

Attachment Theory

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Onnet - AHT

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What is Attachment Theory

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As an area of psychology

***Attachment Theory** is an area of psychology that describes the nature of emotional attachment between humans. It begins as children with our attachment to our parents. The nature of this attachment, and how well it's fostered and cared for, will then influence the nature of our attachment to romantic partners later in our life.*

– Collins, N. L., & Read, S. J. (1990)

- 1950s

- Bowlby and Ainsworth

the nature in which infants get their needs met by their parents significantly contributes to their “attachment strategy” throughout their lives.

– Ainsworth, M. S., & Bowlby, J. (1991)

- It helps us understand:

- why your close relationships have succeeded/failed
- why you're attracted to the people you are attracted to
- the nature of the relationship problems that come up again and again for you

Stages of Attachments

- Pre-Attachment ($\leq 3m$):
- Indiscriminate Attachment (6w-7m): infants start distinguishing between familiar and unfamiliar people, responding more positively to the primary caregiver.
- Discriminate Attachment (7-11m): infants show a strong attachment and preference for one specific individual.
- Multiple Attachments ($>9m$): children begin to form strong emotional bonds with other caregivers beyond the primary attachment figure.

Opportunity for attachment

Quality caregiving

Four Attachment Styles

Security base

Attachment Style != Personality

Secure Attachment Style

- comfortable displaying interest and affection
- comfortable being alone and independent
- display a healthy level of self-confidence
- correctly prioritize their relationships
- tend to draw clear boundaries and stick to them
- capable of accepting rejection and moving on despite the pain
- apable of being loyal and sacrificing when necessary

Anxious Attachment Style

- They need constant reassurance and affection from their partner
- They have trouble being alone or single
- They have trouble trusting people
- rely on others for their emotional needs

Can your Attachment Styles change?

- Some even have successful long-term relationships as an anxious or avoidant
- Secures are consistently more happy and feel more supported,²⁶ are less likely to become depressed,²⁷ are healthier,²⁸ retain more stable relationships, and become more successful²⁹ than the other types
- Your attachment style can change over time although it's **slow** and **difficult**
- Extreme negative life events, such as divorce, death of child, serious accident, etc., can cause a secure attachment type to fall into a more insecure attachment type