

# *Attachment and ED's*

*A Holistic Exploration of Attachment as it Relates to  
Eating Disorders*

## **CLINICAL FRAMEWORK**

Attachment styles are not diagnoses or personality traits.

They are adaptive strategies developed to maintain connection and safety in early relationships.

This activity explores how attachment shows up:

- In relationships
- In the body
- In eating disorder behaviors

There is no “secure vs. insecure” scorecard here—*only curiosity.*

## *Part 1: Attachment in the Body*

***Attachment is physiological before it is cognitive.***

When I feel emotionally connected, my body tends to feel:

When I feel emotionally dependent or seen, my body tends to respond with:

Common sensations (check any that apply):

- Tight chest
- Collapsed posture
- Shallow breathing
- Hypervigilance
- Numbness
- Warmth or ease

## *Part 2: Emotional Experience of Attachment*

**Invite reflection without labeling yet.**

**When I am emotionally close to someone, I tend to feel:**

- Calm and grounded
- Anxious or preoccupied
- Numb or distant
- Unsure what I feel
- Relieved but tense
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

**When I need support, my first instinct is to:**

- Reach out quickly
- Wait and see
- Handle it myself
- Feel conflicted or stuck
- Not notice I need support

## *Part 3: Reflecting on Attachment Patterns*

Read each section slowly. Check what resonates some of the time.

**Anxious-leaning** strategies may include:

- Worry about being too much or not enough
- Monitoring others' reactions closely
- Using food/body to manage approval or closeness

**Avoidant-leaning** strategies may include:

- Discomfort with needing others
- Preference for self-sufficiency
- Using food/body to reduce emotional dependence

**Disorganized-leaning** strategies may include:

- Wanting closeness but fearing it
- Rapid shifts between control and overwhelm
- Feeling shame around need or visibility

 *Part 4: Bringing it Together: Attachment and the Eating Disorder*

The eating disorder helps me manage attachment by:

- Creating distance
- Creating predictability
- Managing emotional intensity
- Reducing vulnerability
- Communicating distress

Now, take some time to journal in response to:

*When relationships feel unsafe, my eating disorder helps by...*