

# Core attachment theory (the spine)

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## Adult attachment models (the ones we use)

### 1. Secure attachment

- Comfortable with closeness *and* autonomy.
  - Can depend on others without losing themselves.
  - Regulates emotions without outsourcing or armouring up.
  - Boring on paper. Gold dust in real life.
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### 2. Anxious / Preoccupied

- Craves closeness, fears abandonment.
  - Hyper-attuned to relational threat.
  - Often learned: *love is inconsistent — stay alert.*
  - Strength: emotional depth.
  - Cost: exhaustion (for them and everyone nearby).
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### 3. Dismissive-Avoidant

- Values independence over intimacy.
  - Deactivates attachment needs (“I’m fine, honestly”).
  - Learned early: *needing others isn’t safe or useful.*
  - Strength: self-sufficiency.
  - Cost: emotional intimacy feels like a tax audit.
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### 4. Fearful-Avoidant (Disorganised in adults)

- Wants closeness **and** fears it.
- Push-pull relationships, high emotional intensity.
- Often linked to trauma, neglect, or caregivers who were both comfort and threat.
- Strength: sensitivity.
- Cost: relational chaos and internal whiplash.