KNOWLEDGE STRUCTURES IN CLOSE RELATIONSHIPS

A Social Psychological Approach

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intrusive, and overcontrolling (Kunce & Shaver, 1994). They often assert their own feelings and needs without adequate regard for their romantic partner (Daniels & Shaver, 1991). Preoccupied mothers are more likely than their secure or avoidant counterparts to neglect their children (Crittenden, Partridge, & Claussen, 1991). They are both consciously and unconsciously afraid of death, which they seem to conceptualize as "the ultimate separation" (Mikulincer, Florian, & Tolmacz, 1990).

In summary, what begins with attempts to keep track of and hold onto an unreliable caregiver during infancy leads to an attempt to hold onto teachers, peers, and romantic partners, but to do so in ways that frequently backfire and produce more hurt feelings, anger, and insecurity. (This tendency toward self-fulfilling prophecy is characteristic of all of the major attachment patterns.)

Avoidants

Infants and Children. Ainsworth et al. (1978) included only one avoidant category in their typology of infant attachment patterns, but Main and Solomon (1986, 1990) later noted that many attachment researchers had left a certain proportion of infants unclassified because their behavior did not fit any of Ainsworth's three scoring prototypes. These disorganized/disoriented infants were marked by "sequential and simultaneous displays of contradictory behavior patterns," "undirected, misdirected, incomplete, and interrupted movements and expressions," "stereotypies, asymmetrical movements, mistimed movements, and anomalous postures," "freezing, stilling, and slowed movements and expressions," "apprehension regarding the parent," and "disorganization or disorientation" (Main & Solomon, 1990, pp. 136–140). Most attachment studies have not included this new category, so we generally restrict our summary of avoidance to Ainsworth's avoidant category. When there is evidence for all four categories, however, we draw a distinction between two kinds of avoidance—(a) dismissing of attachment and (b) disorganized or fearful. The four-category adult attachment typology recently proposed by Bartholomew (1990; Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) includes a similar distinction between dismissing and fearful adults.

Dismissingly avoidant infants seem to become prematurely independent and self-reliant after being repeatedly rebuffed in their attempts to seek contact or reassurance. (Their mothers appear to dislike close body contact and in some cases wish they had not had a child; Main, 1990.) When left alone in the Strange Situation, avoidant infants seem to suppress feelings of anxiety (while exhibiting elevated heart rate [Sroufe & Waters, 1977]—perhaps a sign of hidden anxiety) and do not seek contact with their mother upon reunion. In preschool, peer pairs containing at least one avoidant member form relationships that are less deep (less characterized by mutuality,

responsiveness, and affective involvement) and more hostile than relationships involving children with other attachment styles (Pancake, 1989). Avoidant children are more often aggressive toward other children and more likely to receive angry rebukes from teachers. When asked during middle childhood to draw a picture of their family, avoidant children produce drawings characterized by stiff figures with rigid postures and missing arms or feet and a lack of individuation of and distance between family members (Fury, 1993; Kaplan & Main, 1985; Sroufe et al., 1993). By age 10 or 11, avoidant children have the worst peer relations of the original three attachment groups, exhibiting negative perceptual biases equal to those of anxious–ambivalent children and also seeming not to understand social relations very well.

Disorganized, or fearful, children lack self-confidence and have low self-worth (Cassidy, 1988; Jacobsen, Edelstein, & Hofmann, 1994). They suffer from attentional difficulties, being "restless" and "easily losing interest" (Jacobsen et al., 1994). They are not adept at perspective taking and perform more poorly on concrete operational reasoning tasks than secure and dismissingly avoidant children (Jacobsen et al., 1994). By the age of 6, some disorganized children appear controlling and parental toward their own parents (Main & Cassidy, 1988). Disorganized infants and children are more likely than members of the other attachment groups to be the offspring of emotionally disturbed parents (Cicchetti, Cummings, Greenberg, & Marvin, 1990; Cummings & Cicchetti, 1990; Main & Hesse, 1990) and to be victims of parental abuse and neglect (Carlson, Cicchetti, Barnett, & Braunwald, 1989; Crittenden, 1988; Egelund & Sroufe, 1981).

Adults. In adult studies based on a three-category typology similar to Ainsworth's, which probably involves placing a mixture of dismissing and fearful individuals into the avoidant category, avoidants have proved to be relatively uninvested in romantic relationships (Shaver & Brennan, 1992); they have a higher breakup rate than secures (Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Shaver & Brennan, 1992) and grieve less following a breakup (Simpson, 1990), although they often feel lonely (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). They prefer to work alone and use work as an excuse for avoiding close relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). Avoidants describe their parents as rejecting and somewhat cold (Hazan & Hutt, 1993; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Rothbard & Shaver, 1994), report having poor relationships with parents while attending college (Hazan & Hutt, 1993; Rothbard & Shaver, 1994), and are more likely than secures or anxious–ambivalents to have an alcohol-abusing parent (Brennan, Shaver, & Tobey, 1991). They tend to withdraw from their romantic partners (i.e., avoid care and support) when experiencing stress (Simpson, Rholes, & Nelligan, 1992), attempt to cope with stress by ignoring or denying it (Dozier & Kobak, 1992), and later

exhibit psychosomatic symptoms (Hazan & Hutt, 1993; Mikulincer et al., 1993). Avoidants tend to feel bored and distant during interactions—another sign of low involvement or denial of interest (Tidwell, Shaver, Lin, & Reis, 1991). They do not like to share intimate knowledge about themselves and do not approve of others who self-disclose freely (Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991). Avoidants are somewhat pessimistic and, in fact, may appear cynical about long-term relationships (Carnelley & Janoff-Bulman, 1992). They claim not to be consciously afraid of death but reveal unconscious death anxiety when responding to TAT pictures (Mikulincer et al., 1990).

In studies that draw a distinction between dismissingly and fearfully avoidant adolescents and adults, dismissing avoidants have high self-esteem, are cold, competitive, and introverted (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). They are notably not anxious, depressed, or dependent (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Dismissings are defensively autonomous and prefer not to rely on others for emotional support (Bartholomew, 1993). Fearful avoidants, on the other hand, are introverted and unassertive, and tend to feel exploited (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). They lack self-confidence and are self-conscious (Bartholomew, 1993). On the whole, they feel more negative than positive about themselves (Clark, Shaver, & Calverley, 1994). Compared to the other three groups, fearfuls are anxious, depressed, and hostile (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; Carnelley, Pietromonaco, & Jaffe, 1994; Dutton, Saunders, Starzomski, & Bartholomew, 1994; Shaver & Brennan, 1992). They are self-defeating, report a large number of physical illnesses, and (more often than other groups) exhibit indicators of borderline personality (Alexander, 1993; Dutton et al., 1994). Fearful avoidance in adults has been positively correlated with reports of severe punishment and abuse during childhood (Clark et al., 1994) and, in turn, with dominating, isolating, and emotionally abusing one's spouse during adulthood (Dutton et al., 1994).

In summary, what begins with attempts to regulate attachment behavior in relation to a primary caregiver who does not provide contact comfort or soothe distress tends to become dismissing avoidance—defensive self-reliance accompanied by somewhat cool and distant representations of close relationship partners and cool, sometimes hostile, relations with peers. In contrast, what begins as conflicted and disorganized/disoriented behavior in relation to a frightening or distressed caregiver may translate into desperate, ineffective attempts to control the behavior of romantic partners in adulthood.

Secures

Infants and Children. Secure infants appear confident both in themselves and in the availability of their caregivers (Elicker et al., 1992). When reunited with a caregiver, they readily seek contact, are easily soothed, and quickly

return to exploring the environment (Ainsworth et al., 1978). Secure children are generally happy (LaFreniere & Sroufe, 1985), easy-going, cooperative (Arend, Gove, & Sroufe, 1979), empathic (Sroufe & Fleeson, 1988), and creative (Elicker et al., 1992). They seem to work well with parents and teachers, and in problem-solving situations can comfortably accept direction and guidance (Arend et al., 1979; Matas, Arend, & Sroufe, 1978; Sroufe & Fleeson, 1988). Secures tend to get along well with peers and enjoy close friendships (Elicker et al., 1992; Pancake, 1989; Sroufe et al., 1993). Family pictures drawn by secure children show individuated, complete figures that are grounded or centered on the page. The figures tend to be appropriately spaced, showing a natural proximity among family members. Secures also include other aspects of family life in their drawings, such as bicycles, pets, and trees (Fury, 1993; Kaplan & Main, 1985; Sroufe et al., 1993).

Adults.   Secure adults are highly invested in relationships and tend to have long, stable ones characterized by trust and friendship (Collins & Read, 1990; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Keelan, Dion, & Dion, 1994; Kirkpatrick & Davis, 1994; Kirkpatrick & Hazan, 1994). They describe their parents favorably (although in balanced and realistic terms) and have good relationships with them while attending college (Hazan & Hutt, 1993; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Levy, Blatt, & Shaver, 1994; Rothbard & Shaver, 1994). Secures have relatively high self-esteem and high regard for others (Collins & Read, 1990; Feeney & Noller, 1990), and feel well liked by coworkers (Hazan & Shaver, 1990). When stressed, secures cope by seeking social support (Mikulincer et al., 1993), and they support their romantic partner when the partner is under stress (Simpson et al., 1992). They seek integrative, mutually satisfactory resolutions to conflicts (Pistole, 1989), self-disclose appropriately, and like other people who self-disclose (Mikulincer & Nachshon, 1991). They often adopt parents' religious views and imagine God to be a warm, trustworthy attachment figure (Kirkpatrick & Shaver, 1990, 1992). They are relatively unafraid of death, both consciously and unconsciously (Mikulincer et al., 1990).

Overall, it seems that secure infants, children, and adults have mastered the complexities of close relationships sufficiently well to allow them to explore and play without needing to keep vigilant watch over their attachment figures and without needing to protect themselves from their attachment figure's insensitive or rejecting behaviors.

THE CONTENT AND STRUCTURE OF WORKING MODELS

Given the extensive evidence concerning differences between three or four major attachment styles, how can these differences be understood in terms of