

Attachment Styles



SECURE

Comfortable with closeness and independence; communicate needs openly, and can repair after conflict. Trusts others and self.

Security isn't about never struggling—it's about having the flexibility to return to balance in relationships.

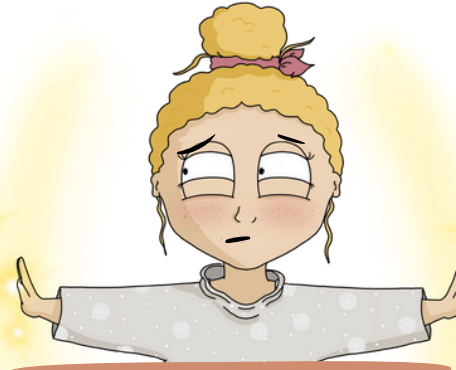
**Ventral vagal
(connected, safe,
grounded).**



ANXIOUS

Craves closeness and reassurance, fears abandonment. May become preoccupied with a partner's availability. Often hypervigilant to signs of withdrawal, tone, or body language to avoid being left.

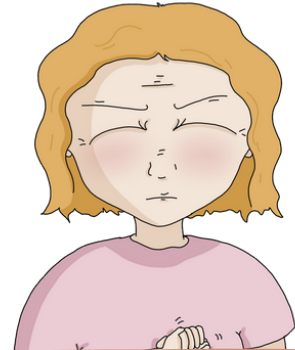
**Hyper-arousal /
sympathetic
(fight/flight
energy).**



AVOIDANT

Values independence, struggles with vulnerability, distances in intimacy. Adults may minimise emotions. Though often misread as cold, this style protects against vulnerability.

**Hypo-arousal /
dorsal vagal
(numbing,
detachment).**



DISORGANISED

Longs for closeness but fears it at the same time; push-pull dynamic. May swing between anxious pursuit and avoidant withdrawal, sometimes within the same moment.

**Cycling between
sympathetic +
dorsal (chaotic
shifts).**

Attachment Styles

Comes From...



SECURE

Childhood:

Consistent, attuned caregiving; safe expression of needs.

Later life:

Healthy friendships/partners, therapy, mentors who model trust.



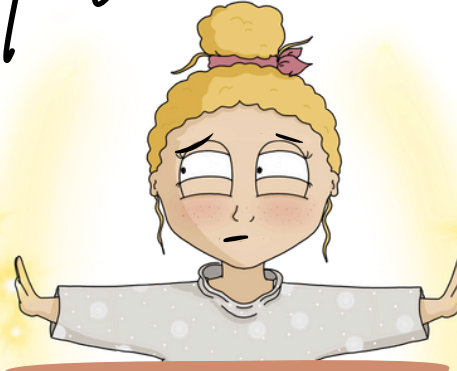
ANXIOUS

Childhood:

Caregivers inconsistent (sometimes warm, sometimes unavailable); unpredictability.

Later life:

Relationships with emotional highs/lows, abandonment experiences, conditional love ("I love you if...").



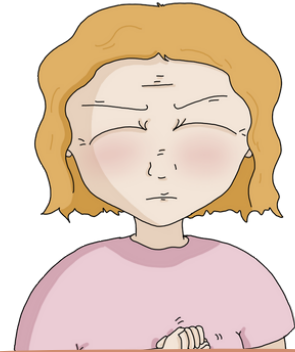
AVOIDANT

Childhood:

Emotionally distant or rejecting caregivers; praise for self-sufficiency.

Later life:

Environments where vulnerability is punished (e.g. work-first culture, invalidating partners).



DISORGANISED

Childhood:

Caregivers were a source of both comfort and fear (abuse, neglect, chaos).

Later life:

Trauma bonds, abusive/unsafe relationships, environments with betrayal or unresolved trauma.

Attachment Styles Sounds Like...



SECURE

Beliefs:

"I am worthy of love,"
"Others can be trusted."

Thinking style:

Balanced, realistic,
both/and thinking.

Common thoughts:

- "It's okay to ask for what I need."
- "We can work through this."
- "Disagreements don't mean we'll break up."



ANXIOUS

Beliefs:

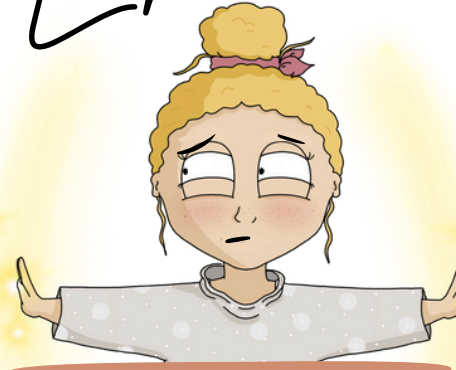
"I'm not enough,"
"Others will leave me."

Thinking styles:

Catastrophising,
mind-reading, hyper-
focus on rejection.

Common thoughts:

"They haven't texted back — did I do something wrong?"
"If I'm not needed, I'll be abandoned."
"I have to be extra nice so they won't leave."



AVOIDANT

Beliefs:

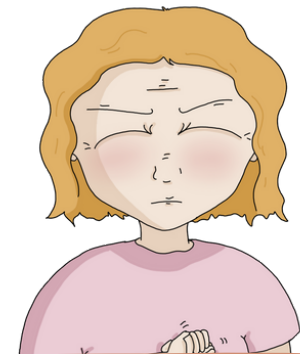
"I can only rely on myself,"
"Closeness = loss of freedom."

Thinking styles:

Minimising, black-and-white thinking,
rationalising emotions away.

Common thoughts:

"People always let you down in the end."
"If I get too close, I'll lose myself."
"I feel suffocated when someone depends on me."



DISORGANISED

Beliefs:

"Love is unsafe,"
"People hurt and abandon me," "I don't know what I need."

Thinking styles:

Flipping between catastrophising and minimising, internal conflict

Common thoughts:

"I want you close — but please don't hurt me."
"Love is dangerous."
"If I trust you, I'll get abandoned or betrayed."

Attachment Styles

Feels Like...



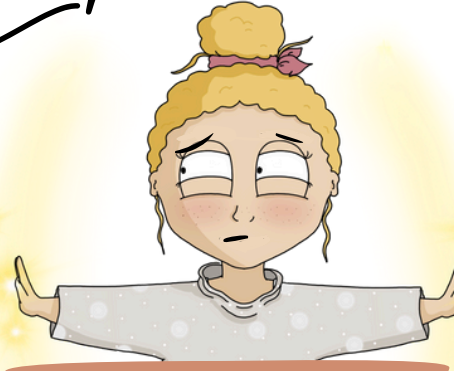
SECURE

- Grounded
- warm
- steady heartbeat.
- Relaxed breath
- open body posture.
- Sense of calm when apart and joy when together.



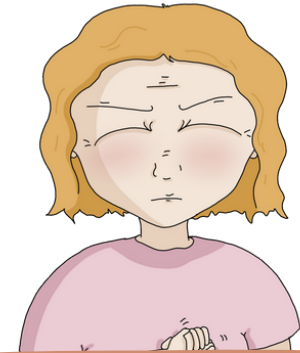
ANXIOUS

- Tight chest
- fluttery stomach,
- racing thoughts.
- shallow breath
- hypervigilance
- Somatic agitation: pacing, nail-biting, insomnia.



AVOIDANT

- Numbness
- flatness
- disconnection from body.
- Tension in shoulders/neck,
- holding breath unconsciously.
- Restlessness when things get too intimate.



DISORGANISED

- Feeling both hot and cold (activation + freeze).
- Heart racing with simultaneous heaviness in limbs.
- Dissociation or panic
- sudden urge to run while also clinging.

Attachment Styles

Acts Like...



SECURE

Behaviours:

Open communication, consistent boundaries, ability to repair after conflict.

Protest behaviours:

Rare — may briefly withdraw but returns to connection.

Can sometimes 'stay' longer than they should



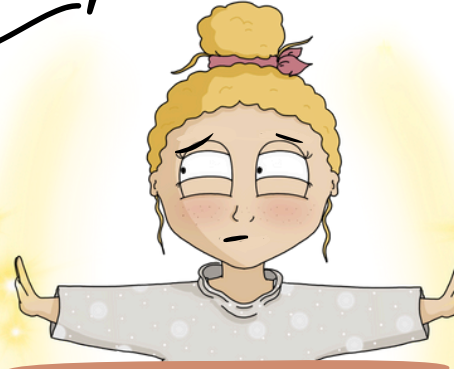
ANXIOUS

Behaviours:

Seeks reassurance, preoccupied with partner's signals, analyses texts.

Protest behaviours:

Excessive calling/texting. Trying to induce jealousy, "I'll wait the exact amount of time they took to reply so I don't look too needy." Withdrawing affection to "teach a lesson."



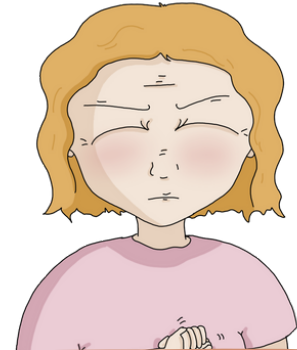
AVOIDANT

Behaviours:

Pulls away when things get close, over-focuses on work/hobbies, downplays emotions.

Protest behaviours:

Ghosting or suddenly going silent. Criticising partner for being "too needy."



DISORGANISED

Behaviours:

Push-pull dynamic (clingly then distant), sudden shifts in mood.

Protest behaviours:

Testing loyalty ("If you really loved me, you'd do X"). Sabotaging closeness (picking fights right when things feel intimate).

Attachment Styles Healing Pathway



SECURE

Maintain balance, model healthy relating, continue regulation practices.

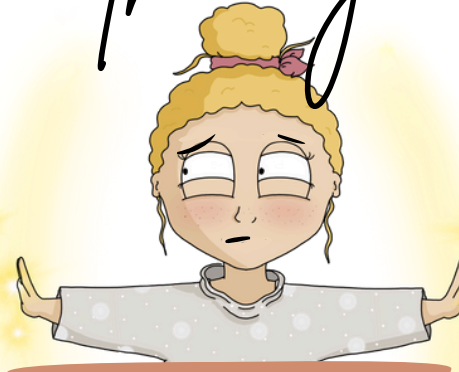
Strengths:
Steady, open,
adaptable.



ANXIOUS

Practice self-soothing, expand capacity to sit with uncertainty, work on boundaries.

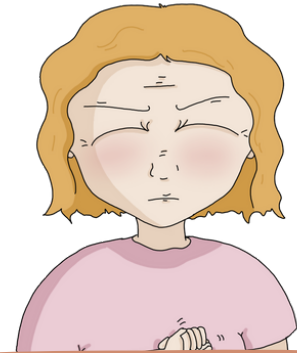
Strengths: Deeply
empathetic,
attuned, loyal.



AVOIDANT

Practice vulnerability in small steps, safe co-regulation, body awareness.

Strengths:
Independent,
resourceful, resilient..



DISORGANISED

Trauma-informed therapy, titrated exposure to intimacy, nervous system regulation.

Strengths: Intuitive,
emotionally intense,
creative.