



Attachment

WHAT ARE THE ATTACHMENT STYLES?

The ways in which we co-regulate and form relationships with our caregivers can be defined through four main attachment styles:

- **Secure:** The parent is attuned to the child and reliably 'shows up' for them. The child feels, safe, respected, comfortable and confident in relationships, finding it easy to give and receive emotional support.
- **Insecure-avoidant:** The parent is indifferent to the child's needs, dismissing the signals. The child feels unimportant, avoiding their own emotions and not communicating their needs.
- **Insecure-ambivalent:** The parent sometimes attunes to the child's needs and sometimes doesn't, when preoccupied. The child feels on edge with unpredictable responses and doesn't trust others will be reliably there for them.
- **Insecure-disorganised:** The parent can be very unattuned to the child's needs and at times be disorienting or frightening. The child feels unsafe, scared and helpless, often unsure of what to do.

WHY IS ATTACHMENT IMPORTANT?

It is important to consider how we attach to our caregivers as it plays a role in developing co-regulation and ultimately self-regulation. How parents formed their attachments when they were young can influence their parenting styles but does not have to govern their attachment with their own children; if a parent grew up with an insecure attachment, it doesn't mean it will be the same for their children. The ultimate goal we are always working towards is a secure attachment where children feel safe, seen, soothed and secure.

When we have a more secure attachment, children are more likely to have higher self-esteem, better emotion regulation, more empathy, more positive engagement with peers, greater overall social competence and happier relationships with parents.

CIRCLE OF SECURITY

Circle of Security is a relationship based program designed to foster secure attachment relationships with children and their caregivers.

