

Attachment behaviours from adults with Intellectual Disabilities towards their support workers : development of an instrument

KAHWAJI Caroline* & RINALDI Romina*

* Department of Psychology : Clinical Orthopedagogy, University of Mons (UMONS), Belgium

Focus : Do adults with intellectual disabilities in living facilities manifest attachment behaviours towards direct-care staff ? How are attachment behaviours manifested by adults with ID ? Is there a link between attachment, challenging and adaptive behaviours ?

1. Introduction

Attachment behaviours can be defined as behaviours that occur between an individual and a caregiver that aim at seeking and maintaining proximity and/or protest to separation. They are thought to regulate fear, anxiety, or other forms of distress regarding real or perceived threats. The research on attachment have been expanded from child to adult in general population, and in different context as peer or family relationship. Recently, a number of studies have focused on the attachment of adults with intellectual disabilities (ID) and emphasized that direct-care staff could be considered as potentiel attachment figures. However, available research indicate a lack of psychometrically sound tools to address the topic of attachment in adults with ID. (2)

2. Objectives of the study

- 1 : To assess psychometric properties and clinical features of attachment behaviours in adults with ID
- 2 : To investigate the structure of the attachment behaviours - selective or indiscriminate

3. Participants

Support workers acting as third-parties for the assessment of adults with ID in living facilities in the French community of Belgium – Data collection is ongoing

4. Elaboration of the instrument

Qualitative study (3)
Semi-structured interviews with support workers about attachment and behaviours in adults with ID

Development of a first set of items about attachment behaviours

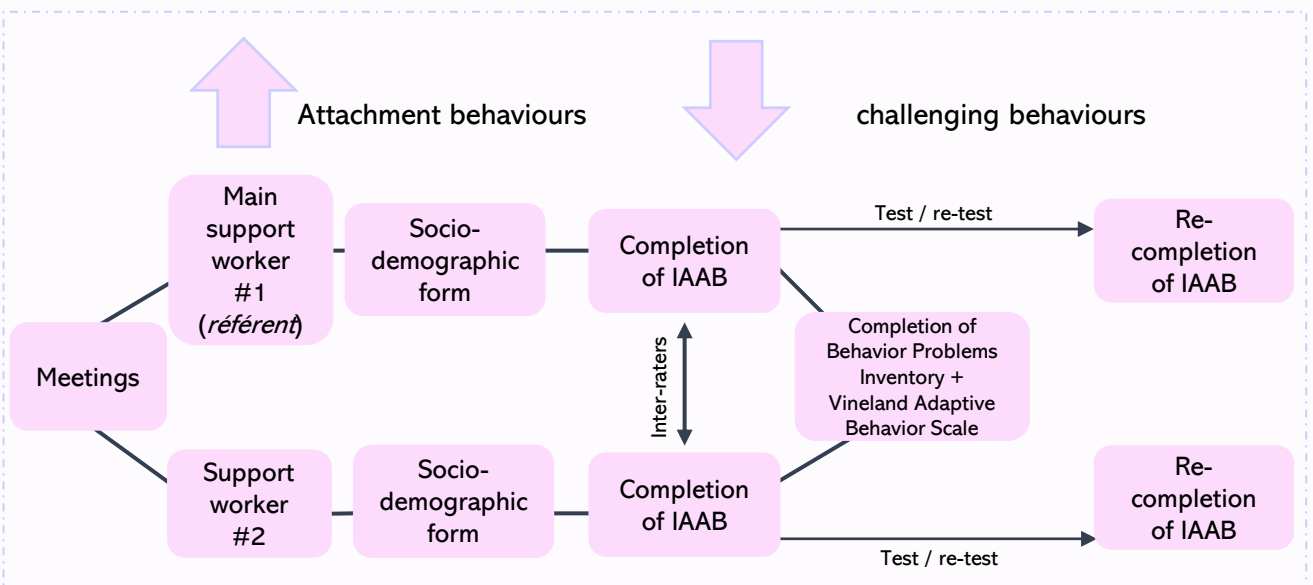
Assessment of this set by a group of experts on relevance and observability of each items

Revised version of the set of items

Assessment of the second set by a group of support workers (1)

Final version of the set of items
Instrument for the assessment of attachment behaviours – IAAB

5. Hypothesis & methods



6. Perspectives

Assessment of the attachment behaviours – Are these attachment behaviours selective ?

Linked to emotionnal development + challenging and adaptive behaviours

Identifying the needs for having more sensitive, reflexive and responsive practices

Supporting the intervention (4)

1. DeVellis, R. F., Thorpe, C. T. (2022). Scale development: Theory and applications. California: SAGE Publications.
2. Rinaldi, R., Batsélé, E., & Haelewyck, M.-C. (2022). Attachment and Challenging Behaviors in Adults with Intellectual Disability: A Scoping Review. *Journal of Mental Health Research in Intellectual Disabilities*, 15(3), 197-216.
3. Rinaldi, R., Duplat, J., Kahwaji, C., Wauthia, E., Willaye, E., Batsélé, E. (submitted). Attachment behaviours in adults with intellectual disabilities in assisted living facilities: Representations from direct-care staff. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*.
4. Schuengel, C., Kef, S., Damen, S., Worm, M. (2010). People who need people : attachment and professional caregiving. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*, 54(1), 38-47. DOI:10.1111/j.1365-2788.2009.01236.x