



**Attachment**

**Overview**

Attachment theory was developed by British psychoanalyst John Bowlby in the 1960s. It developed out of his interest in understanding the intense distress an infant experiences when separated from their caregiver. Research done within the field of interpersonal neurobiology helps us better understand early brain development and the significant impact fetal and infant exposure to trauma has beginning in the third trimester of pregnancy. Early life trauma often creates an insecure attachment style which continues through adulthood, impacting a person's relationship with others. Understanding the difference between secure and insecure attachment, and defining the three types of insecure attachment is a necessary component of working with people with complex needs. Upon completion you will better understand the four different types of attachment, how they develop and the resulting impact on adult relationships.

**Core Videos to Watch:**

- [Dr. Allan Schore - Attachment Trauma and The Effects of Neglect and Abuse on The Brain](#) (5 min)
- [Dr. Allan Schore - Neurobiology of Secure Attachment](#) (13 min)
- [Dr. Dan Siegel - Disorganized Attachment](#) (5 mins)

<h2>Attachment Terminology</h2>	
<b>Child Terms</b>	<b>Adult Terms</b>
Secure/Autonomous	Secure/Autonomous
Anxious-Resistant	Preoccupied
Anxious-Avoidant	Dismissing
Disorganized/Can not classify	Unresolved/Fearful/ Can not classify



Attachment Style	Parental Style	Resulting Adult Characteristics
<b>Secure</b>	Aligned with the child; in tune with the child's emotions	Able to create meaningful relationships; empathetic; able to set appropriate boundaries
<b>Avoidant</b>	Unavailable or rejecting	Avoids closeness or emotional connection; distant; critical; rigid; intolerant
<b>Ambivalent</b>	Inconsistent and sometimes intrusive parent communication	Anxious and insecure; controlling; blaming; erratic; unpredictable; sometimes charming
<b>Disorganized</b>	Ignored or didn't see child's needs; parental behavior was frightening/traumatizing	Chaotic; insensitive; explosive; abusive; untrusting even while craving security

**Competency Reflection, Assessment or Demonstration**

Now that you have reviewed the materials about attachment styles it is time to reflect on your experiences with this core competency.

In the space below write two case examples – one where you have had a positive outcome or effective intervention with a person who has an insecure attachment and one in which the intervention was not as effective. Please identify which insecure attachment style is applicable and why. Use the chart above as a reference.

**Case Study #1 – The Effective Intervention**

**What were the characteristics, practices and values that contributed to an effective intervention?**

**What role did you play? How did you contribute to the success?**

**What impact or outcome did this have on individuals with complex needs?**



**Camden Coalition**  
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**The National Center**  
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*An initiative of the Camden Coalition*

**Case Study #2 – The ineffective intervention**

**What were the characteristics, practices and values that contributed to the ineffective intervention?**

**What role did you play?**

**What impact did this have on individuals with complex needs?**

**Reflecting on what you've learned from this module – what would you do differently if you were involved in it again.**

**Additional Resources for Deeper Understanding:**

- [Regina M. Sullivan - The Neurobiology of Attachment to Nurturing and Abusive Caregivers](#)
- [Joanna Chambers- The Neurobiology of Attachment: From Infancy to Clinical Outcomes](#)