

Attachment framework – The basic principles

Over the lifespan, the **need for connection with others** shapes our neural architecture, our responses to stress, our everyday emotional lives, and the interpersonal dramas and dilemmas that are at the heart of those lives.

(Johnson, 2019, p. 5)

1. The longing for a felt sense of **connection is a primary need**, especially when threatened.
2. A felt sense of safe haven connection calms the nervous system and **primes emotional balance**.
3. The emotional balance associated with a sense of secure connection confers a coherent, articulated, **positive sense of self** ...
4. A felt sense of secure base primes a sense of **competence, autonomy [and] effective dependency**.
5. The key factors that define the quality of an **emotional bond** are ARE – Accessibility, Responsiveness and Emotional Engagement.
6. **Separation distress** is primed when secure connection is lost.
7. Key bonding interactions are enshrined in mental representations – **mental models of self and other**.
8. In general, those who have experienced **secure attachment** are more emotionally healthy and resourceful.
9. There are three insecure styles of constraining habitual strategies. The first is **anxious or preoccupied** attachment.
10. The second insecure style is **avoidant or dismissing**. Avoidants tend to try to minimize frustration or distress ...
11. A third insecure style, most often found in people who have **experienced complex trauma** at the hand of attachment figures, is called fearful-avoidant or in children, disorganized.
12. **Strategies can be adaptive**, or become insecure styles, often habitual, rigid, generalized, constraining. Styles can change over time.
13. **Insecurity is a risk factor** for almost all problems in adaptation and all mental disorders.
14. In adult relationships, attachment is reciprocal with **both partners ideally reaching** [for] and supporting each other ...

(Johnson & Campbell, 2022, pp. 26-27)

References:

Johnson, S. M. (2019). *Attachment theory in practice - Emotionally focused therapy (EFT) with individuals, couples and families*. New York: The Guilford Press.

Johnson, S. M., & Campbell, T. L. (2022). *A primer for emotionally focused individual therapy (EFIT) - Cultivating fitness and growth in every client*. New York: Routledge.