

A map for close relationships

You are more than a score.

This workshop offers language for noticing patterns. It does not diagnose you, grade a relationship, or tell you who you must be.

Two questions, many possible answers

Attachment-related **anxiety** describes concern about whether important people will be available and care for us. Attachment-related **avoidance** describes discomfort with emotional closeness or depending on others. These are continuous dimensions: people can fall anywhere along each one.

Both dimensions concern feelings in close relationships. They are not diagnoses of an anxiety disorder or an avoidant personality disorder. Scores can differ between relationships and across time; a single session is only one snapshot.

Four prototypes are a vocabulary

Secure

Lower anxiety and lower avoidance: relative ease with closeness and relying on others.

Anxious

Higher anxiety and lower avoidance: closeness may feel important while availability or reassurance feels uncertain. Also called preoccupied.

Avoidant

Lower anxiety and higher avoidance: independence or emotional distance may feel more comfortable. Also called dismissing or dismissive-avoidant.

Anxious-Avoidant

Higher anxiety and higher avoidance: wanting connection can sit alongside uncertainty or discomfort with closeness. Also called fearful-avoidant.

These are descriptive prototypes, not four boxes that divide people into fixed types.

Read a pattern with care

One person can have several patterns

The ECR-RS asks about close relationships in general and about four specific domains: Mother, Father, Partner, and Best friend. The General section has its own wording and score; it is not an average of the other sections. A mother-like or father-like figure can be your reference.

A result can help describe how you answered today. It cannot establish a cause, explain another person, measure your worth, or predict what a relationship will become. An unfamiliar result is an invitation to think, not a verdict.

Your participation is yours

You may skip any section, leave an item blank, take a break, or keep the whole activity private. You do not need to explain your choices or disclose family or relationship history. Sharing a score or story is optional.

On paper, you self-score and keep your sheets.

A next step you can choose

Compare one relationship with another, or choose a pattern you want to understand. Ask what fits and what the score leaves out. On the website, each completed section has a fuller explanation and an optional fictional island exercise with a possible reply and its reason. You may read, write privately, discuss a character, or pass; no real-life practice is assigned.

When you see the map

The axes run from 1 to 7. Lines at 4 simply mark the midpoint of the response scale. They are visual guides, not validated cutoffs or diagnostic thresholds.

Sources & further reading

Fraley, R. C., Heffernan, M. E., Vicary, A. M., & Brumbaugh, C. C. (2011). The Experiences in Close Relationships-Relationship Structures questionnaire: A method for assessing attachment orientations across relationships. *Psychological Assessment*, 23, 615-625.

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Official ECR-RS items and scoring:

<https://labs.psychology.illinois.edu/~rcfraley/measures/relstructures.htm>

ECR-R background and dimensional interpretation:

<https://labs.psychology.illinois.edu/~rcfraley/measures/ecrr.htm>