

# Regulation Strategies for Different Attachment Styles

## **Why do we need different regulation strategies for different attachment styles?**

We all have different ways of relating to others, called our attachment style, and ways of getting our needs met.

If someone is distressed, relating to them according to their attachment style can help;

them **feel safe**,

**diffuse** their distress,

avoid causing them **extra** stress, and

**teach helpful** ways of managing stress.



The table below suggests regulation strategies that may be helpful for different attachment styles. It outlines;

- **Relational Behaviours** ~ to help you identify an individual's predominant attachment style
- **Co-regulation Strategies** ~ to promote safe and supportive interactions according to an individual's attachment style
- **Regulation Strategies** ~ to support individuals having either **high** or **low** energy stress responses. **High** energy responses need to discharge extra energy before their nervous system can calm down, while **low** energy responses need to slowly increase their energy without getting overwhelmed.

**Please note:** You may need to try a few strategies to find the right one for a certain person, or situation.

eg. small movements for school/office vs. whole body movements for at home/outside.

This is a guide only. Mix it up! Try strategies from different sections, to find what works best for you.

Follow these links to learn more about [Stress Responses](#) or [Attachment Styles](#).

You can also take this free [quiz](#) to get a better idea of your, or someone else's, attachment style.



Attachment Style	Relational Behaviours	Co-regulation Strategies	Regulation Strategies	
			High Energy	Low Energy
<b>Secure</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Empathetic</li> <li>• Respects boundaries</li> <li>• Awareness, &amp; appropriate expression, of emotions</li> <li>• Effectively manages emotions, conflict &amp; challenges</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Direct &amp; reciprocal, verbal &amp; non-verbal communication</b></li> <li>• <b>Help to identify, &amp; express, needs &amp; emotions</b></li> <li>• <b>Open body language</b></li> <li>• <b>Appropriate physical touch</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dance / run</li> <li>• Make an obstacle course</li> <li>• Balloon games</li> <li>• Gardening / pick flowers</li> <li>• Play a sport</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Find shapes in the clouds</li> <li>• Suck some ice</li> <li>• Hum, whistle, sing quietly</li> <li>• Rest / be still &amp; quiet</li> </ul>
<b>Anxious</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Distrust &amp; uncertainty in relationships</li> <li>• Need for reassurance</li> <li>• Difficulty respecting boundaries</li> <li>• Lower self-esteem</li> <li>• Less likely to engage in <u>cognitive reappraisal</u></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reassurance</li> <li>• Consistent support</li> <li>• Practicing secure attachment <b>(as above)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hug someone</li> <li>• Hold hands</li> <li>• Press hands together</li> <li>• Shake it off!</li> <li>• Stress Ball</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Massage</li> <li>• Be near a safe person or pet</li> <li>• Hug a heat pack</li> <li>• Meditation</li> <li>• Chat with a mate</li> </ul>
<b>Avoidant</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Independent &amp; self-reliant</li> <li>• Untrusting of others / resistant to help-seeking</li> <li>• Uncomfortable with / <u>suppresses</u> emotions</li> <li>• Lower <u>emotional awareness</u>,</li> <li>• Emotional &amp; cognitive distancing</li> <li>• Avoids responding to challenges</li> <li>• Decreased <u>responsiveness in relationships</u>.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Giving personal space</li> <li>• Less confrontational, side-by-side (rather than direct) communication, <u>especially for males</u></li> <li>• Help to identify, <b>tolerate</b> &amp; express emotions</li> <li>• Practice help-seeking behaviours</li> <li>• Practicing secure attachment <b>(as above)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Blow warm air on your hands</li> <li>• Sing!</li> <li>• Do something fun</li> <li>• Doodling / colouring</li> <li>• Make a tasty snack</li> <li>• Do a puzzle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shrug your shoulders</li> <li>• Smell something nice</li> <li>• Find 1 thing to be thankful for</li> <li>• Imagine doing something fun</li> <li>• Listen to music / sounds you like</li> </ul>
<b>Disorganised</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Unpredictable behaviour - simultaneously desiring &amp; fearing intimacy</li> <li>• Over-analyses others' actions</li> <li>• Pulling away for self-protection</li> <li>• Considers dependency on others as unsafe</li> <li>• Feels undeserving of love or care</li> <li>• 'Switching off' emotions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Help to define &amp; engage in 'safe' personal space, &amp; interpersonal interactions</li> <li>• Practicing boundary-setting to increase safety</li> <li>• Autonomous choice and control</li> <li>• Help to <u>communicate feelings &amp; needs</u></li> <li>• Practicing secure attachment <b>(above)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Squeeze or hug your fave toy / pet / pillow / blanket</li> <li>• Get into nature</li> <li>• Clench &amp; relax your fists</li> <li>• Roar like a lion!</li> <li>• Superhero pose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sigh, yawn, cough</li> <li>• Have a warm bath / shower</li> <li>• Imagine your Safe Place</li> <li>• Blow bubbles</li> <li>• Soak up the sunshine</li> </ul>