

Attachment History Checklist

This checklist is to assess the relationship(s) you had with individuals who took care of you and spent a significant amount of time with you in childhood. Please indicate the name of the caregiver below and their relationship to you. Starting from *as far back as you can remember*, please mark (X) the experiences that best describe the behaviors exhibited by this caregiver when you were a child and adolescent.

First name of caregiver: _____

Relationship to you: _____

Gender: _____

1	Hugs, when I wanted / needed them	32	Angry if I was upset	63	Favored sibling(s)	94	Unpredictable
2	Told me "I love you"	33	Physically absent	64	Made me feel guilty	95	Frightening / scary behavior
3	Affectionate	34	Emotionally absent	65	Smothered me	96	Rageful / angry behavior
4	Consistently there for me	35	Ignored my emotions	66	Over-protective	97	Physically abusive
5	Played with me	36	Little or no physical affection	67	Overly involved in my life	98	Sexually abusive
6	Showed interest in me	37	Cold	68	Made me do what <i>they</i> wanted or liked	99	Emotionally abusive
7	Predictable	38	Critical / negative	69	Rejected me unless I did what <i>they</i> wanted or liked	100	Addiction (smoking, drinking, drugs, gambling)
8	Sensitive to my emotions	39	Shaming	70	Was not allowed to be "me"	101	Fighting, screaming, yelling
9	Kind / loving / tender	40	Dismissive	71	Would turn conversations or situations to focus more on themselves	102	Very strict and permissive at the same time
10	Caring / Compassionate	41	Never there for me	72	Wanted me to listen to <i>their</i> problems. Treated me as <i>their</i> confidant	103	Never cared about how I was feeling and always made it about them
11	Trustworthy	42	Didn't play with me	73	Involved me in <i>their</i> issues	104	Didn't protect me
12	Sincere / genuine	43	Didn't soothe me when I was upset	74	Fake / insincere	105	Provided few rules / little or no structure
13	Knew what I needed	44	Didn't talk about my thoughts or feelings	75	Inconsistently there for me	106	Used religion to shame me
14	Encouraged and supported me	45	Expected early independence	76	Punished me if I was distressed / crying / upset	107	Vicious / cruel / heartless behaviors
15	Allowed me to be my own person	46	Expected me to be a little adult	77	Was sometimes sensitive to my emotions	108	Controlling and rejecting at the same time
16	Comforted me when I was distressed	47	Emphasis on activities and getting material things	78	Would <i>sometimes</i> soothe me if I was upset	109	Would say "I love you," then hurt me somehow
17	Laughter and positive moments	48	Was told "no" a lot with no good reason	79	Asked me for hugs when <i>they</i> wanted them	110	Never supported or encouraged me

18	Allowed me to express my thoughts / feelings without getting angry / upset	49	Allowed me to express my thoughts / feelings, then dismissed them	80	Would teach me to 'be nice' by not sharing how I truly felt or what I truly thought	111	Allowed me to express my thoughts / feelings but was angry / upset at the same time
19	Protected me / made me feel safe	50	Behaved as though I was invisible	81	Would teach me certain beliefs or phrases over and over	112	Hypocritical behaviors - "Do as I say but not as I do"
20	Repaired any hurts that occurred between us	51	Laughed in my distress	82	Sometimes laughed in my distress	113	"I'll give you something to cry about"
21	Helped me make sense of problems or explained what happened	52	Spent quality time together doing <i>activities</i> , like shopping, watching tv, sports	83	Told me what I was feeling or thinking, but it wasn't accurate or true	114	Would play mind games, manipulate me, gaslight me, make me feel like I'm crazy
22	Sincerely apologized to me for their mistakes	53	Didn't apologize for mistakes they made	84	Didn't feel important	115	Didn't seem to care if I was hurting
23	Noticed when I was upset and was sensitive to my distress	54	Rarely or never discussed things that were important or upsetting to me	85	Blamed me / wasn't allowed to make mistakes – had to be perfect	116	Spanked me / hurt me and told me they were doing it because they loved me
24	Helped me to understand why I was feeling / behaving the way I was	55	Showed interest in me when it was convenient for them	86	Would <i>seem</i> interested in me, but really weren't	117	Didn't talk about or discuss conflict / problems
25	Would speak truthfully about their thoughts / feelings	56	Spanked me, and told me I deserved it	87	Would often lie about how <i>they</i> truly felt or what <i>they</i> truly thought	118	Would encourage me to be truthful, then punish me
26	Consistently there for me when I really needed them to be	57	Showed me "tough love"	88	Storytelling – little discussion of reality	119	Angry at me for no apparent reason
27	Took responsibility for their mistakes. Talked about mistakes with me	58	Wasn't interested in understanding who I am as a person	89	Passive-aggressive	120	Put me in bad situations
28	Spent quality time together talking and had heart-felt conversations	59	Had a lot of superficial conversations	90	Whatever I was feeling, they were feeling	121	Called me names / swearing
29	Knew if something was wrong, even when I tried to pretend nothing was	60	Taught me to rely on myself and to not depend on others	91	Would punish me without discussion	122	Would punish me when I did nothing wrong
30	Helped me to understand my emotions and thoughts are separate from theirs	61	I would tell them things, then they would break my trust	92	Often spoke about how they felt	123	Blamed me for making them upset or angry
31	Understood how I felt from my point of view	62	Was often too busy for me	93	Gossiping about other people	124	Neglectful / lack of caregiving

Instructions for Clinicians

This checklist is intended for distribution and completion as a self-report by clients. It is intended to assist clinicians in identifying adaptive and adverse experiences the client *perceived* or *directly experienced* by their primary caregivers in childhood and adolescence. Each behavior listed above are common behaviors often exhibited by caregivers and reported by clients during history taking. Columns 1, 2, 3 and 4 illustrate the prototypical behaviors or experiences of the **Secure, Dismissive, Preoccupied and Cannot Classify** Attachment Classifications, respectively. Behaviors listed in column 1 or numbers 1-31 are indicative of adaptive experiences consistent with Secure Attachment; behaviors listed in column 2 or numbers 32-62 are indicative of adverse experiences consistent with Insecure Dismissive Attachment; behaviors listed in column 3 or numbers 63-93 are indicative of adverse experiences consistent with Insecure Preoccupied Attachment; and behaviors listed in column 4 or numbers 94-124 are indicative of adverse experiences consistent with Insecure Cannot Classify Attachment. Items 1-31 assess whether the client has adaptive resources. Specifically, items 20, 22, and 27 assess if their caregiver had the ability to repair ruptures. Items 21, 24, 25, and 27- 31 assess if their caregiver had the ability to engage in mentalization or mindsight. If the client endorses few or no items from 20-31, the client will need assistance with mirroring and mentalization in psychotherapy.

When clients have completed the checklist, it is imperative the clinician follow up and inquire about each behavior the client endorsed. The clinician should ask the client to provide an example or ask for specific memories of each behavior endorsed, then note how old the client was; and how many times the experience occurred. For any adverse behaviors endorsed, clinicians must inquire whether anyone was there to assist the client. Clinicians should then document adverse experiences into a trauma time line as part of their comprehensive history taking, and case conceptualization for identifying targets for EMDR reprocessing. It is important to note that few adaptive experiences endorsed should alert the clinician that the client will need resource building before EMDR reprocessing can commence. Moreover, few adaptive experiences also illustrate that the client will most likely need assistance in developing self-regulation capacities, and problem-solving skills, in addition to the clinician assisting them with mentalization.

Please note this instrument has not yet been cross validated in any research study. Any impressions from this instrument are preliminary. Presently, the Adult Attachment Interview (AAI) is the only empirically supported instrument to determine a client's attachment classification. It is important to refer to references such as those listed below to help assist you in understanding your client's Attachment Classification

Following your client's checklist completion, a comprehensive history taking of attachment may include the full Adult Attachment Interview ((AAI)-George, Kaplan, & Main, 1996), or just a few items (questions 3, 4, and 11 included below):

- 3.) *I'd like to ask you to choose five adjectives or words that reflect your relationship with your mother starting from as far back as you can remember in early childhood--as early as you can go, but say, age 5 to 12 is fine. I know this may take a bit of time, so go ahead and think for a minute...then I'd like to ask you why you chose them. I'll write each one down as you give them to me.*
- 4.) *Now I'd like to ask you to choose five adjectives or words that reflect your childhood relationship with your father, again starting from as far back as you can remember in early childhood--as early as you can go, but again say, age 5 to 12 is fine. I know this may take a bit of time, so go ahead and think again for a minute...then I'd like to ask you why you chose them. I'll write each one down as you give them to me. (Interviewer repeats with probes as above).*

11.) Why do you think your parents behaved as they did during your childhood?

The AAI may be obtained via online search free of charge at <https://scholar.google.com> by entering Adult Attachment Interview in the search bar. Scoring of the AAI requires specialized training, and therefore narrative results must be set in the context of other clinical data points when administered by non-certified clinicians. Together with this checklist and the clinician's history taking, a best fitting Attachment Classification may be understood for the client which will help to guide case formulation and treatment planning. For a comprehensive body of work regarding attachment theory and research, please refer to the *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, Research, and Clinical Applications (3rd ed.)*. When you meet with your client, please inquire about their emotional state as a result of completing this form.

Cassidy, J., & Shaver, P.R. (Eds.)-(2016). *Handbook of Attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications (3rd ed.)*. New York: Guilford Press.

George, C., Kaplan, N., & Main, M. (1996). *Adult Attachment Interview*. Unpublished manuscript, Department of Psychology, University of California, Berkeley (3rd ed.)

Leeds, A.M. (2016). *A Guide to the Standard EMDR Therapy Protocols for Clinicians, Supervisors, and Consultants (2nd ed.)*. New York: Springer Publishing Co.