

WHAT IS ATTACHMENT?

Imagine yourself as an infant unable to care for yourself, unable to communicate your needs with language, and entirely dependent on others for everything. It is during this time that we develop attachments to our caregivers to ensure that we receive the food, hygiene, love, trust, protection, attention, and consistency we require for survival. How we develop this attachment to our caregivers not only holds implications for our wellbeing as infants and children, but also for how we engage in relationships as adults.

When an infant and caregiver are strongly attuned (the caregiver meets the infant's needs with satisfaction) a secure attachment is developed. The infant can feel confident in the responsiveness of the caregiver and rely on their protection. As adults, people with secure attachment bolster the ability to form and maintain healthy relationships.

When an infant and caregiver are not strongly attuned (the caregiver is unresponsive, unavailable, neglectful or abusive) the infant cannot trust or rely on them for the care they require. This can lead to insecure attachment where the infant feels unsafe and vulnerable. As adults, people with insecure attachments may struggle to form healthy relationships and maintain them long-term.

Did your experience as an infant or child reflect a mostly secure or mostly insecure attachment?

