Adult Attachment Styles

Assessment: Using the ASQ-SF

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Expanding on two Dimensions: Clinical Implications?

- From a clinical perspective, are the 2 dimensions are enough to comprehensively assess adult attachment?
- Is there more to the 2 dimensions than meets the eye?



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Expanding on two Dimensions: Clinical Implications?

Attachment anxiety: Excessive need for approval and validation, a preoccupation with relationships

- These are really two facets of attachment anxiety that (while related)…
  - *Mean different things*
  - *Issues to be addressed may be somewhat different*

Attachment avoidance: Discomfort with emotional closeness, a lack of confidence in depending on others, excessive self reliance, view relationships as secondary to achievement in other life domains

- These are really two facets of attachment avoidance that (while related)…
  - *Mean different things*
  - *Issues to be addressed may be somewhat different*

Securely attached (low anxiety & avoidance): Feelings of confidence regarding one's own worth and competencies, trusting of others (confident they can rely on people), comfortable with emotional closeness

- Confidence in oneself, others, intimate situations is a recurring theme
- In terms of the Schema Therapy Model, attachment security relates to a person's healthy adult mode



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Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ): Deep-Dive

- There is a measure that has been developed and shown to be highly valid and reliable that taps into:
  - The broad dimensions of attachment anxiety and avoidance
  - Facets of these dimensions
    - *Likely to be especially important for therapists*
- The measure is the Attachment Style Questionnaire (Feeney, Noller, & Hanrahan, 1994)
  - The measure has been validated in a number of studies (samples ranging between 470 – 3200 individuals [Feeney et al., 1994; Fossati et al., 2003; Karantzas et al., 2010])
    - *Cited approx. 1700 times*
- The original measure is 40 items long, but recent work suggests that a 29-item version is just as reliable and comprehensive (Alexander et al., 2001; Karantzas et al., 2010)
  - The measure has advantages over other measures:
    - *Designed to also assess attachment in younger populations (e.g., adolescents)*
    - *People who do not have much experience with romantic relationships*

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Attachment Style Questionnaire (ASQ): Deep-Dive

- We focus on the 29-item version – short form (i.e., the ASQ-SF)
- 13 items assess attachment anxiety and 16 items assess attachment avoidance
- Of the 13 items assessing attachment anxiety, items can be further parsed to assess:
  - Need for approval (5 items)
  - Preoccupation with relationships (5 items)
  - Confidence (reverse scored when used to assess anxiety – 3 items)
- Of the 16 items assessing attachment avoidance, items can be further parsed to assess:
  - Discomfort with closeness (9 items)
  - Relationships as secondary (4 items)
  - Confidence (reverse scored when used to assess avoidance, 3 items)

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