Relationship Patterns

(anxiety and avoidance in relationships)

Early in life, people develop one of four styles for relating to other people and the world around them: secure, avoidant, anxious, or fearful. Each differs in the degree to which the person holds a positive or negative view of themselves and others, and the degree to which they experience anxiety and avoidance in relationships.

An insecurely attached individual doubts the availability and support of others and adopts a posture in relationships to manage the doubt, through either avoidance (distancing from intimacy) or anxiety (demanding of intimacy). In some cases, a person experiences both avoidance and anxiety simultaneously.

Secure Attachment

(positive view of self, positive view of others)

I am comfortable with intimacy and autonomy and I enjoy close relationships.



Low Avoidance

I am fearful of abandonment and often depend on others for self-worth. It is important for me to be close to others.



(negative view of self, positive view of others)

Anxious Attachment

Low Anxiety

Avoidant Attachment

(positive view of self, negative view of others)



It is important for me to be independent. I am often emotionally distant, isolated, and minimize my need for connection.

High Avoidance



I am fearful of intimacy. I can be unpredictable in relationships and have conflicting needs for intimacy and distance.

(negative view of self, negative view of others)

Fearful/Disorganized Attachment

High Anxiety

