - Substitute Families: Adoption (pg. 101)
    - See text
- Chapter 12 - Substitute Families: Boarding Homes (pg. 109)
    - See text
- Chapter 13 - Group Care (pg. 129)
    - See text
- Chapter 14 - Care for Maladjusted and Sick Children (pg. 139)
    - See text
- Chapter 15 - Administration of Child-Services (pg. 150)
    - See text
- Conclusion (pg. 157)
    - "The proper care of children deprived of a normal home life can now be seen to be not merely an act of common humanity, but to be essential for the mental and social welfare of a community. For, **when their care is neglected**, as happens in every country of the Western world today, **they grow up to reproduce themselves. Deprived children**, whether in their own homes or out of them, **are a source of social infection** as real and serious as are carriers of diphtheria and typhoid. And just as preventive measures have reduced these diseases to negligible proportions, so can determined action greatly reduce the number of deprived children in our midst and the growth of adults liable to produce more of them" (pg. 157)

c. Further Readings:
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