

# ATTACHMENT THEORY



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John Bowlby, a British psychologist, originally developed the *theory of attachment* in 1958 which disagreed with the common believed idea of the time that child attachment to their primary caregiver was a learned behavior and was only the result of the feeding relationship between child and caregiver.

Bowlby, after observations, postulated that instead, attachment was characterized by clear behavioral and motivational patterns, and attentive primary caregivers fostered a sense of security in children.

Bowlby also maintained that attachment styles affect how people think, feel, and behave in close relationships "from the cradle to the grave".

Bowlby's colleague, **Mary Ainsworth**, later studied infant-parent separations based on Bowlby's theory and identified three main attachment styles: secure, insecure avoidant and insecure ambivalent/anxious/pre-occupied.

Researchers, **Main and Solomon**, added a fourth attachment style called disorganized-insecure/fearful based on their own research.

## in childhood



### Anxious



- ✦ Suspicious of strangers
- ✦ Distressed when separated from caregiver but not easily consoled when they return.
- ✦ 7-15% of infants
- ✦ As they grow older, can be somewhat clingy and over-dependent
- ✦ Wary of strangers

### Avoidant



- ✦ Avoid parents and caregivers
- ✦ May not reject parental attention but do not seek out comfort or contact.
- ✦ Show no preference between a parent and a complete stranger.

### Fearful



- ✦ Show lack of clear attachment behavior.
- ✦ Responses to caregivers are a mix of behaviors.
- ✦ Dazed, confused or apprehensive around caregivers.
- ✦ As they grow old, may take on a parental role
- ✦ Due to feeling both comforted and frightened by the parent.

### Secure



- ✦ Secure, explorative and happy
- ✦ Parents attentive to their needs
- ✦ Are visibly upset when caregiver leaves and happy when they return.
- ✦ Prefer parents to strangers.
- ✦ Tend to be more empathetic during later stages of childhood.
- ✦ Generally described as less disruptive, less aggressive, and more mature than children with other attachment styles.

# in adulthood



# Resource Links



## [Take The Attachment Project Quiz](https://quiz.attachmentproject.com)

<https://quiz.attachmentproject.com>

## [How Attachment Styles Affect Adult Relationships](https://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships-communication/attachment-and-adult-relationships.htm)

<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/relationships-communication/attachment-and-adult-relationships.htm>

## [The Different Types of Attachment Styles](https://www.verywellmind.com/attachment-styles-2795344)

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## [Adult Attachment Theory and Research](http://labs.psychology.illinois.edu/~rcfraley/attachment.htm)

<http://labs.psychology.illinois.edu/~rcfraley/attachment.htm>

## [The Different Styles of Attachment](https://www.simplypsychology.org/attachment-styles.html)

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To schedule an appointment with Peaceful Mind Mental Health, call 218.731.8896 or visit <https://peacefulmindmentalhealth.com/>