

Disorganized / Fearful-Avoidant Attachment

Your Personal Report



The
Attachment
Project

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Thank you for your interest in The Attachment Project.

This document outlines your results on the self-report attachment quiz. Your personal report can be found from page 4 onwards.



Our Mission

Healing an insecure attachment may take dedication, patience, and persistence - although this might be challenging, it is entirely achievable.

Cultivating a secure attachment requires knowledge, practice, and the ability to reflect on yourself (including your experiences, relationships, skills and weaknesses, and beliefs, amongst other factors).

Our mission is to provide you with the necessary insight, skills, and inspiration so that you can develop a sense of security and feel safe - both in relationships and on your own.



The Importance of Human Attachment

Why Attachment?

Human attachment plays an essential role in our survival as babies as well as in our relationships and overall well-being later in life.

Since our attachment styles are formed so early, we neither remember much about this stage of development nor do we have control over it. Therefore, our attachment traits are typically subconscious and automatic.

As a consequence, we might find ourselves repeating the same unhealthy patterns - in our relationships with ourselves and with others - over and over again.

Love & Intimacy

Relationships are a central part of our lives. After all, we are social beings with an innate need to belong.

When it comes to love and intimacy, attachment has a huge influence on the way we select our partners, communicate with them, and act in relationships with them.

For this reason, cultivating attachment security is the key to building and maintaining healthy, balanced, and long-lasting partnerships.

Mental Health & Self-Love

Attachment doesn't only affect the way we perceive others and our relationships with them; it also affects how we see and feel about ourselves.

Possessing attachment security helps us to feel calm, safe, and able to express our true selves.

It enables us to form a clear idea of what we want in relationships and communicate our needs openly. This not only has a profound impact on our happiness and fulfillment, but also on our sense of identity, self-esteem, autonomy, and purpose in life.

Disorganized / Fearful-Avoidant

Understanding Your Scores

Tips for Understanding and Interpreting Your Different Attachment Scores

Our attachment quiz includes a scientifically developed and validated questionnaire, called the ECR-RS (Experiences in Close Relationships - Relationship Structures)*. As you might have noticed, you answered a set of questions for different relationships; for each of your caregivers, partner, and other people in general. Based on your answers, your scores (anxiety and avoidance scores) for each relationship were calculated.

On the graphic, you'll find the estimations of your attachment to each of your caregivers as well as to your partner. Each circle on the graphic has the same color as the one in the results description for the specific relationship (e.g. Below the graphic, the word "partner" is blue, so the circle representing the attachment for this relationship is also blue.).

In some cases, you might notice that your attachment scores for all relationships (caregivers and partner) do not match your profile - your general attachment. This, however, is nothing to be concerned about. It might be that you exhibit a certain pattern of attachment towards people you meet; and yet, in close intimate relationships, you have a different approach. Or it could be that you have a specific attachment pattern towards your caregivers, but not towards other people in your life.

The important thing to remember is that there is no right or wrong when it comes to how you experience your relationships. And there's nothing wrong with having different emotional experiences with different people in your life.



Profile

Disorganized/ Fearful-Avoidant



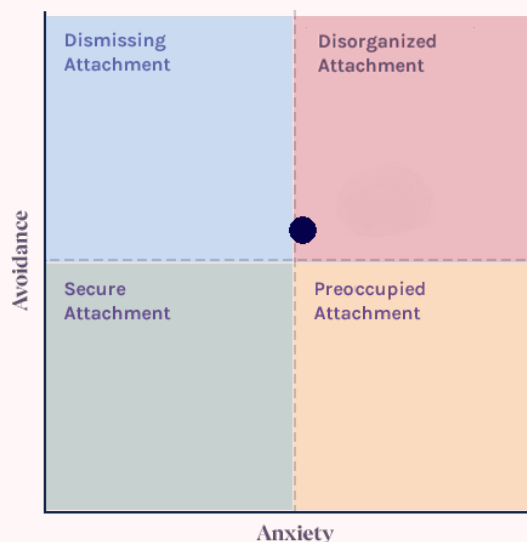
Disorganized/Fearful-Avoidant is one of the three insecure attachment styles.

Please be mindful of the fact that the traits of the disorganized attachment style are considered to vacillate between the anxious and avoidant attachment style traits. This is because the individual's situations, mood, and circumstances often dictate which dimension of attachment they fall on at a certain time. Due to a disorganized attachment's desire for intimacy and love, and intense fear of rejection, they often display an

"I hate you/I love you" pattern of behaviors in relationships. In these situations, the traits of the anxious and avoidant attachment styles are fighting against each other for manifestation.

Characteristics of Disorganized/Fearful-Avoidant Attachment Style Are:

- You may vacillate between the traits of the anxious and avoidant attachment styles. Thus, depending on your situation, you act clingy at times towards a partner, but on other occasions, dismissive and aloof. Also, in some cases, you may end up feeling dissociated within your relationships.
- You might exhibit an unpredictable pattern of behaviors.



Score General: Anxiety: 4.11 / Avoidance: 4.39

- You may have a poor sense of self agency. This can result in a difficulty making decisions/feeling helpless/not establishing goals in life.

- Within intimate relationships, your desire for love and intense fear of rejection can cause you to act chaotically: On the one hand you search for affection and approval, yet on the other you may become jealous and suspicious of your partner's intentions.

- You desire relationships and love, but believe that you are not worthy of it. Therefore you have difficulty opening up to, trusting, and bonding with others. Deep down, you believe that a partner will reject and abandon you.



How Does Your Attachment Style Develop?

The disorganized attachment style is typically formed during the formative period in a child's life - the first eighteen months - as a response to the child's relationship with their primary caregiver(s). It is thought that this attachment style forms from the child perceiving their source of safety (their primary caregiver) as "scary" or fearful.

The genesis of this perception of fear is often rooted in chaotic, frightened, or frightening behavior from a caregiver. At times the caregiver may be frightened of their child and their ability to parent effectively, but they may also act frighteningly towards the child. Sometimes, this frightening behavior might be aggressive or threatening towards the child or other people. In more extreme circumstances, the caregivers might be abusive.

This pattern creates an internal conflict for the child: their source of safety is also their source of fear. Who do they turn to when their world becomes frightening or threatening?

Another possible contributing factor to the development of disorganized attachment is when caregivers pass down their own sense of loss and trauma to the child through their actions. Parenting styles are learned, thus, caregivers often respond to their child's needs in the same way that their own needs were met. As a result, disorganized caregivers may feel disconnected from their child. In response to this sense of disconnection, the child attempts to forge a strategy that will ensure that their caregiver stays emotionally tuned-in to them.

Why is secure attachment so important?

Let's have a look at the **five primary conditions** for secure attachment and the corresponding benefits for self-development. Your responses from the self report on the five conditions of secure attachment will give you an indication of your early childhood experience from your earliest childhood memories.



Mom or Caregiver #1

Protection:	4
Attunement:	4
Soothing & Reassurance:	3
Expressed Delight:	4
Encouragement:	3
Average:	3

Result

Moderately Insecure

Father or Caregiver #2

Protection:	2
Attunement:	2
Soothing & Reassurance:	1
Expressed Delight:	1
Encouragement:	1
Average:	1

Result

Very Insecure



The Five Conditions for Secure Attachment

1. Felt Safety

As a parent, first and foremost, you want your child to feel protected. If your child feels protected, they feel safe. For the infant and toddler, safety means closeness to the caregiver, as they are the source of food, warmth, and protection. Danger means separation from them, beyond the comfort zone.

The attuned caregiver is fiercely protective but not overwhelming, intrusive, or ignoring. They give their child space and freedom to explore the world, but stay close enough so that the child has a felt sense of safety.

When the infant strays too far and becomes frightened, they know that they can run to the caregiver and be enveloped in a warm, protective embrace, secured against the world. This conveys a message: "You are safe. You are loved. You are loveable."

2. Feeling Seen and Known/Attunement

Attuned parents can read their baby's cues accurately and respond to their needs. Attuned responses give infants information about the effects of their behavior. Children learn that when they signal a need, they can expect a prompt, predictable, and accurate response. The result is a feeling of control over their lives, starting early on: "I signal that I'm hungry, and I get fed; I signal that I'm tired, and my mother rocks me to sleep."

3. Felt Comfort/ Soothing and Reassurance

The attuned parent's arms are open and inviting. When the child is distressed, the caregiver reassures and soothes the child back to a calm emotional state.

Helping the child manage their distress and frustrations will help them develop an internal model of being soothed and comforted. Over time, the child will develop the ability to manage their own distress and self-soothing.

5. Felt Support for Best Self

Children need to feel supported and encouraged to explore their world joyfully and safely.

Parents who champion this have a deep faith in their child and always provide them with a safety net. Deeply involved in their child's life, parents give the child space and thrust them towards autonomy and independence. This sense of security allows the child to explore, discover, succeed, and fail; and through such exploration, the child develops a good, autonomous, strong, and unique sense of self.

4. Feeling Valued/ Expressed Delight

Feeling valued begins in infancy and is the foundation of healthy self-esteem development.

Parents who raise children with healthy self-esteem repeatedly express their joy about who the child is rather than what the child does. They focus on Being rather than Doing. Such parents exhibit "expressed delight" to the child and about almost everything the child does. They focus on the joys of parenting, not the chores.

Special Thanks to R. Chris Frayley from the University of Illinois for making the use of this test possible and for his contribution to the Attachment field.

1) The Experiences in Close Relationships-Revised (ECR-R) questionnaire is a revised version of Brennan, Clark, and Shaver's (1998) Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) questionnaire. The items on the ECR-R were selected using techniques based on Item Response Theory, but were selected from the same item pool as those from the ECR. Both the ECR and the ECR-R are designed to assess individual differences with respect to attachment-related anxiety (i.e., the extent to which people are insecure vs. secure about the availability and responsiveness of romantic partners) and attachment-related avoidance (i.e., the extent to which people are uncomfortable being close to others vs. secure depending on others).

What can you do?

By now, you may more concretely suspect whether the self-assessment test was right and that you might have a disorganized attachment style.

One of the key issues in people with disorganized attachment style is fear of someone they trust hurting them. The easiest solution? Do not trust anyone. This, however, is not a very productive or fruitful solution.

Simply avoiding proximity will not heal the trauma or painful childhood experiences. In order to learn how to build secure relationships, you need to learn to trust people first.

One way to start healing is by working with a psychotherapist. A therapist is someone you can trust, as he or she will offer a non-judgmental, accepting, calm, and predictable space for you to open up. You might be able to express and make sense of your experiences, emotions, and needs in a safe environment.

Although we promote therapy, another option you could consider is trying to heal on your own. This could be a promising early approach, as it does not overly push your limits: It does not require trusting a stranger right away.



We can help!

We know that having a disorganized attachment style can be difficult: It can be stressful, confusing, and overwhelming to experience constant instability in your relationships, feelings, thoughts, and behaviors.

But there's no need to feel trapped or hopeless - we've got your back! Below, we've outlined a series of steps you can take on your journey towards cultivating attachment security.

The Path to Cultivating Secure Attachment



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Special thanks to R. Chris Fraley from the University of Illinois for making the use of this test possible and for his contribution to the attachment field. This test is used with permission from R. Chris Fraley from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

Source (ECR-RS): Fraley, R. C., Heffernan, M. E., Vicary, A. M., & Brumbaugh, C. C. (2011). The Experiences in Close Relationships—Relationship Structures questionnaire: A method for assessing attachment orientations across relationships. *Psychological Assessment*, 23, 615–625.

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