

## Attachment Style Characteristics in the Workplace (and in General)

### COMMON PATTERNS FOR ANXIOUS ATTACHMENT:

#### Strengths

- Aware of others' needs
- Sensitive to others' feelings in the workplace
- Value teamwork
- Encouraging
- Communicative
- Help others to feel seen and heard
- Aware of own weaknesses
- Willing to improve
- Cooperative
- Flexible
- Respectful
- Thoughtful
- Inclusive
- Self-reflective
- Helpful
- Supportive
- Often do well with leading teams of people

#### Weaknesses

- People pleasing can create resentment long-term
- People pleasing can also prevent them from focusing on THEIR own tasks
- Can get involved in gossip or politics in the workplace at times because of tendency to be over-involved in the interpersonal components of work
- Fear of disapproval can distract them or prevent them from asserting themselves
- Won't speak up for personal needs very often (ex. ask for a promotion or raise)
- Will often feel under-appreciated
- Less independent and autonomous (largely from fear of making mistakes and losing approval)
- May conform too often instead of speaking up
- Can emotionally spiral if something goes wrong (though not always the case)
- Struggle to set boundaries (can get inundated in work and end up not completing things)
- Strong fear of rejection
- Often very sensitive to criticism
- Can get especially distracted by romantic interests in the workplace
- Sometimes will be so focused on their relationships, won't know "who they are" or "what they want" in the career area of their lives
- Self-doubt

### Fears (based largely on Core Wounds)

- Not being good enough
- Being rejected
- Failing
- Being disliked, excluded
- Getting in trouble/being seen as “bad”
- Being abandoned in some way (ex. being fired out of the blue or everyone turning on them)

### How they work with others

- Work well in teams
- Can be excellent leaders
- Good at creating cohesion
- Excellent at helping people understand one another
- Uplifting
- Generally do better in jobs that involve human interaction
- Don’t do as well at work when they feel isolated
- Often put others’ needs and opinions ahead of their own
- Good at sharing with others

### How they handle conflict

- Often avoid conflict by people-pleasing
- If there is conflict, quick to work to resolve it between people
- More focused on interpersonal conflict than work conflict (Ex. How a promotion affects their interpersonal dynamic – more likely to focus on friendship than work regulations)
- Conflict impacts them deeply (can create significant distress for them)
- Flexible and willing to discuss and resolve conflict
- Often willing to communicate if a conflict has already taken place
- Effective compromisers
- Likely to put their need for approval from others ahead of their own preferred outcome
- Sometimes try to manage others’ feelings around conflict above their own



## Needs

- Validation
- Encouragement
- To feel seen and heard
- To feel valued
- Respond significantly better to positive re-enforcement
- To feel important
- To feel included
- To express their opinions
- To feel a sense of certainty in their role
- To feel emotionally connected in the workplace
- Do well when they feel a sense of emotional connection to boss or team members
- Deeply desire boss's approval (reflection of caregiver/authority figure)  
> Can be clients' approval if running a business

## Decision Making

- Quick to make decisions based on what will benefit the most people
- Often make decisions based on how the choices make people feel
- Largely guided by making decisions based on what peoples' opinions of them will be
- Dislike interpersonal conflict, value harmony

## What motivates them

- Connection
- Acknowledgement from others
- Teamwork
- Positive re-enforcement
- Emotional connection
- Having negative criticism be reframed as positive advice
- Feeling protected, looked out for by others
- Feeling seen and understood
- Feeling valued
- Feeling emotionally safe at work
- Feeling supported in their opportunities for growth at work



### • **How They Communicate**

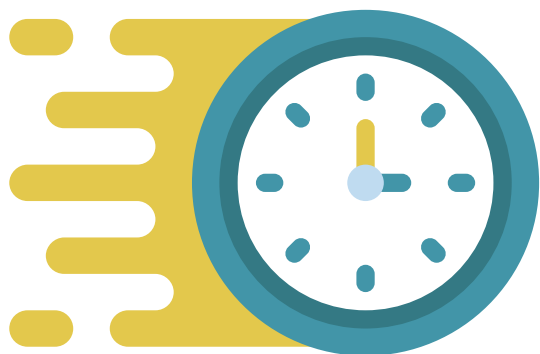
- Often from the point of view of how they feel
- Over-explain things at times
- Communicate fairly directly
- Can be indirect at times to avoid disapproval or interpersonal conflict
- Often very agreeable, use agreeable language
- Often like to discuss their feelings and perceptions about things
- Good at sharing their internal world with others, open
- Vulnerable

### **What Triggers Them**

- Dismissiveness
- When people are short
- When they are being ignored
- When someone is rude or cold
- When they feel invalidated
- An absence of encouragement or connection
- If they feel like they can't go to a superior and have an open conversation
- If they feel judged
- If they feel unsupported in the workplace

### **Time management**

- Challenges occur when they don't set boundaries with work conversations, chatting with co-workers, taking on others' work or problems, struggling to say no, not communicating due to fear of disapproval (ex. "I feel overwhelmed and I need support")
- Can be very driven and determined when helping others with their work
- Can be very focused when leading a team or group meeting



## COMMON PATTERNS FOR FEARFUL AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT:

### Strengths

- Attuned to others
- Notice changes in patterns, quick to catch incongruencies
- Resilient
- Hard-working
- Analytical but also emotionally intelligent
- Independent
- Adaptable (due to childhood)
- Work well outside of their comfort zone
- Detail-oriented
- Extremely focused when they are emotionally regulated
- Determined
- Value growth and improvement
- Can empathize with opinions of others
- Supportive and respectful (unless feeling triggered)
- Usually good at finding things they like to do for work (as their freedom is important to them)
- Aware of others' needs
- Supportive
- Self-reflective
- Willing to grow
- Enjoy new opportunities
- Perseverant
- Can be very ambitious

### Weaknesses

- Can be emotionally dysregulated easily
- Can be people-pleasers as well but will often break the people pleasing cycle when they feel too imbalanced
- Do share with AA's the people-pleasing patterns that take them away from their own tasks
- Can become too "tunnel-visioned" at times
- Inflexible and rigid at times/controlling
- Can be spiteful if they feel someone has "taken away their power" or disrespected them
- Can get stuck in "freeze" mode if they feel disempowered or confused (especially if they have significant unresolved trauma)
- Can lack "staying power" and flee too quickly if they are unhappy
- Before doing work on themselves, often struggle to express themselves and their needs > often leads to a flight response or fight response at times
- Can be suspicious or untrusting
- Can get bored easily if they aren't challenged
- Can self-sabotage if they are not stimulated enough/aligned with Personality Needs

### Weaknesses (Continued)

- Can be inconsistent (largely based on their ambivalent emotions when triggered)
- Can have a sharp tongue, can be overly critical or harsh with words
- Often get impatient easily
- Can be controlling if afraid
- Have the capacity to be manipulative

### Fears (based largely on Core Wounds)

- Being betrayed
- Feeling unworthy
- Feeling trapped, helpless or powerless
- Being publicly shamed
- Getting in trouble/being seen as “bad”
- Being verbally or emotionally attacked (strong “fight back” response)

### How they work with others

- Do well at working independently
- Can be excellent at organizing/structuring projects but often don't like managing people (or can gain some satisfaction from this but it is rivalled with not wanting to feel “responsible for other” > codependent patterns brought up)
- Excellent at understanding others
- Have a great capacity to communicate if they are working on this area of their lives (because they very much feel their emotions but also can analyze and relate to others well)
- Can be controlling and expectant at times
- Generally do better in jobs/projects that involve novelty, growth and opportunity
- Avoid stagnation, can get people motivated and into action
- Can sometimes put others' needs and opinions ahead of their own
- Can rebel against authority figures at times
- Sometimes people-please
- Can “bulldoze” at times
- Often put a lot of pressure on themselves and this translates into their expectations of others



### How they handle conflict

- Oscillate from people-pleasing to wanting to stand up for themselves at times (under-expression to over-expression)
- Sometimes jump the gun/make assumptions about a situation before completely investigating it
- Can act from a place of panic and volatility at times
- Feel a need to “over-defend” themselves in conflict at times
- Can become spiteful if they feel hurt
- Ultimately once the dust has settled, they are often excellent at empathizing and seeing another’s perspective
- Like to handle things directly (approach-oriented > avoidant)
- Likely to put their need for approval from others ahead of their own preferred outcome at times
- At times will try to manage others’ feelings around conflict above their own
- Can struggle with guilt post-conflict
- Sometimes can be a bit too sharp with their words

### Needs

- Growth/opportunity
- To feel empowered
- To feel seen and heard
- To feel connected
- Respond well to criticism if it is delivered respectfully
- To feel understood by others
- To express their opinions
- To feel respected by others
- To feel emotionally connected in the workplace
- Do well when they feel a sense of emotional connection to boss or team members
- Need freedom from being “micro-managed” in the workplace
- Want to be empowered to make their own decisions (make good entrepreneurs often)

### Decision-making

- Quick to make decisions based on what will benefit the way people feel
- Can jump the gun at times, but sometime this works in their favor
- Do have a good capacity to mull things over in their mind until they reach a decision
- Dislike leaving things “unfinished”
- Often make intuitive decisions (largely coming from hypervigilance)

### What Motivates Them

- Growth
- Empowerment
- Emotional connection
- Clarity
- Feeling seen and understood
- Feeling valued
- New opportunities (aka novelty)
- Feeling respected
- Feeling worthy
- Achievement

### How They Communicate

- Over-explain things at times
- Communicate very directly
- Can oscillate from being agreeable to confrontational
- Often like to discuss their feelings and perceptions about things
- Sometimes avoid anything too personal (how they feel, anything private or vulnerable)
- Do not share their needs enough (Ex. "I need support")
- Will sometimes pretend they are doing better than they are/avoid showing weakness

### What triggers them about others

- If they feel disrespected
- If they feel dismissed or ignored
- Feeling taken advantage of
- Sudden changes in patterns
- Feeling like they are "bad" or did something they should feel guilty about
- Feeling unheard or bulldozed
- If they feel like someone is competing with them
- Boundary violations
- If they see someone bullying others (will really rally behind the underdog)
- Trust violations! \*
- Feeling trapped/stuck
- Incompetency in others (as they often feel like they have to be perfect and it's an injustice when others aren't held to the same standard)



## Time management

- Challenges occur when they don't set boundaries with work conversations, chatting with co-workers, taking on others' work or problems, struggling to say no, not communicating due to fear of disapproval (ex. "I feel overwhelmed and I need support")
- They often feel like they are getting "emotionally dumped on" at work
- Can be very focused for long periods of time when they set their sights on something
- Can also get "stuck" when they feel disempowered or untrusting and stay in "freeze" mode for periods of time

## COMMON PATTERNS FOR DISMISSIVE AVOIDANT ATTACHMENT:

### Strengths

- Intellectual
- Thorough
- Practical
- Grounded in their approach
- Don't let their emotions take over
- Detail-oriented
- Independent
- Think things through carefully
- Enjoy endless learning
- Can be very hardworking
- Often get a lot of their identity through work, thus taking it VERY seriously or working extremely hard
- Stay on track well and often keep people on track
- Good at speaking up for their needs
- Express their boundaries
- Comfortable asking for what they feel they deserve
- Resourceful
- Don't get distracted by gossip or politics easily
- Ruminates less
- Resilient
- Work well under pressure
- Analytical
- Can be very ambitious

### Weaknesses

- Can be cold or blunt (which can cause challenges in the workplace at times)
- Sometimes unaware of how their behavior affects others
- Can be harsh
- Can be unaware of others' needs
- Don't put much value on interpersonal relationships at work (unless they already have long-standing friendships) which can prevent long-term opportunity

### **Weaknesses (Continued)**

- Sometimes too independent, struggle more to work in teams as a result
- Dislike operating outside of their comfort zone
- Can be conflict avoidant, often leading to a lack of resolution and harbored resentments
- Can forget to take account for how their actions may impact others on a team, sometimes indirectly causing hostile relationships
- Often dislike public speaking
- Can be shy at times, withdrawn
- May do things their own way (which can be beneficial at times but offend superiors or team members at other times, especially if it breaks the rules)
- Will sometimes avoid meetings out of preference for time alone
- Can be irritable and impatient with others
- Sometimes will struggle to listen to others and have correlated communication difficulties about projects, deadlines etc.
- Often less likely to practice self-observation and reflectivity about their own behavior or potential flaws, limiting their opportunity for personal/professional development

### **Fears (based largely on Core Wounds)**

- Fear of being shamed
- Fear of being criticized and hurt by criticism
- Fear of being “unsafe”
- Fear of having to jump too far outside of their comfort zone
- Fear of having to work with others too much and it draining their energy
- Fear of seeming incompetent
- Having conflict
- Feeling trapped or having to over-commit to things

### **How they work with others**

- Will sometimes avoid sharing their opinions for the fear of being shamed
- Will often stay on the “sidelines” of group projects interpersonally
- Will sometimes agree to things initially but end up doing things their own way
- Can be grounding and anchoring with others, a calming force
- Can pick up on details at times that others don’t
- Often the voice of reason in group settings
- Will often challenge people on their ideas, play “devil’s advocate”
- Excellent at taking independent roles on projects, doing things on their own
- Consistent, often very reliable

### How they handle conflict

- Often avoid conflict
- Will internalize their frustrations more often than not
- Will sometimes pretend they agree and then go do what they want anyways
- May even prefer to stop talking to people altogether other than approach conflict
- Are careful not to use awful words in conflict, will try to remain neutral
- Can remain fairly non-emotional and grounded if they do enter into conflict
- Rational
- Will try to see both sides
- Will analyze situations until they feel like they've come up with the most rational approach

### Needs

- To feel safe
- Intellectual stimulation
- An environment with consistent learning
- Positive re-enforcement/words of affirmation
- To feel valued
- To feel acknowledged
- Freedom to be independent
- Autonomy
- To feel like their opinions are heard and taken into consideration
- A certain degree of space
- Prefer to not work intensively with people or in teams
- To feel that if they do speak up, their stance on a topic will be valued
- To feel respected
- To feel like the people around them are logical and rational

### Decision-making

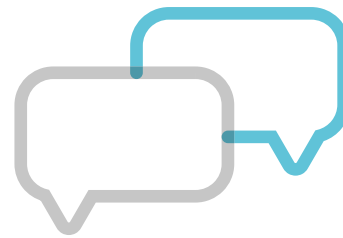
- Make decisions often after in-depth analysis on topics
- Prefer to have time to consider different options
- Often more likely to make decisions based on facts and information rather than how their choices will affect other people (though there can be exceptions to this)
- Slow-moving on making choices
- Like to take all potential variables carefully into consideration
- Fairly detail-oriented
- Like decisions that have exact outcomes or models for particular scenarios and likelihood

### What Motivates Them

- The ability to grow intellectually is a huge motivator for them
- Learning (especially if autonomous)
- Clarity around projects, directions, deadlines
- Emotional connection
- Clarity
- Feeling seen and understood
- Feeling valued
- New opportunities (aka novelty)
- Feeling respected
- Feeling worthy

### How They Communicate

- Prefer to maintain privacy in their interactions
- Communicate intellectually
- Enjoy discussing facts
- Often enjoy intellectual debates as long as they are free from emotional charge (aka not confrontational)



### What triggers them about others

- Lack of clarity on deadlines/what's expected
- When people make decisions very quickly or emotionally
- If they are criticized
- If they feel unheard
- If they feel that nobody is valuing their hard work or opinions
- Hypocrisy
- Inefficiency
- Inconsideration
- If they feel others are trying to take credit for their work or ideas
- Being micromanaged
- Feeling trapped or forced into something they don't want to do

### Time management

- Are often very efficient when they have clear deadlines and expectations
- Can struggle with time management when they feel unclear or overwhelmed
- Can procrastinate if they are doing things they don't enjoy
- Do have the capacity to get into freeze mode if they feel criticized, unsafe or disempowered
- Are excellent at maintaining boundaries with other people in the workplace
- Often complete their tasks in a timely manner because generally good at remaining distraction-free
- Can sometimes get lost in the details of things
- Can struggle with "analysis-paralysis"
- Can often be good at keeping others on track as well

## COMMON PATTERNS FOR SECURE ATTACHMENT:

The Secure Attachment is much more neutral in regard to patterns, the weaknesses, fears etc. are more difficult to discuss because they become very personal based on what is unresolved and less likely to fit a “pattern” based on attachment. If I discuss their weaknesses less it isn’t to idealize them, but to simply not put “filler” around experiences that don’t fit well into a patterned format at this point.

### Strengths

- Emotionally regulated
- Balanced
- Excellent at sharing boundaries
- Clear on their needs
- Don’t mind conflict but don’t end up in unnecessary conflict
- Can often focus better (less real estate in their mind taken up by core wounds, fears, unmet needs and resentments)
- Good at speaking up for themselves and asking for opportunity or a raise
- Good at working with others
- Strong communicators
- Can hear and understand multiple people’s perspectives
- Not quick to be involved in drama, good at treading and staying away from it
- Often make good leaders and managers of people
- Feel worthy of asking for a raise, of sharing their opinion
- Naturally more comfortable sharing ideas or opinions with others
- Active listeners
- Less likely to take things personally
- Trusting
- Stable
- Trustworthy
- Honest

### Weaknesses

- Sometimes unsuspecting (because too trusting)
- Sometimes have less “grit” than some of the other attachment styles because they’ve been through less (though this isn’t always the case)
- Most other characteristics will be highly subjective and personal, less likely to fit into a patterned format (Ex. Feeling not good enough because of losing a job in the past etc.)

### Fears Based on Core Wounds

- This does not fit into a pattern

## How they work with others

- Are often fair
- Considerate
- Conscientious
- Good at communicating
- Good at listening to others and taking their opinions into consideration
- Have no problem asserting themselves if they feel it is the right thing
- Value their own opinions and will share them with others
- Will speak up if they feel there is a problem
- Want everyone to get along and be a team
- Good at working in teams, even if they are more introverted (SA's can be either)
- Friendly with others, respectful

## How they handle conflict

- Very much value working through conflict
- Don't like to leave things unresolved
- Feel relatively comfortable working through conflict though obviously don't seek it out
- Communicate effectively
- Don't take things as personally Likely to be less triggered/charged
- Good at asserting their boundaries
- Don't mind being vulnerable
- Can share their feelings
- Can validate the other person's feelings and perspectives well
- Will be respectful in conflict-oriented situations
- Want both parties to feel happy about the resolution
- Fair

## Needs

- Stability
- Harmony
- Growth
- Connection
- Empowerment
- Clarity
- Certainty
- Open to change (in a healthy amount)
- Balance (work-life balance)
- To be heard
- Enjoyment\*

## Decision-making

- Driven to make fair and balanced decisions
- Value both facts and harmony between people relatively closely (though their cognitive functions may sway them one way)
- Pay attention to detail
- Not quick to jump to conclusions
- Can make decisions efficiently but won't "rush" (they are usually quite thorough)
- Logical and rational but pay significant attention to emotions and feelings as well

## What motivates them

- Opportunity
- A healthy work environment (don't do as well in unhealthy dynamics – outside of their comfort zone)
- Feeling respected and empowered
- Connection
- Building relationships
- Feeling like they can be themselves at work
- Feeling comfortable in their environment
- Growth and learning

## How they communicate: (They won't be perfect, but here are some patterns)

- Assertively
- Respectfully
- Clearly
- Authentically
- Fairly
- Validate others' emotions and perspectives
- Attuned to self
- Take self into consideration\*

## What triggers them about others

- Whatever is unresolved from their past (less likely to fall into a patterned category)
- Disrespect, toxicity, unfairness etc. (WAY outside of their comfort zone)



## Time management

- Effective at managing time
- Good at setting boundaries
- Feel safe and comfortable delegating to others
- Can communicate when they feel overwhelmed and say no
- Able to manage time with the goal in mind of work-life balance (though not always perfect at this and obviously context plays a role Ex. Just got hired for a new CEO role)

