

DISORGANIZED ATTACHMENT

When connection feels both wanted and unsafe

The nervous system can hold both longing and fear at the same time.

*People
Heal
in
Connection*

1 What it often sounds like

*"I want connection,
but part of me also expects
hurt or overwhelm."*

A deep desire for closeness can exist alongside a sense of fear, creating conflicting feelings about relationships.

2 Common signs



Push-pull in relationships (coming close, then pulling away).



Mixed signals (wanting closeness but feeling uneasy).



Feeling both drawn in and scared at the same time.



Intense reactions under stress (e.g., heightened anxiety, anger, or shutdown).



Shutting down or becoming chaotic when feeling overwhelmed.

3 What may be underneath it

Early relationships may have felt both comforting and frightening, creating confusion around safety.

This can happen when care was inconsistent, unpredictable or involved both warmth and fear. The nervous system learns to stay on high alert, because connection and threat were experienced together.

*Safety
can grow
in time.*

4 Helpful shifts



Focus on safety first.

Create moments of safety in your body, relationships and environment.



Go slowly.

Take time to notice what feels safe and build trust at your own pace.



Use grounding and regulation skills.

These can help when emotions feel intense or overwhelming.



Look for consistency.

Notice and value people, environments and experiences that feel reliable and steady.



Therapy and secure relationships can help.

Supportive, attuned relationships can help rewire the nervous system toward safety.

5 Helpful reminder

This is not a character flaw.

It is a nervous-system adaptation to early experiences. With awareness, support and safe relationships, change is possible.

*You are not too much.
You are making sense
of what happened.
Change is possible.*