

Audiobook Supplement

polysecure

Attachment, Trauma and
Consensual Nonmonogamy

Jessica Fern

with a foreword by Eve Rickert and Nora Samaran

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Thorntree () Press

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GLOSSARY

Compersion

The state of happiness, joy or pleasure that comes from delighting in other people's happiness. In nonmonogamy, this term is more specifically used to refer to the positive feelings experienced when your lover is having a positive experience with one of their other lovers.

Consensual nonmonogamy (CNM)

The practice of having multiple sexual and/or romantic partners at the same time, where all people involved are aware of this relationship arrangement and consent to it. CNM can include, but is not limited to, polyamory, swinging, open marriage, open relationship, solo polyamory and relationship anarchy.

Metamour

Two people who share a partner, but are not romantically or sexually involved with each other. For example, if you have a partner who also has a spouse, you and their spouse would be metamours, or if you have a boyfriend and a girlfriend who are not involved with each other, the two of them would be metamours to each other.

Monogamy

The practice of having one sexual or romantic partner at a time.

Mononormativity

This term was coined by Pieper and Bauer¹ to refer to the societal dominant assumptions regarding the naturalness and normalcy of monogamy, where political, popular and psychological narratives typically present monogamy as the superior, most natural or morally correct way to do relationships.

Polysaturated

The point at which the thought of another relationship leaves one feeling more exhausted than excited. When a polyamorous person has as many significant and insignificant others as they think they can handle at a given time.

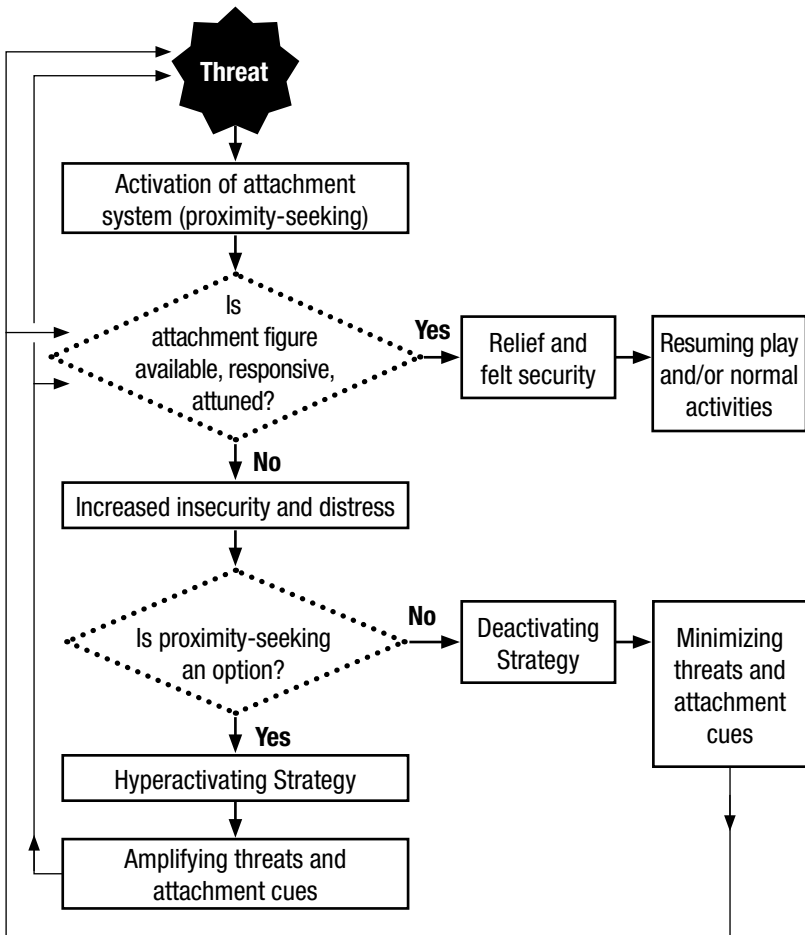


FIGURE 1.1 An adaptation of Mikulincer and Shaver's model of attachment-system activation and functioning in adulthood.⁵

Parental Interactions	Childhood Attachment Style	Adult Attachment Style
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protective • Emotionally available • Responsive • Attuned 	Secure	Secure 50–60%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unavailable • Unresponsive • Imperceptive or mis-attuned • Rejecting 	Insecure: Avoidant	Dismissive 20–30%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconsistently responsive, available or attuned • Intrusive • Acting out of their needs for attention or affection over the child’s needs 	Insecure: Anxious	Preoccupied 15–20%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frightening • Threatening • Frightened • Disorienting • Alarming 	Insecure: Disorganized	Fearful-Avoidant 20–40%

TABLE 1.1: The types of parental interactions that are related to the different attachment styles in childhood, and how the names of the insecure styles change in adulthood. The percentages of each style are also noted. These percentages do not neatly add up to 100 percent since they are more of a general range, with each study finding slightly different percentages for each style (since people with a fearful-avoidant style might initially test as being one of the other insecure styles). Gender differences have not been found between the different styles.

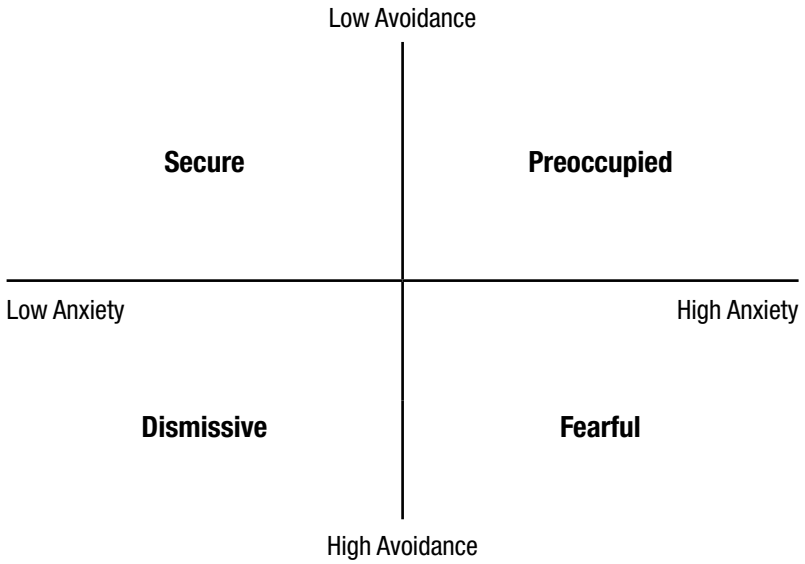


FIGURE 2.1: Attachment styles expressed using the two dimensions of attachment anxiety and attachment avoidance.

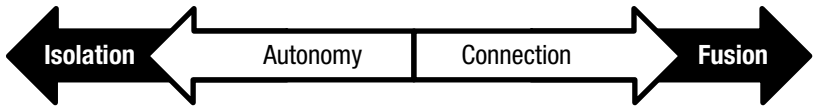


FIGURE 2.2: How the values and drives for agency and communion can go beyond their healthier manifestations and turn into either self-alienation or self-abandonment.

	Input	Output
Healthy Boundaries Being connected and protected.	We can connect with others, while also maintaining our sense of self. We can take in love from others.	We share our feelings, opinions and perspectives, while respecting and allowing others to be distinct and separate from us. We can give to others.
Porous Boundaries Being connected but not protected.	Over-receiving: We absorb and allow in what is not ours. We lose our sense of self.	Over-giving: We intrude onto others, inserting our thoughts, feelings, opinions, perspectives or sense of self into them.
Rigid Boundaries Being protected but not connected.	Under-receiving: We block out the input and love of others.	Under-giving: We restrain ourselves from expressing or giving to others.

TABLE 2.1: Healthy, porous and rigid boundaries, adapted from *Loving Bravely* by Alexandra H. Solomon.

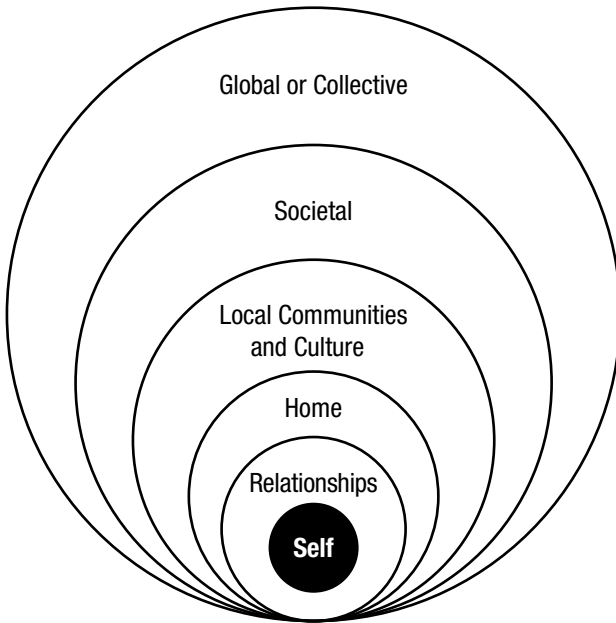


FIGURE 3.1: The nested model of attachment and trauma.

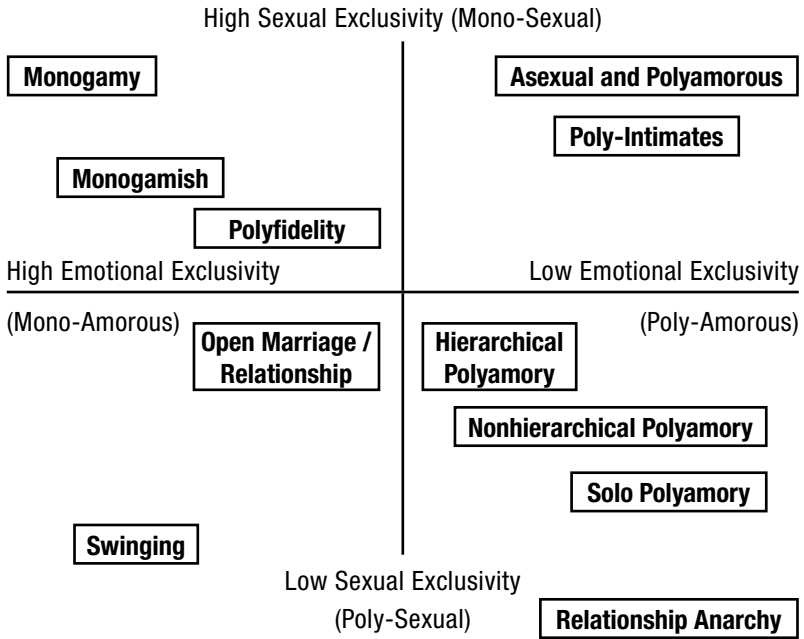


FIGURE 4.1: The different types of nonmonogamy.

Types of Regulation

Auto-Regulation

(It just happens)

- Self-stimulation or self-soothing done more automatically than consciously.
- Autoregulation is done alone, so there is no interpersonal stress.
- Can be similar to overfocusing on an object or task and can be dissociative or zoning out.

Examples: Thumb-sucking, averting eye contact, reading, doing art, watching TV, alcohol, drugs, masturbating, daydreaming, overeating, swiping or scrolling on your phone.

External Regulation

(You do it)

- Reaching for another to help regulate and soothe you.
- Interactive, but only focusing on one person attuning to the other at a time.
- Can overfocus on either the self or on the other.

Examples: Being held and soothed by a caregiver, talking with a friend about your problems, listening to a live talk or music, getting a massage.

Interactive Regulation

(We do it)

- Mutual or co-regulation with another where both people are regulating each other.
- Skin-to-skin and eye-to-eye contact.
- Both people are attuning to each other.

Examples: Dancing with a partner, sex, having a mutual dialogue, musicians playing together, cooking together.

Self-Regulation

(I do it)

- Regulating one's own state through active or intentional techniques that are self-soothing or stimulating.
- Ability to exhibit self-control through managing bodily or emotional impulses.

Examples: Calming down through breath control, mental techniques (e.g., reframing), muscle relaxation, vocal control. Some of the autoregulation behaviors can also be examples of self-regulation when they are intentional.

TABLE 9.1: Types of regulation, adapted from Stan Tatkin's "The Four Regulation (Self-Care) Strategies" from *We Do: Saying Yes to a Relationship of Depth, True Connection, and Enduring Love*.

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