

experiences in close relationships **questionnaire – revised (ecr-r)**

your name _____ relationship(s) described _____ today's date _____

The statements below concern how you feel in emotionally intimate relationships. You can use them to assess how you tend to feel in close relationships generally, or you can use them to focus on a particular relationship or type of relationship. Typical examples include your relationship with your current romantic partner, romantic partners in general, your mother, your father, your best friend, or friends in general. With adaptations, the statements are also relevant to therapeutic relationships. Using the 1 to 7 scale, after each statement write a number to indicate how much you agree or disagree with the statement.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

*strongly
disagree*

*strongly
agree*

| | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 1. | I'm afraid that I will lose this person's/others' love | |
| 2. | I prefer not to show this person/others how I feel deep down | |
| 3. | I often worry that this person/others will not want to stay with me | |
| 4. | I feel comfortable sharing my private thoughts and feelings with this person/others (R) | |
| 5. | I often worry that this person/others don't really love me | |
| 6. | I find it difficult to allow myself to depend on this person/others | |
| 7. | I worry that this person/others won't care about me as much as I care about them | |
| 8. | I am very comfortable being close to this person/others (R) | |
| 9. | I often wish that this person's/others' feelings for me were as strong as my feelings for them | |
| 10. | I don't feel comfortable opening up to this person/others | |
| 11. | I worry a lot about my relationship(s) | |
| 12. | I prefer not to be too close to this person/others | |
| 13. | when this person/others are out of sight, I worry that they might become interested in someone else (and leave/exclude me) | |
| 14. | I get uncomfortable when this person/others want to be very close | |
| 15. | when I show my feelings for this person/others, I'm afraid they will not feel the same about me | |
| 16. | I find it relatively easy to get close to this person/others (R) | |
| 17. | I rarely worry about this person/others leaving me (R) | |
| 18. | it's not difficult for me to get close to this person/others (R) | |
| 19. | this person/others make me doubt myself | |
| 20. | I usually discuss my problems and concerns with this person/others (R) | |

cont.

| | | |
|-----|--|--|
| 21. | I do not often worry about being abandoned (R) | |
| 22. | it helps to turn to this person/others in times of need (R) | |
| 23. | I find that this person/others don't want to get as close as I would like | |
| 24. | I tell this person/others just about everything (R) | |
| 25. | sometimes this person/others change their feelings about me for no apparent reason | |
| 26. | I talk things over with this person/others (R) | |
| 27. | my desire to be very close sometimes scares this person/others away | |
| 28. | I am nervous when this person/others get too close to me | |
| 29. | I'm afraid that once this person/others get to know me, they won't like who I really am | |
| 30. | I feel comfortable depending on this person/others (R) | |
| 31. | it makes me mad that I don't get the affection and support I need from this partner/others | |
| 32. | I find it easy to depend on this person/others (R) | |
| 33. | I worry that I won't measure up to other people | |
| 34. | it's easy for me to be affectionate with this person/others (R) | |
| 35. | this person/others only seems to notice me when I'm angry | |
| 36. | this person/others really understands me and my needs (R) | |

This questionnaire measures attachment related "anxiety" and "avoidance". To score it, first reverse the answers to all statements which are followed by an (R) (e.g. statements 4, 8, 16, 17, 18, etc). So for these statements, if an answer reads "1" score this as "7". If it reads "2" score it as "6", and so on. Now add all scores for the odd-numbered statements and divide this total by 18 to get an averaged score for "anxiety". Similarly add all scores for the even-numbered statements and divide by 18 to get an averaged score for "avoidance". You can now transfer these averaged scores to the companion ECR-R dimensions diagram to assess whether the current picture is one of security, preoccupation, dismissal, or fearful-avoidance.

averaged anxiety =

averaged avoidance =

The wording used in this version of the ECR-R is deliberately fairly general e.g. "this person/others". If one is routinely using the scale just for, for example, romantic relationships, it's very reasonable to change the wording so that all statements are about "my partner". Similarly this version of the scale has the statements ordered so that anxiety and avoidance items alternate. This is a compromise between mixing the items up a little, but still making scoring reasonably straightforward. In research studies the items would be more thoroughly mixed.

ECR-R dimensions

name:

date:

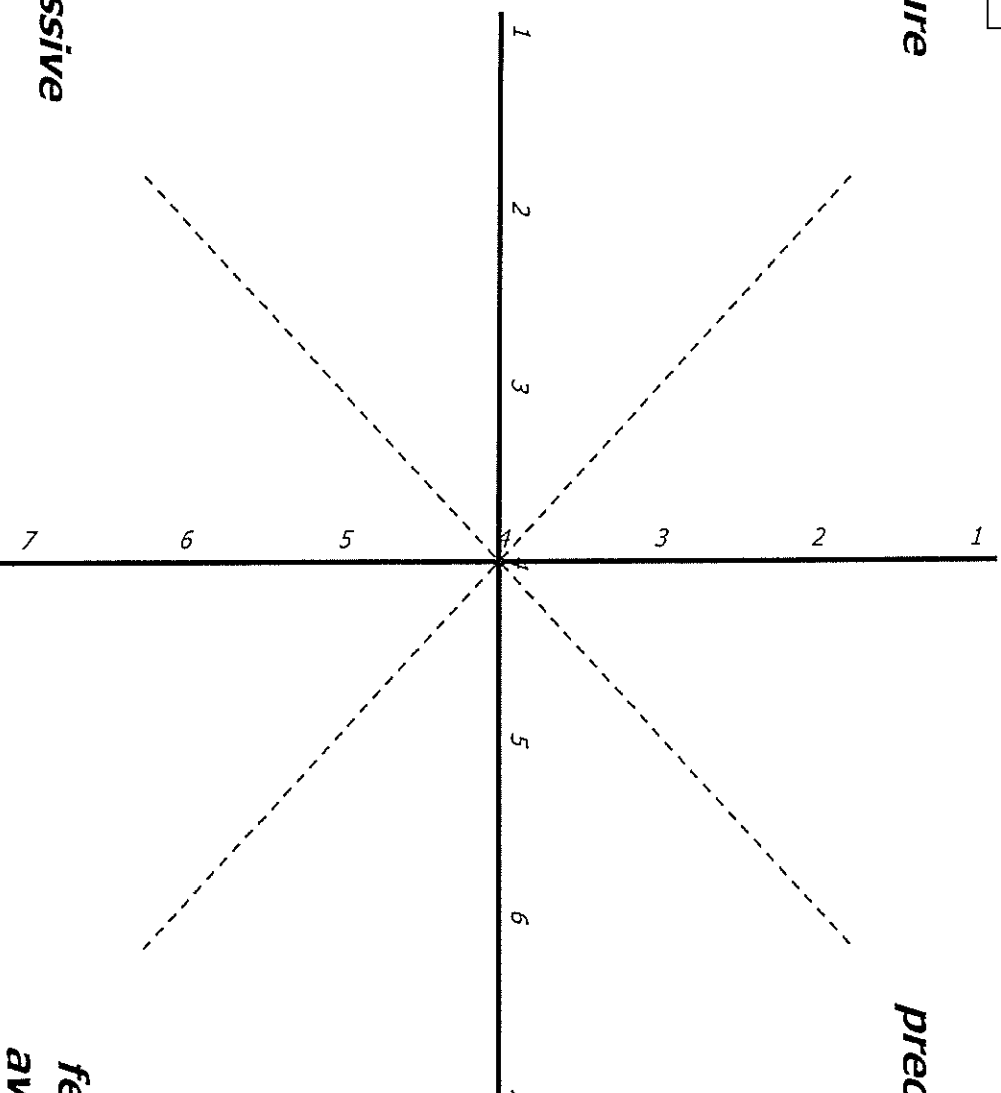
low avoidance

secure

preoccupied

low
anxiety

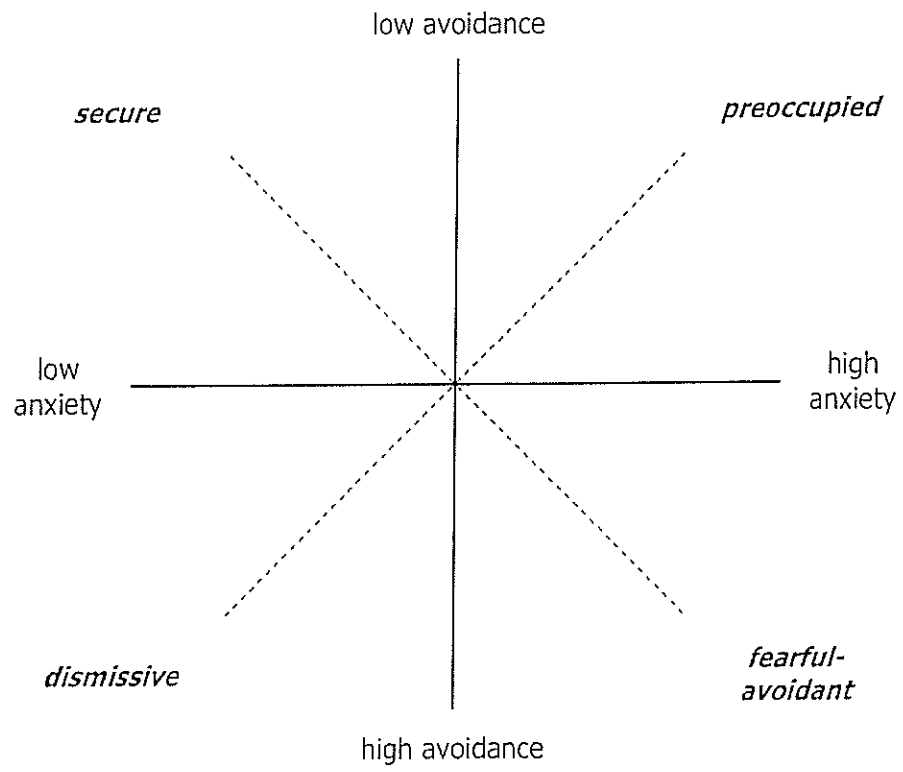
high
anxiety



high avoidance

***fearful-
avoidant***

note that this scale can be used to classify & track changes in one's attachment style in close relationships generally, or in types of relationship, or in specific relationships



assessing attachment in adults

from blog at www.stressedtozest.com posted on 18/10/09

I'm a doctor and psychotherapist who's interested in using attachment ideas to improve how helpful I can be for clients. Awareness of attachment issues informs therapy, it doesn't dictate it. An obvious question is whether it's sometimes worth assessing attachment in a "formal" way. I'm no expert in this area. I'm an "informed amateur" and, after reading and exploring a good deal around the subject, my impression is that it can be pretty useful at times to assess attachment. The Wikipedia article on *Attachment measures* provides an excellent overview of the field while, for much more in depth information, the two attachment books and the various websites that I've described in previous blog postings give comprehensive coverage. In fact most people would probably benefit from being more aware of their attachment styles in close relationships with the crucial knock on effects this has on our partners, friends, work relationships and children. It's part of healthy maturing to keep what we value from our upbringing and work to change what we feel is no longer helpful. The first post I wrote on this area - *Attachment, compassion, and relationships* - introduces these issues.

One can roughly divide attachment measures for adults by whether they focus on retrospectively assessing early childhood attachment or on assessing attachment in current adult relationships - and on whether they use interview assessment methods or self-report questionnaires. A little like the blind men describing an elephant, all these measures assess important aspects of attachment but the results they elicit don't necessarily correlate closely. For adult-focused psychotherapists like me, who are interested in practical assessment tools, the obvious option is to use self-assessment measures.

The first of these was produced by Hazan and Shaver in the late 1980's. They took simple threefold descriptions of childhood attachment types and re-wrote them as descriptions of typical ways that adults think, feel and behave in romantic relationships. In 1990 Bartholomew published an influential paper arguing that a four-category model was more accurate. Her four categories are:

A. It is easy for me to become emotionally close to others. I am comfortable depending on them and having them depend on me. I don't worry about being alone or having others not accept me.

B. I am uncomfortable getting close to others. I want emotionally close relationships, but I find it difficult to trust others completely, or to depend on them. I worry that I will be hurt if I allow myself to become too close to others.

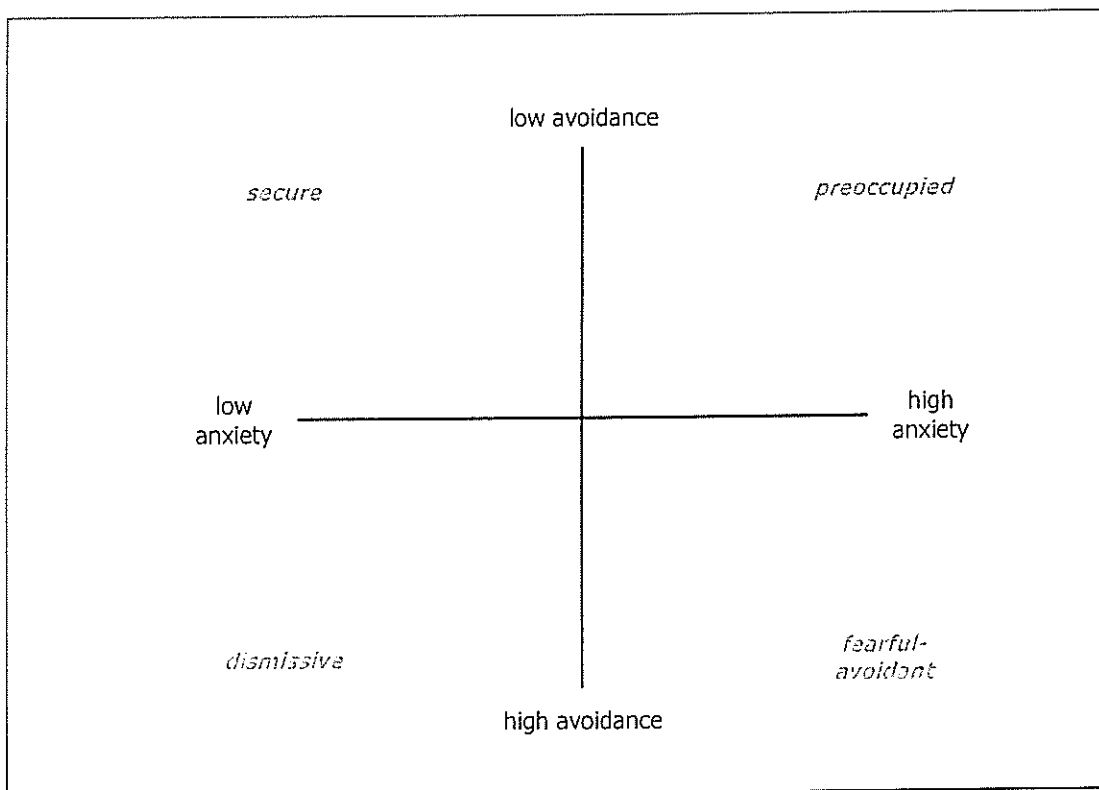
C. I want to be completely emotionally intimate with others, but I often find that others are reluctant to get as close as I would like. I am uncomfortable being without close relationships, but I sometimes worry that others don't value me as much as I value them.

D. I am comfortable without close emotional relationships. It's very important to me to feel independent and self-sufficient, and I prefer not to depend on others or have others depend on me.

In her *Relationship Questionnaire* she asked subjects to read the four descriptions and select the one that best captures the way they approach close relationships. In fact it may, at times, be more helpful to use the questionnaire to assess specific close relationships (e.g. with romantic partner, mother, close friend, etc) or types of close relationship (romantic partners, friends, siblings, etc). It also tends to be more accurate and nuanced to score each of the four categories (e.g. on a 1 to 7 scale) so that one ends with a more graded picture of one's attitudes and behaviours in the relationship(s). For a downloadable copy of the *Relationship Questionnaire* click [here](#). It is a quick assessment tool and gives useful information. Type A is classified as "secure" attachment, Type B as "fearful-avoidant", Type C as "preoccupied", and Type D as "dismissive". See over the page for this charted onto a diagram.

Further forms of attachment measure proliferated in the 1990's and as Fraley has described " ... researchers and clinicians new to the field were drowning in a sea of self-report measures ... ". Happily in 1998, Brennan and colleagues "gathered all the self-report measures of adult attachment known at the time and administered the non-redundant items to 1,086 undergraduates. Factor analyses of the responses revealed two major factors; the content of the items loading on these factors led Brennan and her colleagues to label them attachment-related anxiety and attachment-related avoidance." The Brennan paper was a breakthrough and she and her colleagues used their data to produce a new questionnaire, **[Cont.]**

the *Experiences in Close Relationships (ECR) inventory*. This 36 item questionnaire is made up of 18 statements about anxiety and 18 about avoidance. See Phil Shaver and Chris Fraley's excellent webpage on *Self-report measures of adult attachment* for more details of the ECR and other questionnaires. In 2000, Fraley, Waller & Brennan re-analysed items from adult self-report measures and produced the *Experiences in Close Relationships - Revised (ECR-R) inventory* again assessing attachment-related anxiety (i.e., how much people are insecure vs. secure about the extent to which their partner's are available and responsive) and attachment-related avoidance (i.e., how much people are uncomfortable being close to others vs. secure depending on others). Fraley gives more background to the ECR-R at his *Information on the ECR-R* webpage. Here he also gives details of an online version of the questionnaire, but note only 16 of the 36 statements in the online version are actually the same as the standard ECR-R.



It makes excellent sense to use the ECR or the ECR-R as one's key assessment measure in clinical work. Clicking on the *Experiences in Close Relationships - Revised (ECR-R) inventory* provides a downloadable MS Word version of the full standard questionnaire that I've put together. Clicking on *the ECR-R Dimensions scoring* chart provides a downloadable MS Powerpoint sheet allowing ECR-R scores to be graphically illustrated and monitored (or if you don't have access to Powerpoint, then here's a *Word version*). It takes approximately 10 minutes for someone to answer the ECR-R's 36 questions, and another 2 or 3 minutes to calculate average scores for their anxiety and avoidance. Happily, if one is filling in the inventory for more than one relationship (e.g. for both one's mother and one's partner, etc), it only takes about an extra 5 minutes to complete the ECR-R for each additional relationship assessed. Be cautious though about over-glibly classifying oneself or others on these scales. Yes, we do tend to fall into particular styles in our close relationships. However it is clear that our styles are "dimensional" and nuanced not just blunt, general "categories". So, for example, I might typically have a secure attachment style with my partner, but I could at times slide into a temporary dismissive style (and noting this tendency might be very helpful). Our close relationship style can also evolve over time - to become more secure or less secure - depending on the relationship experiences we encounter (and co-create) in our lives. Attachment style also varies between our different close relationships. Assessing attachment can be very helpful, but be aware that styles are mixed, variable and individualized.