

Attachment Styles

	Secure	Anxious	Avoidant	Disorganised
Percentage of infants	70%	15%	15% ⁱ	Can be displayed before classic anxious and avoidant behaviour kicks in
Separation Anxiety	Infant is distressed when the primary caregiver leaves	Intense distress appears in the infant when the primary caregiver leaves	No sign of distress in infant when primary caregiver leaves	
Stranger Anxiety	Infant avoids strangers when alone, but is friendly when the primary caregiver is present	The infant avoids and shows fear of strangers	The infant is fine with the stranger present and plays normally	
Reunion Behaviour	The child is positive and happy when primary caregiver returns	The infant approaches the primary caregiver, but resists contact and may push them away	The infant shows little interest when the primary caregiver returns	Conflict between wanting to physically approach and to flee the caregiver, perhaps veering off with their eyes or face averted; exhibits frozen, rigidly repetitive behaviours, anger or rage
Other	The child uses the mother as a primary caregiver to explore their environment	The infant cries more and explores less than the secure or avoidant types	The primary caregiver and stranger are able to comfort the infant equally well	Appears disorientated
As infants	<p>Has a caregiver who is sensitive to the signals of the child and responds appropriately to their needs</p> <p>Feels confident that the attachment figure will be available to meet their needs</p> <p>Uses the attachment figure as a safe base to explore their environment</p> <p>Seeks the attachment figure in times of distress</p>	<p>Has an inconsistent primary caretaker</p> <p>Exhibits clingy and dependent behaviour, but will be rejecting of the attachment figure when they do respond</p> <p>Has difficulty moving away from the attachment figure to explore novel surroundings</p> <p>Can be difficult to soothe when distressed; not comforted by interaction with the attachment figure</p>	<p>Has a caregiver who is emotionally unavailable, unresponsive or ignores the child's needs; often discourages crying</p> <p>Physically and emotionally independent of the primary caregiver</p> <p>Doesn't seek contact with the attachment figure when distressed</p> <p>As children, can appear to parent themselves</p>	<p>The caregiver may be dissociative, helpless, withdrawing, frightening or frightened; may have anxiety disorder or be social and economically disadvantaged</p> <p>Expresses odd or ambivalent behaviour towards the caregiver (i.e. first running up to them, and perhaps running away from the caregiver, curling up in a ball or hitting the parent)</p>

				Exhibits contradictory behaviours or jerky movements; or freezing/apparent dissociation
As adults	<p>Likely to see others as being available, responsive and helpful</p> <p>Likely to view themselves as worthy of respect</p> <p>Likely to interact easily; comfortable with intimacy; can meet both their own and another's needs</p> <p>Likely to be better able to regulate their emotions, feel more confident in exploring their environment, and tend to be more empathic and outward looking</p> <p>Likely to seek emotional support from partners</p> <p>Doesn't play emotional games, communicates clearly, and can compromise</p>	<p>Likely to believe their needs will be met if with their partner all the time; may choose someone who is isolated and hard to connect with</p> <p>Questions their self-worth</p> <p>Those who are anxious give up meeting their needs to focus on others</p> <p>Find it difficult to regulate their emotions. Heavily invested in their relationships. To feel more secure, they yearn to get emotionally closer to their partners.</p> <p>Likely to feel unsure of their partner's feelings and feel unsafe in their relationship. Often become clingy, smothering, demanding or possessive toward their partner.ⁱⁱ</p> <p>Often worry about being abandoned by their romantic partners</p> <p>Constantly vigilant, alert to any perceived sign of disapproval, waning interest, or impending abandonment, which</p>	<p>Believe themselves to be unworthy and unacceptable.</p> <p>Believe they are more likely to get some of their needs met if they don't appear to have any</p> <p>As adults, they often feel dismissive and have a tendency to drop hints, complain or sulk to try and get what they need</p> <p>Avoidant partners often react angrily to perceived slights or other threats to their self-esteem</p> <p>Highly avoidant people have negative views of romantic partners and usually positive, but sometimes fragile, self-views^v</p> <p>Can be hypervigilant about their partner's attempts to control them or limit their autonomy and freedom</p> <p>Try to create and maintain independence, control, and autonomy in their relationships^{vi}</p>	<p>Individuals with a disorganized attachment often can't make sense of their experiences and have trouble forming a coherent narrative of their life</p> <p>Can have trouble socially or struggle in using others to co-regulate their emotions; it may be difficult for them to open up to others or to seek out help; they often have difficulty trusting people</p> <p>Adults often have difficulty managing stress and may show hostile or aggressive behaviour; because of their negative early life experiences, they may see the world as an unsafe place</p> <p>Often subconsciously attracted to someone who is inconsistent, neglectful, uncaring or abusive</p>

		<p>produces a self-amplifying cycle of distress</p> <p>Hopeful but guarded view of their romantic partnersⁱⁱⁱ</p> <p>Their insecurity can be hard to live with and the end of friendship or romantic relationships feels devastating and reinforces the insecurity</p> <p>Adults tend to use distraction, junk food, alcohol or drugs when distressed^{iv}</p>		
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ⁱ By 1978, Ainsworth's estimate for US babies was: Securely attached 69%, Avoidant 23% and Ambivalent 8%.

ⁱⁱ Attachment style, excessive reassurance seeking, relationship processes, and depression.

Shaver PR, Schachner DA, Mikulincer M
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ⁱⁱⁱ Working models of attachment: implications for explanation, emotion and behavior.
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^{iv} Mikulincer M, Shaver PR. The attachment behavioral system in adulthood: Activation, psychodynamics, and interpersonal processes. In: Zanna M, editor. *Advances in experimental social psychology.* Vol. 35. Academic Press; New York: 2003. pp. 53–152.

^v Bartholomew K. Avoidance of intimacy: An attachment perspective. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships.* 1990; 7:147–178.

^{vi} Mikulincer M. Attachment working models and the sense of trust: An exploration of interaction goals and affect regulation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology.* 1998; 74:1209–1224. doi: 10.1037/0022-3514.74.5.1209