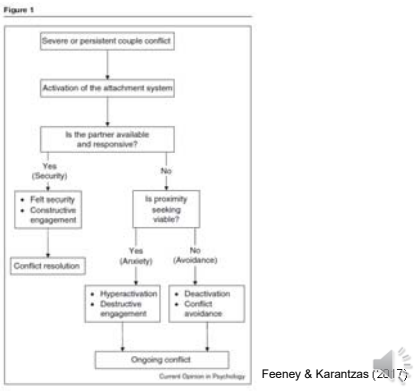
Relationship Science Online

An Attachment-Based Model of Couple Conflict

Attachment & Conflict Patterns



Feeney & Karantzas (2017)

Attachment Styles & Conflict Patterns

Table 1

Conflict-related correlates of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance.

	Attachment anxiety	Attachment avoidance
Perceptions of couple conflict	More frequent and intense conflict Negative attributions: partner behavior seen as intentional and stable Less accurate decoding of partner's positive nonverbal messages	Downplaying frequency and impact of conflict Less accurate decoding of partner's negative nonverbal messages
Responses to conflict	Physiological reactivity Hyperactivating strategies: - domination, coercion - demanding, clinging - less mutual negotiation	Physiological reactivity Deactivating strategies: - avoidance, withdrawal - less mutual negotiation - less involvement - less disclosure, expressivity
Conflict-related outcomes	More negative appraisals of partner Rumination Ongoing hurt and distress Dissatisfaction with communication Relationship distress	Defensiveness, distancing Dissatisfaction with communication Relationship distress

Feeney & Karantzas (2017)

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Attachment Issues & Conflict Patterns

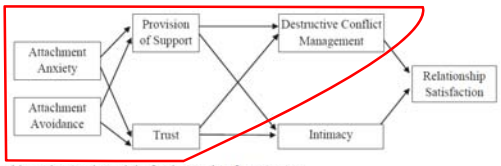


Figure 1. Hypothesized model of relationship functioning.

Karantzas, Feeney, Goncalves, & McCabe (2014)