Introduction

The Attachment Disability Handbook is a distillation of the concepts I developed in *Attachment Disability Volume 1: The Hidden Cause of Adolescent Dysfunction and Lifelong Underperformance.* That book, written primarily for an audience of psychiatrists and psychotherapists, identified Attachment Disability as the residual effects of trauma related to loss, abuse, or neglect in relationships, and as the underlying cause of several conditions that are often misdiagnosed as various forms of mental/emotional disorders. I explained that Attachment Disability may present in three cardinal ways: Attachment Avoidance, Attachment Entanglement, and Attachment Acting-Out.

The concept of attachment was developed by two British psychoanalysts and child psychiatrists, John Bowlby and Donald Winnicott, based on their observations of children and adolescents raised in foster homes, in orphanages, or by biological relatives during the turmoil of World War II. Their notions regarding attachment impairment and its later consequences were a prominent feature of my psychiatric training in the 1960s. My furtherance of their ideas evolved over decades of practice in a variety of settings, including specialty training at the New York State Psychiatric Institute; clinical, research,

and consulting work at Minnesota's Anoka State Hospital and Lakeland Mental Health Clinic; serving as a consultant to a dropout program; and extensive office practice.

The very good news about Attachment Disability is that once you identify it, you can manage it through a three-step process I described in the first book, with resulting improvements in quality of life. That's why I created this abbreviated version with the aim of introducing this process to a far wider audience: teachers, counselors, social workers, health care workers, parents and guardians, and others who are in positions to help Attachment Disability sufferers navigate their condition, and ultimately learn to manage it well enough to experience significant relief.

While this book simplifies what I wrote in *Attachment Disability Volume 1*, it contains the core knowledge you will need in order to be of genuine assistance. I have eliminated same case studies that were discursive and obscure while modifying others to clarify their messages. Further, I have discarded the extensive and detailed endnotes and footnotes, here including only footnotes that reference the parent volume—now available as an e-book—for readers whose curiosity leads them to explore certain concepts further. On the other hand, I have retained the essence of its chapters on anxiety and depression, which assert that all anxiety is related to the prospect of separation and abandonment, and that most so-called "depression" is actually cognitive, not emotional: it is self-blame for the paralysis or impulsiveness caused by unrecognized

anxiety. In lieu of an index, each chapter now contains a summary of key instructions and guidelines. Moreover, I have collected all of the chapter summaries into a separate PDF file that you can download for easy reference from the Attachment Disability website: www. attachmentdisability.com.

How to Use This Book

The Attachment Disability Handbook consists of two Parts. In Part I, Varieties of Attachment Disability, the three forms of the condition are described, with one chapter devoted to each. Part II, Managing Attachment Disability, begins with a chapter on the strategy and tactics of management. The remaining three chapters of this Part cover the three steps of management: clarifying the condition, learning to accept it, and focusing on what the afflicted individual can change in their behaviors to improve their life experience.

I encourage you to read the chapters in order, as understanding builds from chapter to chapter. But before you start at the beginning, you might want to flip to the end and skim through chapter 7. This will acquaint you with how management of Attachment Disability works in practice as individuals learn to manage their condition. In other words, it will afford you a glimpse of where you are headed after developing a base of knowledge about what Attachment Disability is and the steps involved in easing its effects.

Recent Discoveries

My practice has changed since writing the first volume: I see fewer children and younger adolescents and more older adolescents, young adults, adults, and seniors. This more extensive and in-depth contact across the age spectrum has simply confirmed my belief—as expressed in the term *lifelong underperformance* in the subtitle of the original book—that the reverberation of trauma knows no age constraint. You don't "get over" trauma; you learn how to accept and live with it. So as you peruse these pages, please keep in mind that the concepts I developed years ago with children and adolescents in mind apply to all trauma sufferers.

The change in my practice has brought with it more exposure to individuals with the physical disabilities that accompany the degenerative changes of aging, especially chronic pain. It has become clear to me that the dependency and helplessness that result from the progression of chronic illness unmask and fuel the return of attachment issues that sufferers had previously managed by being active and productive. The ghosts of trauma return to haunt the aging disabled, and fears of abandonment flourish. I believe the insights herein are especially relevant to the understanding and management of these older sufferers.

A Final Note

The alert reader will note a tendency to redundancy in this handbook. When you do, I applaud your alertness and scrutiny because it means you have read the material closely. But I make no apology—this repetition is by design. Both the learning and unlearning of Attachment Disability are generated by repetition, so your appreciation of it is evidence of learning.

May this handbook serve you and those you counsel well.