

What is attachment-based therapy?

A guide to how therapy can help you understand yourself, your patterns, and your relationships.

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Welcome

People come to therapy for all kinds of reasons. Maybe something feels difficult, confusing or heavy. Perhaps you've noticed familiar patterns that keep repeating.

Or maybe nothing is dramatically wrong, but something feels off and you'd like help untangling it. You might have had therapy before, or this might be your first time.

This guide offers a simple explanation of what attachment-based therapy means. Therapists work differently, so I'm sharing this from my perspective as someone who practises and teaches an attachment-based approach.

My aim is to help you understand how therapy could support you to make sense of your feelings and relationships, and move towards feeling less anxious, more confident, more resilient, or simply more like yourself again.

Sometimes therapy is the first place where you can pause and say things out loud without filtering. A place where you don't have to hold everything together. You can arrive exactly as you are – curious, unsure, overwhelmed or hopeful.

What is attachment-based therapy?

Therapy is a space to talk things through, understand what's going on underneath, and begin to feel better. It can help you feel less overwhelmed, more grounded, and more confident in yourself and your relationships. Attachment-based therapy is grounded in research and neuroscience. It's based on the idea that our early experiences shape how we cope, communicate and connect as adults. We develop patterns that once helped us feel safe, but sometimes they become limiting later in life.

In therapy, we explore what's happening for you now, and how your experiences have shaped who you are. It isn't about re-living the past or placing blame.

As your awareness grows, you may begin to meet challenges with more clarity and less panic. You can start to loosen old survival strategies that no longer serve you, and move towards connection, calm, and confidence.

It's about understanding why you feel the way you do – so you can have more space, more choice, and more capacity for the changes you want to make.

Why choose attachment-based therapy?

Attachment-based therapy may feel right for you if you're looking for support with:

- anxiety or constant overthinking
- relationships that feel one-sided or repetitive
- low self-esteem, harsh inner critic or perfectionism
- difficulty with boundaries or asking for help
- grief, loss or life transitions
- feeling overwhelmed or carrying everything alone
- feeling numb, stuck or disconnected

Some people arrive knowing what they want to work on. Others just know that something feels heavy or exhausting, and they're ready for things to feel easier. Attachment-based therapy looks beneath the surface. Rather than only focusing on what is happening, we explore why it feels the way it does. We trace the threads between your past and your present.

You don't need a clear goal to begin. Sometimes the starting point is simply "I'm tired of feeling like this".

Over time, therapy can help you:

- feel more confident and trusting in yourself
- understand triggers with more clarity
- soften long-standing patterns
- build healthier, mutual relationships

Therapy is a place to make sense of old patterns and practise new ways of relating, at a pace that feels safe. You don't have to carry everything alone.

Getting started: our first session

I'll send you an agreement before we begin. Some people like to read it in advance, others prefer to talk it through together. Either is completely fine.

In our first session, I'll answer any questions about the practicalities of working together, and then we'll ease in. You won't need to prepare anything. I'll ask a few questions about what's brought you to therapy, what life looks like for you right now, and any previous experiences of support. We might reflect on your childhood or relationships, but there's no expectation to share everything at once. We go gently.

There are no right or wrong answers. Some people talk freely, others take time to warm up. I'll follow your pace and check in with you as we go.

It's normal to feel nervous at the beginning, especially if you're not used to speaking about yourself. Over time, sessions often become a place to breathe out. A regular moment in the week that's just for you, where you don't have to hold it all together.

There are no right or wrong answers.

We'll explore what you hope to get from therapy, and go at a pace that feels safe for you.

What therapy looks like, week to week

We will always keep your goals in mind. Some weeks there might be something specific you want to explore. Other weeks, we simply start with how you're feeling that day. There's no expectation to arrive with a plan. In our sessions, we might:

- notice and explore relationship **patterns**
- pay attention to your **inner voice** and everyday emotions
- reflect on **past experiences** and what lies beneath the surface
- create **space** to say things you can't say elsewhere
- offer room to **grieve** losses or unmet needs
- build awareness of the link between **body, mind and emotion**
- develop **boundaries, self-compassion** and new ways of **coping**
- understand why certain situations feel **triggering** or **overwhelming**

Some sessions feel light and reflective. Others bring emotion or uncertainty. Both can be meaningful. Therapy isn't about constant progress – it's a process of unfolding, noticing, and slowly integrating change. Over time, small shifts build. You may find yourself pausing before reacting, speaking more kindly to yourself, or feeling less alone.

The relationship between us

In attachment-based therapy, the relationship between us is central to the work.

You're not doing this alone – we're in it together.

Therapy offers a consistent space where you can feel heard, understood and taken seriously. In attachment terms, this can become a 'secure base' and a 'safe haven' – somewhere you can be yourself without fear of judgement.

As trust grows, we begin to notice the patterns that show up between us too. These moments can be powerful. They offer a live experience of connection, rupture and repair – the foundation for change in many attachment-focused approaches.

Over time, patterns that once felt automatic can soften. You might find you respond differently to stress, ask for support more easily, or feel more grounded in who you are. Change often begins not with big breakthroughs, but with the quiet experience of being met, understood and accepted.

What might change over time

Therapy doesn't promise instant transformation. But it can create gradual, meaningful change from the inside out.

As you understand yourself more clearly, you may find that life begins to feel different in small but powerful ways. You might notice that you:

- feel less anxious or overwhelmed
- respond more calmly in relationships
- set clearer boundaries with less guilt
- speak to yourself with more compassion
- feel more confident and grounded day-to-day
- have more space between feeling and reacting
- stop carrying everything alone
- loosen long-standing patterns of people-pleasing or perfectionism

These shifts often arrive quietly at first. A pause before reacting. A moment of self-kindness. Reaching out instead of withdrawing. Over time, small changes ripple outward into daily life, relationships and the way you speak to yourself.

Therapy is not about becoming someone new. It's about becoming more fully yourself – with greater choice, resilience and self-trust. The aim is not perfection, but ease. Not to erase your history, but to understand it gently, and move forward with more freedom than before.

A quick guide to attachment terminology (optional reading)

You might have come across attachment language before, so I've included a brief guide here if you're curious. I don't usually use this terminology in sessions – the focus is always on how things feel, not on labels or theory.

Internal working models: Internal 'maps' we form early in life about ourselves and others. They influence what we expect in relationships and how we interpret people's reactions.

Attachment defences: Protective strategies we developed when we were younger to help us feel safe or stay connected. They served a purpose then, but sometimes limit us now.

Internalising a secure base: The process of building an inner sense of safety and self-worth, so you can support and soothe yourself outside therapy too.

Safe haven: A relationship where you can go when things feel difficult and feel met with care rather than criticism.

Attachment styles: Patterns of relating shaped by early experiences. They are not fixed labels, just one lens through which to understand behaviour.

You don't need to remember any of this. It's simply here for interest. What matters most is how life feels for you today, and how therapy can help you move forward with more confidence, connection and choice.

FAQ

What if I don't know where to start?

That's completely normal. Many people arrive unsure what to say. We begin with whatever feels most present – even if it's simply “I'm not sure where to begin”.

Do I have to talk about my childhood?

Only if it feels helpful. We make links gently, without forcing anything before you're ready. Your pace and comfort matter.

What if I get emotional?

Emotions are welcome here. You don't have to hold them in or apologise for them. Therapy is a space where feelings can be expressed safely.

How long does therapy take?

There's no set timeframe. Some people work short-term, others for longer. We review together and you decide what feels right for you.

Is online therapy effective?

Yes. Many people find it easier to settle and open up from home. It also removes travel time, making therapy more accessible and consistent.

What if I feel nervous about starting?

It's natural to feel unsure at first. We take things slowly, build trust, and check in regularly about how the work is feeling for you.

There's no 'right way' to attend therapy. It's simply two people making sense of things together. You don't have to do it alone.

Working together

I offer online therapy for adults and couples across the UK.

I work with people who are experiencing anxiety, relationship difficulties, loss, life transitions, and the weight of old patterns that feel hard to shift. If you'd like to explore whether therapy could help you feel calmer, more confident and more like yourself again, you're welcome to get in touch.

We can arrange a free call so you can see how it feels to talk together, ask questions, and decide on the right next step for you.

Find out more or book a call:
www.georginasturmer.co.uk

This guide is for general information only and is not a substitute for therapy.

