Therapeutic Implications & Strategies:

Working with Clients High on Attachment Anxiety

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Attachment Anxiety

Coping Modes
- Compliance surrender (freeze)
- Overcompensation (fight)
  - Self-aggrandiser
  - Over-controller

- **Wallin (2006) suggests because the therapist is emotionally available and accepting, the therapeutic relationship presents an alternative to the norm, and a reduction in the need to use hyperactivating strategies**
  - May diminish the notion that a response can only be obtained if amplifying affect, helplessness
  - Point is to render the hyperactivating strategy increasingly unnecessary
  - Early on in therapy, anxious people can appear eager for change and prepared to commit
  - But working on insecurities runs the risk of not having to rely on people as much, including therapy termination
  - What appears like a client ready for change, may quickly turn into one who presents a sense of helplessness, need for validation, and resistance to empowerment
  - Setting limits is especially important with these clients:
    - *Can protect both parties*
    - *Can guard against negative counter-transferance (making empathy difficult)*
- **Providing a high amount of support to anxiously attached people can be quite unhelpful as it feeds into their own insecurities and lack of competence.**
- **While a moderate degree of social support should be provided, the emphasis of assistance should be on strengthening the anxiously attached person's sense of self competence, reassurance of worth, and value as an individual (Berant, 2009)**
  - Having said this, encouraging anxiously attached individuals to become more independent is "slow going" (p. 186, Berant, 2009) due to their need for approval and validation

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