

# THE PSYCHOLOGY OF RELATIONSHIPS

## WE ALL HAVE AN ATTACHMENT STYLE: WHAT'S YOURS?

### AX

#### ANXIOUS ATTACHMENT

People with an anxious attachment style are generally preoccupied with their relationships and are sensitively attuned to any subtle changes in connectedness or intimacy whether real or perceived. They seek reassurance from loved ones and find it hard to truly trust that they are loved.

### S

#### SECURE ATTACHMENT

People with a secure attachment style tend to have a positive expectation of relationships and can be consistent in giving and receiving love, affection, and care whilst maintaining healthy boundaries. Securely attached people can set, communicate and live to reasonable expectations in relationships.

### AV

#### AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT

Avoidantly attached individuals tend to minimise closeness and intimacy by giving the impression they are 'better than', or 'do not need' others. This distancing is frequently accompanied with short displays of warmth and affection enabling them to keep relationships going without having to get too close.

## RELATIONSHIPS: WHEN ONE STYLE MEETS ANOTHER



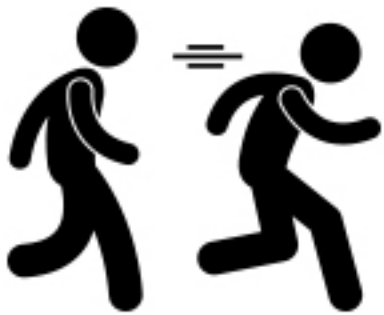
#### AX + AX

These couples often cling to one another in a co-dependent bond. The couple tend to rely solely on one another for all their emotional and practical support creating a "we are ok as long as we have each other" attitude.



#### S + AX

In these relationships the secure partner will tolerate their loved ones need for reassurance and provide within reason. This tends to settle the anxiety and aid both to obtain a more secure position.



#### AV + AX

The 'Cat and Mouse' of relationships. One seeks reassurance whilst the other seeks space. Their opposing needs trigger one another whilst also locking them into an uncomfortable and intensely painful game like situation.



#### S + S

Both have positive expectations of relationships and can communicate effectively to resolve any issues as they arise.



#### S + AV

The secure partner can tolerate their loved ones need for distance without taking it personally, in return the avoidant will often settle and become more open and available to their partner.



#### AV + AV

Both require a strong sense of independence and autonomy from one another, these relationships are frequently long-term, but an enduring sense of loneliness and disconnection is experienced by both.