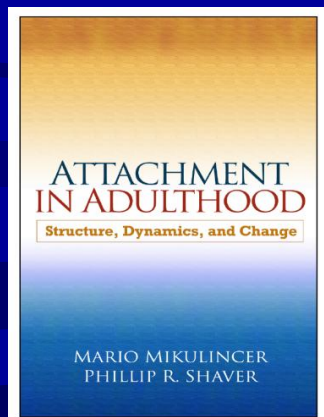


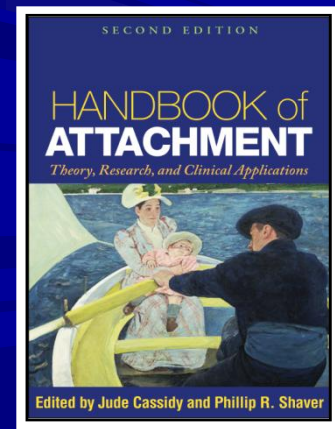
# Secure and Insecure Love: An Attachment Perspective

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Prepared for a Glendon  
Association Webinar

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THE GLENDON  
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& PSYCHALIVE

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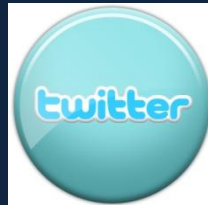
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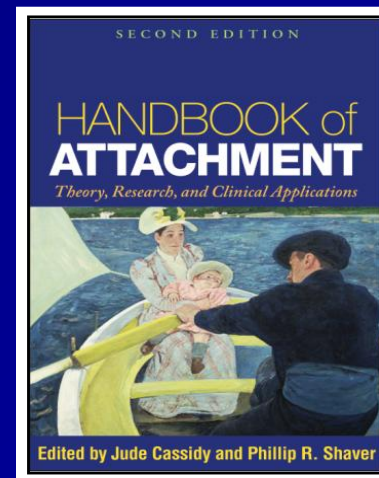
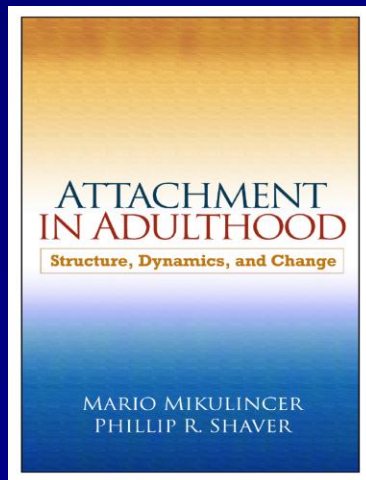


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# Agenda

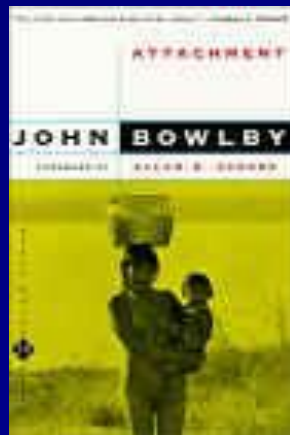
- Convey some of what we (especially my Israeli collaborator, Mario Mikulincer, and I) have learned while pursuing an adult version of Bowlby and Ainsworth's attachment theory
- Briefly explain attachment theory and its extension by social/personality psychologists to the domain of adolescent and adult relationships
- Provide examples of research on working models in dreams and other narratives, attachment-system activation, emotion regulation in behavior and the brain, 'caregiving' in couple relationships, and security priming as 'therapy'





# Attachment theory

Created by John Bowlby, a British psychoanalyst, based partly on primate ethology, to explain why “maternal deprivation” leads to anxiety, anger, delinquency, and depression



From 1969-1988, he published 5 books about the theory, including one on psychotherapy



# Ainsworth's huge contribution

First to test Bowlby's theory, with home observations and laboratory assessments; her major book was published in 1978



Invented the laboratory Strange Situation to assess the quality of infant-mother attachment. Classifications based on this measure have been shown, in 30-year longitudinal studies, to predict — in conjunction with later experiences — adolescent and adult mental health and relationship quality

# Harlow's monkeys and Ainsworth's "Strange Situation"



Secure attachment facilitates exploration; insecure attachment interferes with it



# Attachment theory distilled

- Humans, especially young children, rely on attachment figures for protection, support, and emotion regulation
- The attachment behavioral system is an evolved, innate regulator of proximity (hence of safety and safe exploration)
- When threats abate, behavioral systems other than attachment (e.g., exploration, caregiving) can be activated, allowing a person to become more competent/autonomous
- Attachment orientations, or “styles,” develop in relationships, resulting in systematic individual differences in attachment orientation: **secure, anxious, avoidant, . . .**
- The theory applies from “the cradle to the grave” (Bowlby)

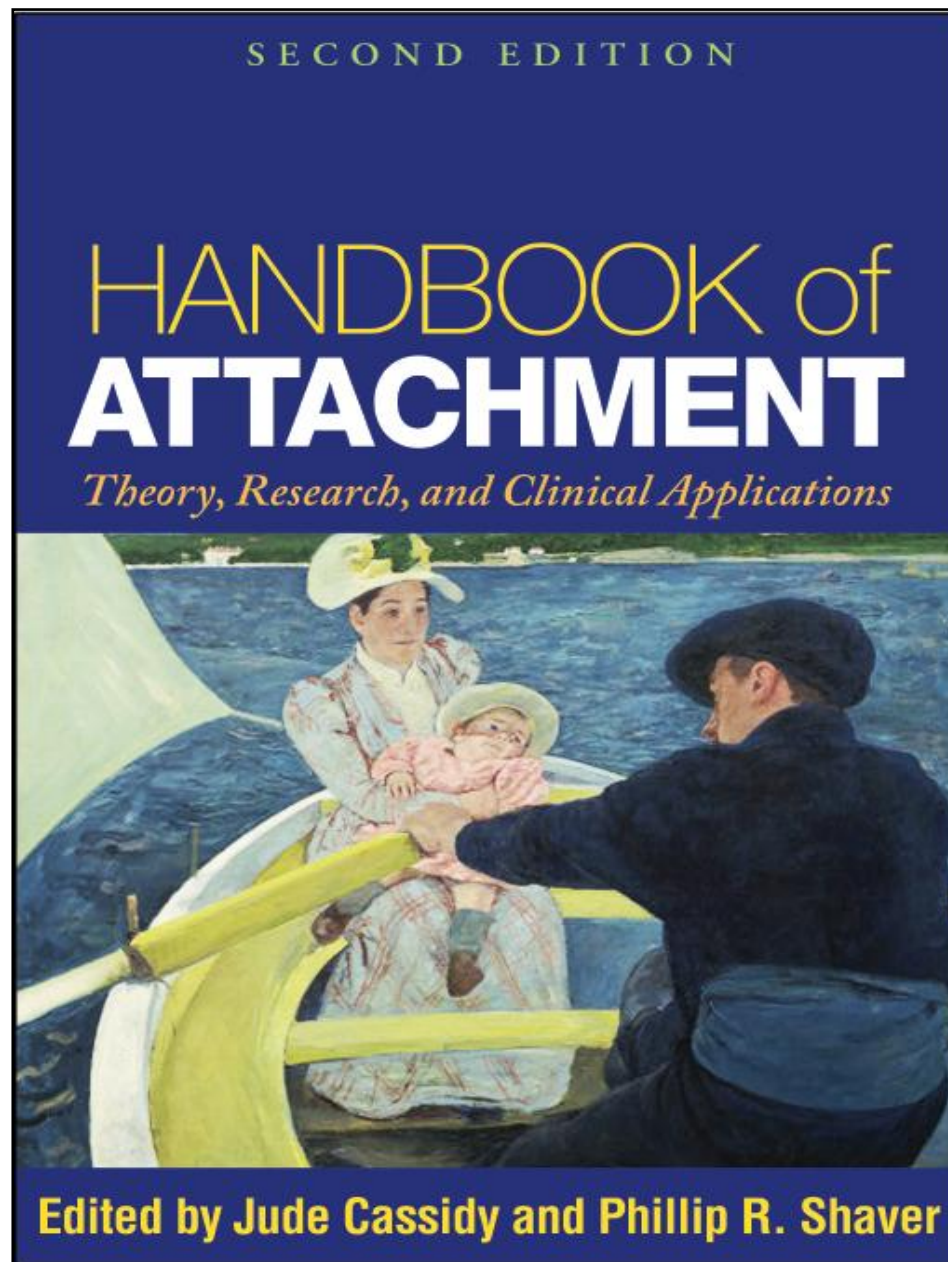
# Poll #1

Are you familiar with attachment theory research?

- No
- Somewhat
- Yes, very familiar

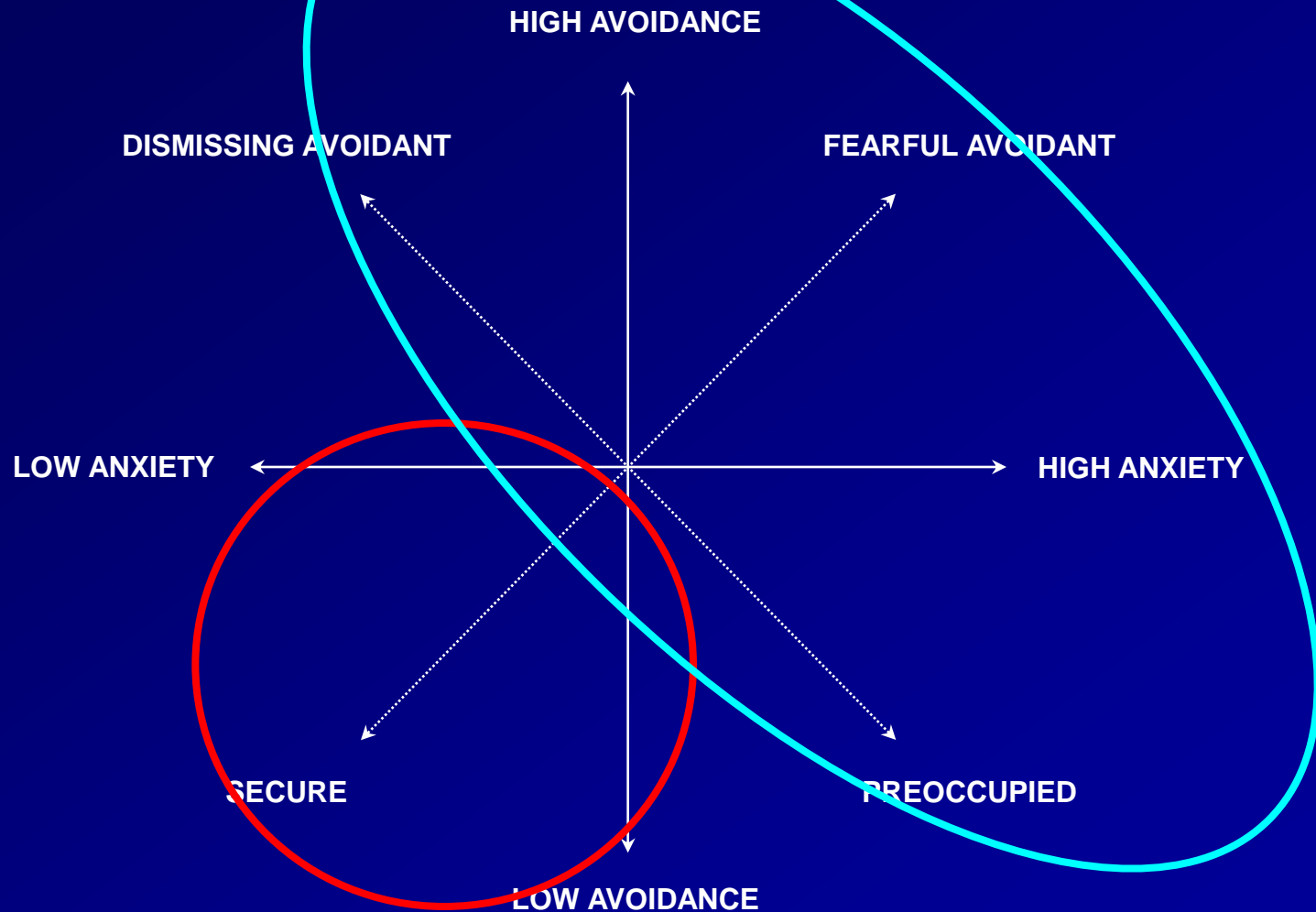


A 1000-page  
summary of basic  
and applied  
attachment  
theory and  
research,  
currently being  
revised for 2015





# Adult attachment 'styles' in social/personality psychology: Regions in a two-dimensional space



Adapted from Ainsworth et al. (1978), Bartholomew  
& Horowitz (1991), Fraley & Shaver (2000)

# Self-report attachment measure

(Brennan, Clark, & Shaver, 1998)

## Avoidance (18 items, $\alpha > .90$ )

1. I prefer not to show a partner how I feel deep down.
2. I try to avoid getting too close to my partner.
3. I feel comfortable depending on relationship partners. (reverse-scored)
4. I turn to a relationship partner for many things, including comfort and reassurance. (reverse-scored)

## Anxiety (18 items, $\alpha > .90$ )

1. I don't often worry about being rejected or abandoned. (reverse-scored)
2. I need a lot of reassurance that I am loved by a partner.
3. I get frustrated if a relationship partner is not available when needed.
4. I resent it when a partner spends time away from me.

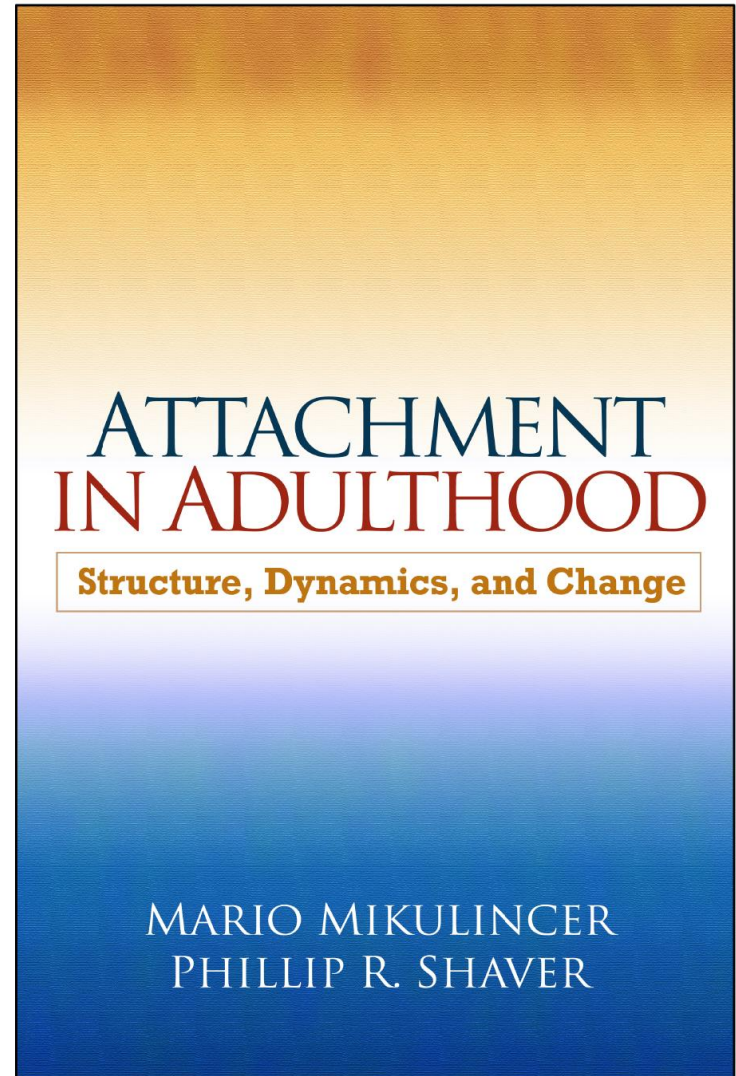
# Maternal caregiving at 18 months predicts self-reported anxiety and avoidance at age 22

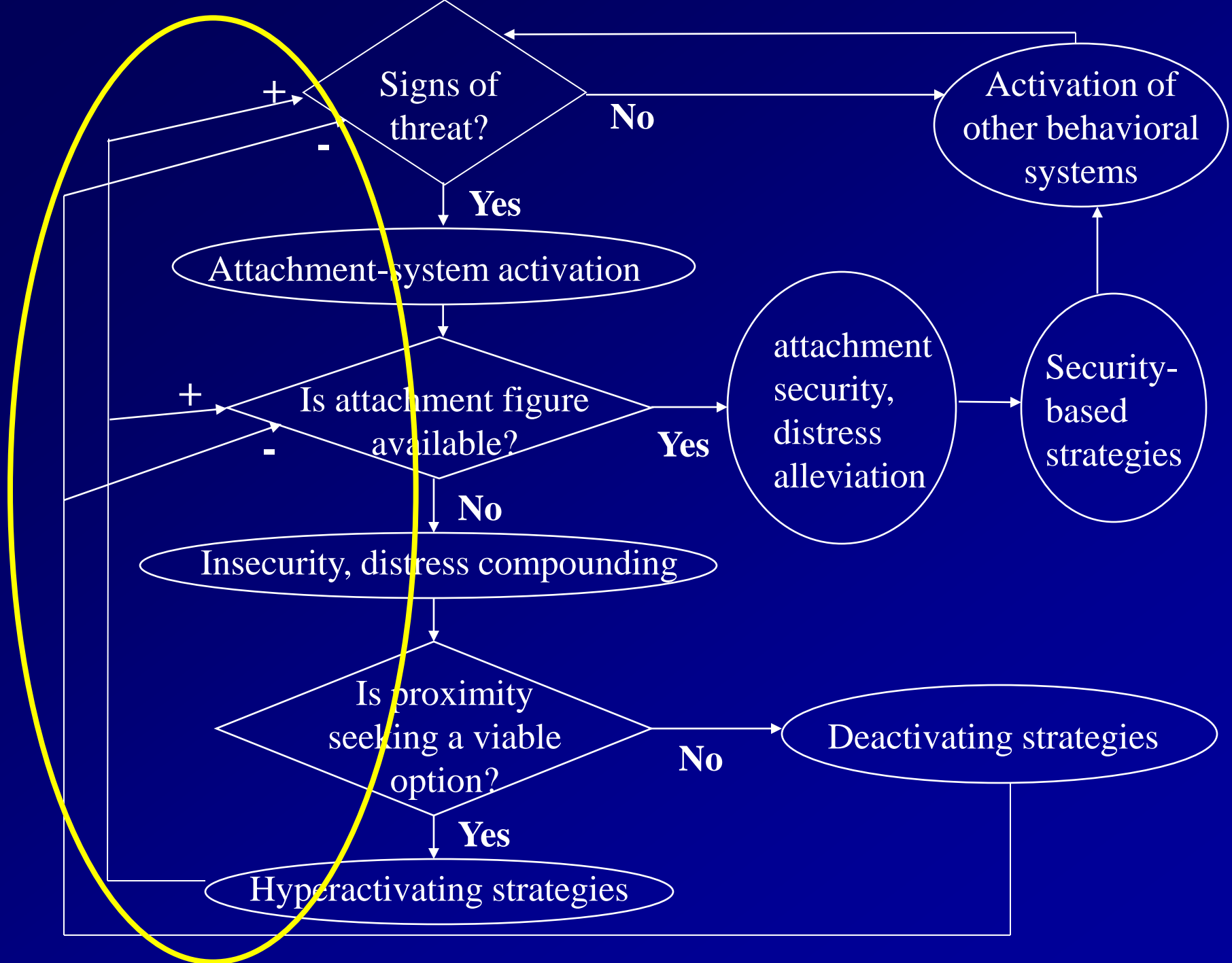
(Zayas, Mischel, Shoda, & Aber, *SPPS*, 2010)

- When each of 36 children were 18 months old, they were observed in a preschool playroom at Stanford University with their mother, and her behavior was reliably coded on three observational scales: *sensitive*, *controlling*, and *unresponsive*.
- At 22 years of age, the now-grownup children completed a short version of the ECR as a measure of attachment anxiety and avoidance in romantic and self-mother relationships.
- Attachment anxiety at age 22 correlated **-.75** with maternal sensitivity measured 20 years earlier, and **.70** with maternal controlling. Avoidance at age 22 correlated **-.73** with maternal sensitivity and **.52** with maternal controlling.
- These correlations were much higher than similar correlations with self-reported attachment to mother at age 22.

# Since Hazan & Shaver (*JPSP*, 1987) . . .

- Hundreds of studies using self-report attachment measures have been conducted
- The findings can be summarized in a three-part model (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007, and elsewhere)
- This book is also being revised for 2015







# “Internal working models”

## Attachment insecurities and dreams

(Mikulincer, Shaver, & Avihou-Kanza, *A&HD*, 2011)

- Participants were asked to recall dreams each morning for 30 days and write a brief account of each one, yielding 14 dreams apiece, on average
- Two ‘blind’ independent judges used Luborsky’s Core Conflictual Relationship Themes coding system to characterize how dreamers represented self and others.
- Dreams reported by individuals high in attachment anxiety included more representations of self as anxious, weak, and helpless, and more portrayals of others as unloving.
- Avoidant attachment was associated with representations of self as less responsive (more distant, uncooperative, unexpressive, and angry) toward cold or hostile others.

# Sample secure dream

Reported by a young woman who scored low on both the anxiety and avoidance scales of the ECR, and whom regard as secure:

*I was sitting in my elementary school library reading a book, which seemed very natural even though I haven't been there for years. I spoke with friends and teachers, and the place was just as it used to be. The principal came in and started yelling at us, saying we were barbaric children. At first I thought we might have been noisy and deserved this rebuke, but I told him that, despite whatever bad behavior we engaged in, we didn't deserve such treatment and he had overlooked my many good qualities. I felt that despite being a little girl, I had enough self-esteem to tell him he was wrong. So I got up and told him I was not a barbarian and I came to the library to read books that I like. He then apologized. I felt proud of myself. At that instant, my mom appeared, hugged me, and said I was okay and she was also proud of me. (I don't know how my mom got there.) She then took me to some fun place; I don't know where. I just remember that we laughed a lot and bought some silly things - maybe in a mall.*

# Sample anxious dream

Reported by a young man who scored high on attachment anxiety:

*I'm arguing with friends about who teaches a particular course. I start running toward the city and see a bank robbery in progress. Suddenly I realize that I am the bank robber! I'm debating with myself about whether I should break into the bank or not, and I decide that I should. I get into the bank and yell, "Give me the money!" The teller stoops down below the counter, gets the money, and hands it to me, and I run away. While exiting the bank, I shoot three times in the air and then run down the street with the weapon wrapped in a quilt. While running, I suddenly think about what I've done and what a bad person I am: "Maybe I hit someone while shooting in the air." I'm debating with myself about where to run and suddenly notice that the money has disappeared. I think, "Why can't I do something right for once?" I want to cry. Suddenly the cops arrive. I say, "Take me. Maybe it's for the best that I go to jail. No one cares about me anyhow." I feel really ashamed of what I did. Suddenly my dad appears and yells at me: "How dare you do such a foolish thing! You deserve to go to jail. You're worthless." It hurts, but I know that what he says is true.*

# Sample avoidant dream

Reported by a young woman who scored high on avoidant attachment:

*My parents wanted me to go with them to my grandma's house, and a discussion ensued about whether it was worth going and if she would or wouldn't have food for us. I said I didn't want to go, and I went into the backyard alone. There was a "cat party" going on, and many disgusting, filthy black cats were sitting in a circle, facing out, with their backs toward each other. Every cat screamed, one at a time, and if the cat opposite to that one correctly identified the screamer, that cat won. I sat in the corner with my computer and was afraid to move. I thought, "Why didn't they run away when they saw me?" I realized that because there were so many of them, they knew they had power over me and could easily wipe me out. Suddenly, my computer fell and landed close to the cats. I had to save it, so I got closer to them, but when I did, they jumped on the computer and threatened me with aggressive expressions and horrible screams. They started to sing, "If you don't go home, you'll have to tell us who is a nice cat." I had to answer with a song saying that all of them were nice. They then let me have my computer. I wanted to destroy them one by one, but instead I went inside with the computer . . . and woke up in terror.*



# The “secure-base script” (Mikulincer, Shaver, et al., *JPSP*, 2009)

- Harriet Waters showed that security in childhood is related to understanding the secure-base script: “If I’m threatened or distressed, I can turn to an attachment figure for help. I will be comforted and can then return safely to other matters.”
- We conducted several studies in which adults were asked to describe what was happening in a series of drawings that formed an outline of the secure-base script.
- Richness of people’s responses was predicted by ECR anxiety and avoidance:  $\beta = -.35$  for anxiety and  $-.45$  for avoidance (and this was not due to narrative length or verbal ability).
- But the two kinds of insecurity were associated with different gaps in the script. Anxious people’s stories tended to lack the final step (relief), avoidant people’s stories lacked the first step (seeking support).



# Further studies of insecure scripts

(Ein-Dor, Mikulincer, & Shaver, *JPSP*, 2011)

In five studies we identified two kinds of scripts that insecure people activate in response to threats:

- A **sentinel script**, characteristic of anxious individuals, who focus intently on possible threats, detect them quickly, and immediately communicate about them to others (which can sometimes be useful to others, but is often viewed as an annoyance)
- A **rapid fight-flight script**, characteristic of avoidant individuals, who rapidly find a way to deal with a threat by attacking the problem or fleeing (which can also benefit others, even though the response is usually not altruistic in intent)

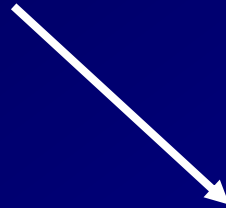
The social benefits of these scripts is discussed in a theoretical paper (Ein-Dor, Mikulincer, Doron, & Shaver, *PoPS*, 2010).

# A second issue: Unconscious activation of the attachment system

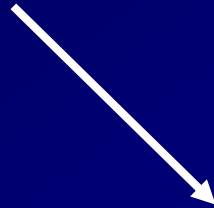
(Mikulincer et al., *JPSP*, 2000)

- Subliminal (22 millisecond) priming with a threat word (e.g., failure, illness, death) heightens mental accessibility of attachment-related concepts -- e.g., faster responses to attachment-related words (e.g., love, hug, secure, close) in a lexical decision task
- Secure people activate positive but not negative attachment concepts; anxious people activate both positive and negative concepts; avoidant people activate both, but activate the negative ones **only when a “cognitive load” is added**
- This suggests that anxiety and avoidance are (as theorized) rooted in earlier painful experiences with attachment figures, and that avoidance requires effortful suppression

(Sample fixation point,  
shows for 500 milliseconds)

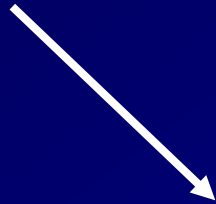


(subliminal, invisible prime word,  
shown for 22 ms and then masked)



**death**

(visible target word)



**love**

(stays visible until the person presses a key indicating it is either a word or not a word: e.g., **evlo**)



# More about attachment-system activation

(Mikulincer, Gillath, & Shaver, *JPSP*, 2002)

- Subliminal priming with a threat word (e.g., failure, separation) increases accessibility of attachment figures' names but not the names of other familiar people
- Attachment anxiety correlates with faster access to attachment figures' names regardless of threat (perhaps an example of anxious vigilance)
- Avoidant attachment correlates with slower access to attachment figures' names (suppression) when the threat word is “separation,” but not “failure” (so suppression may be somewhat attachment-specific)
- We have obtained similar results among religious people for “God” and God-related concepts (e.g., a Torah scroll), suggesting that God can serve as an attachment figure (Granqvist, Mikulincer, & Shaver, *PSPR*, 2010)

# An important attachment-formation study (Beckes et al., 2010, *Psych. Science*), using some of our methods

- Presented subliminal pictures of a striking snake, a mutilated body, or a neutral, control stimulus



- Followed by a supraliminal picture of a smiling woman's face or a control face

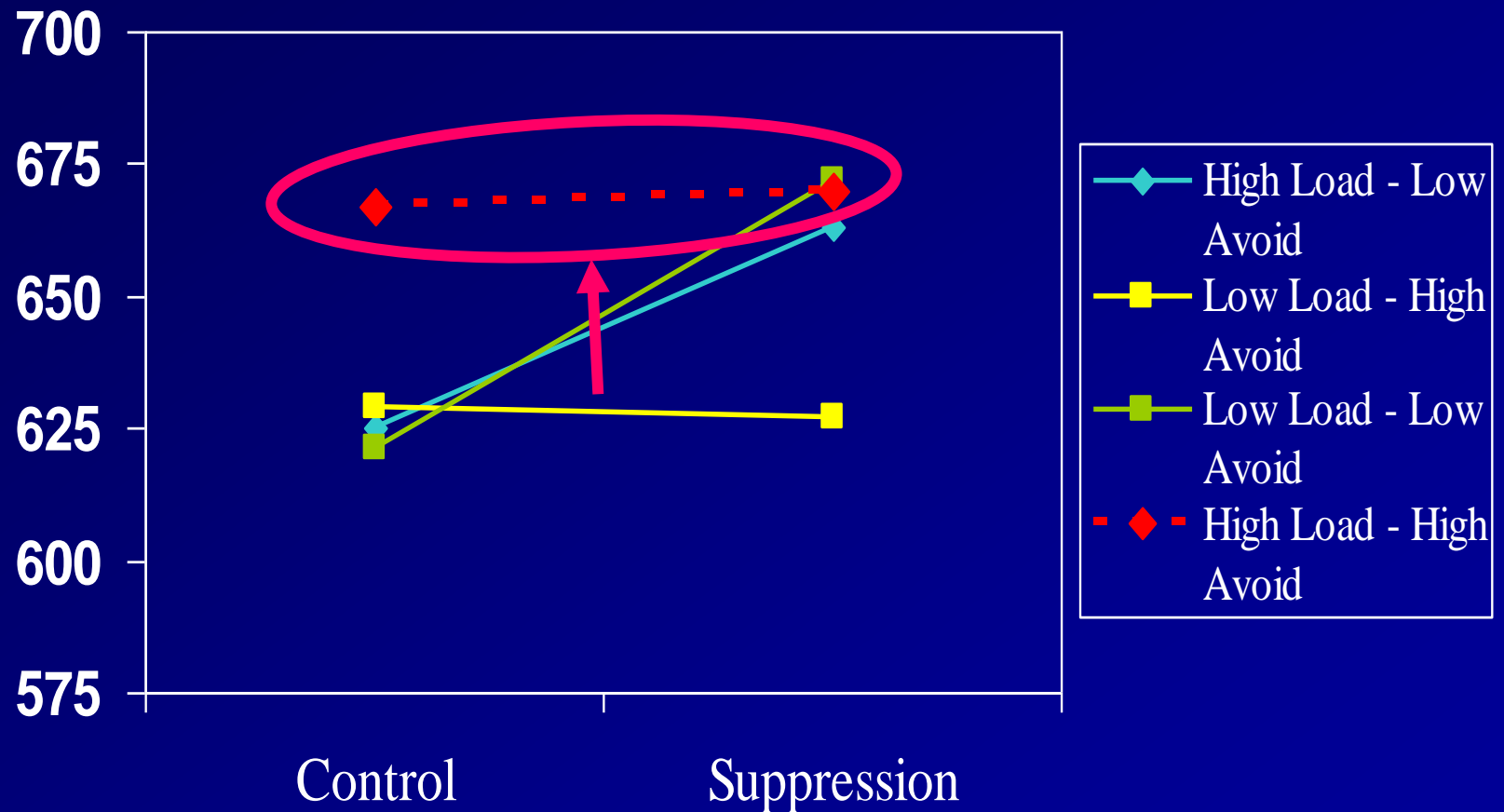


- Measured reaction times in a lexical decision task to security-related words (safe, kind, protect, secure, trust, warm) and insecurity-related words (alone, anxiety, threat, distress, rejection, despair, needy) in the presence of the pictured face.
- An interaction: The secure words were perceived faster and the insecure words slower in the presence of the smiling face if it had been paired unconsciously with the frightening stimuli.

# A third issue: Avoidant attachment and emotion regulation

- Avoidant individuals inhibit or block emotional states that are incongruent with the goal of keeping their attachment system deactivated
- Avoidant inhibition and suppression require mental effort, and hence can be overridden by cognitive load and stress
- Two examples . . .

# Color-naming times (in msec) for separation words during a Stroop task



Avoidant people showed no “rebound” of separation-related thoughts when not under a high cognitive load, but they couldn’t avoid the rebound under a high load (Mikulincer, Dolev, & Shaver, *JPSP*, 2004)

# Broader summary of findings regarding suppression of thoughts of loss/rejection

- Under low load conditions, avoidant people are able to suppress thoughts of loss and defensively activate positive self-representations
- Under high load, they can't suppress thoughts of loss or negative self-representations, suggesting (as in other studies) that their defensive strategies require constant effort
- Not emphasized here but true: Anxious people in our studies seem unable to suppress thoughts of loss or negative self-traits



## A real-world example: Avoidant mothers with a CHD child (Berant, Mikulincer, & Shaver, 2008)

- Participants: 63 mothers of children diagnosed with CHD during their first months of life underwent 3 waves of data collection (at diagnosis, a year later, and 7 years later)
- Measures: Physician's rating of CHD severity at T1; ECR-like attachment scales given to the mother at T1, a maternal mental health scale given at T's 1-3; a marital quality scale given at T's 1-3; a child-appropriate self-concept measure and a projective story measure given to the child at T3 (at age 7 or 8)

## A few results

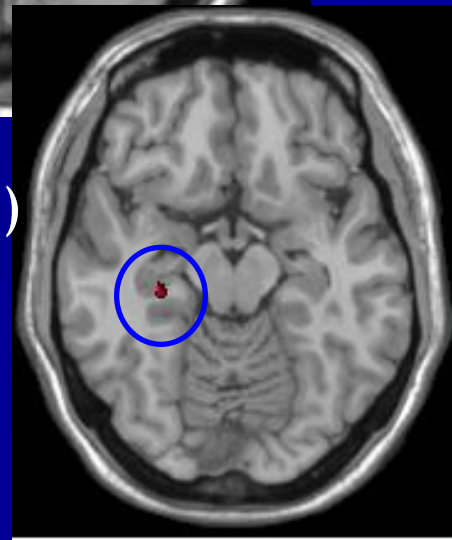
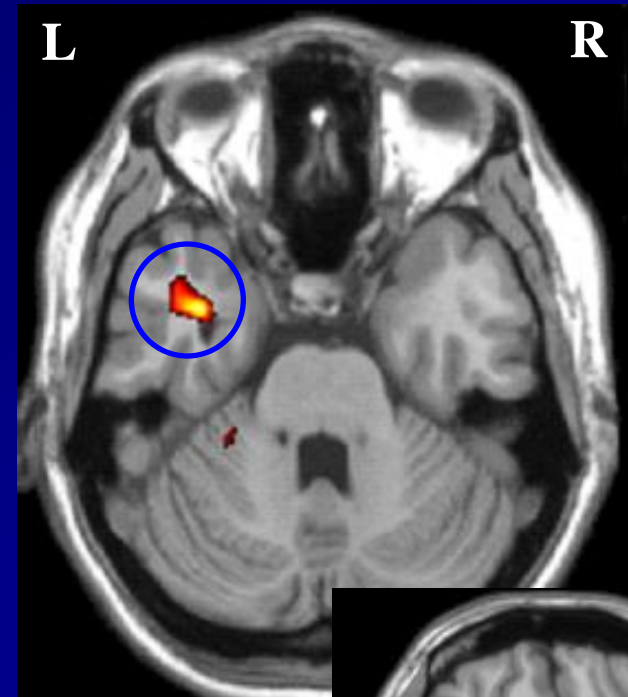
- Mother's avoidance at T1 and the interaction of her avoidance with the child's CHD severity predicted a decline over time in her marital quality and mental health. Non-avoidant mothers showed no such deterioration, regardless of child's CHD severity.
- Mother's avoidance and anxiety at T1 predicted child's poorer self-concept at age 7-8. Also, the child's "dominant affect" (in the projective measure) was more negative at age 7-8 if the mother had been more avoidant 7 years earlier.
- In general, the stress of having a child with CHD was too much for more avoidant mothers to handle, perhaps because avoidant coping collapsed under a "coping load."

# Attachment anxiety and intensification of emotion

- As mentioned, anxious individuals seem unable (or unwilling?) to suppress negative emotions
- To learn more about their intense emotionality, we used neuroimaging (fMRI)

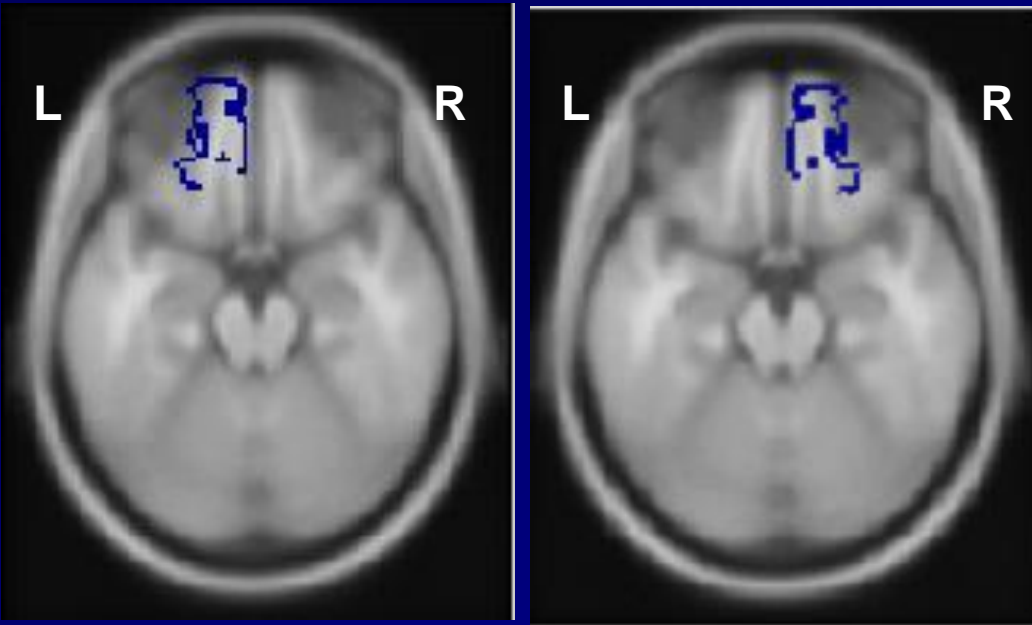
# Regions in which attachment anxiety correlates .74\*\*/.64\*\* with activation during thoughts of loss (Gillath et al., *NeuroImage*, 2005)

- Left anterior temporal pole
  - associated with recall of sad thoughts (Lévesque et al., 2003)
  - activation during negative thoughts (Think Negative > Think Neutral) was correlated with attachment anxiety ( $r = .74^{**}$ )
- Left hippocampus
  - associated with memory retrieval (Eichenbaum, 2004)
  - activation during negative thoughts was correlated with attachment anxiety ( $r = .64^{**}$ )
  - cf. behavioral studies by Mikulincer & Orbach (1995)

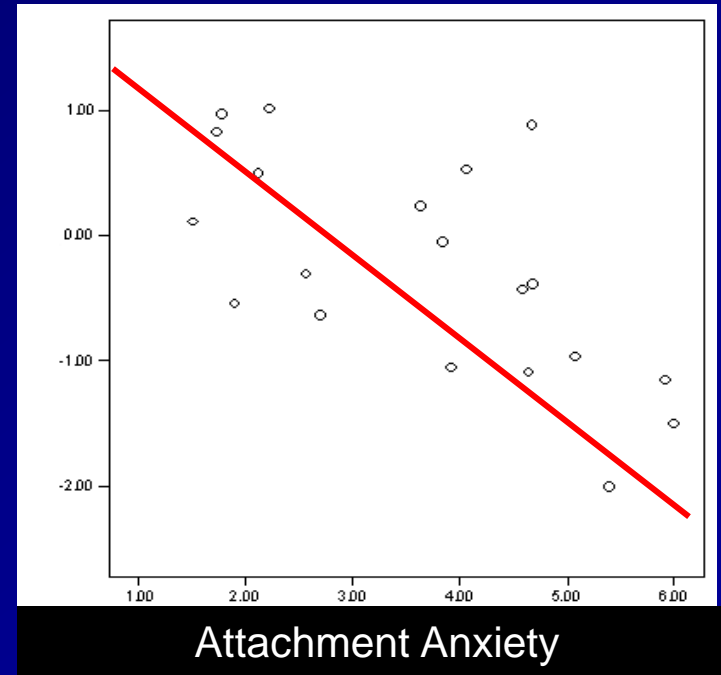


# Suppressing negative thoughts: Negative correlation with attachment anxiety

Activation in orbitofrontal cortex (OFC; BA 11)



Don't Think > Think (contrast values)



- Associated with emotional control (e.g., Shimamura & Knight, 2002)
- Thus, anxious people have, or exert, less emotional control than non-anxious people when explicitly asked to exert control

# Anxiety and avoidance are related to brain responses to social exclusion

(DeWall, Masten, Powell, Combs, Schurtz, & Eisenberger, Scan, 2012)

- 22 college students' brains were scanned (fMRI) while during Cyberball, a manipulation of social exclusion.
- Analyses of the dorsal anterior cingulate cortex (dACC) and bilateral anterior insula were conducted.
- Anxious attachment correlated positively with activity in the dACC ( $\beta = .57$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and bilateral anterior insula ( $\beta = .71$ ,  $p < 0.005$ ), a stronger reaction to exclusion.
- Avoidant attachment correlated negatively with activity in the dACC ( $\beta = -.46$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and bilateral anterior insula ( $\beta = -.59$ ,  $p < .05$ ), a reduced reaction to exclusion.

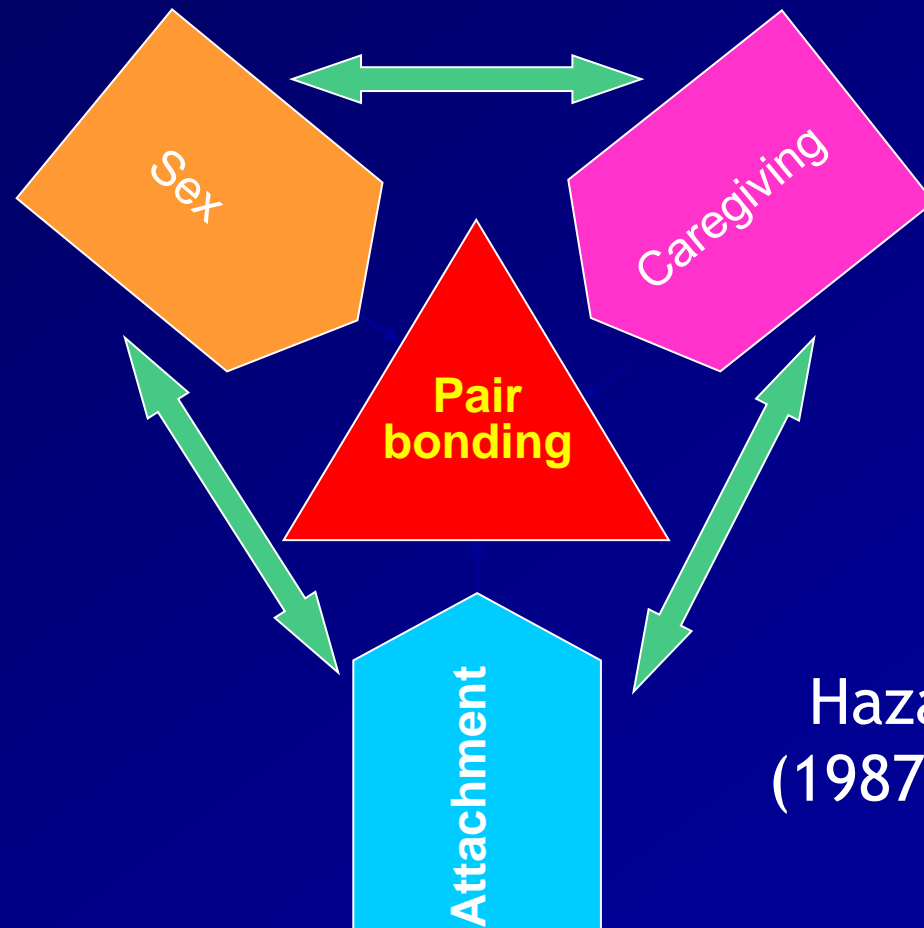


## Poll #2

Are you familiar with attachment theory applied to adult romantic relationships?

- No
- Somewhat
- Yes, very familiar

**COUPLE RELATIONSHIPS:** Romantic love (couple pair-bonding) can be conceptualized as the integration of 3 behavioral systems discussed by Bowlby: attachment, caregiving, and sex



Hazan and Shaver  
(1987); Shaver et al.  
(1988)

# Attachment and sex

- Many studies have shown that attachment anxiety and avoidance are related to sexual motives, fantasies, and behavior (e.g., **Schachner & Shaver, 2004**)
- Anxious people tend to use sex, sometimes without due caution, to get a partner's attention, feel more loved, and bind their partner into a relationship
- Avoidant people tend to begin sex later but then become more promiscuous than anxious and secure people in adulthood; they tend to use sex to boost self-esteem and reputation among peers, but not to feel psychologically intimate with their partner (more "one-night stands")
- Both kinds of insecure people have shorter relationships than secure people, on average

# A daily diary study of sexual fantasies

(Birnbaum, Mikulincer, & Gillath, *PSPB*, 2011)

- Young Israeli couples kept daily diaries concerning sexual fantasies and described aspects of their relationship functioning for 21 days.
- Avoidant attachment was related to sexual fantasies that emphasized non-intimacy, control of sexual interactions, and negative views of fantasy sexual partners.
- Anxious attachment was related to sexual fantasies that emphasized desires for closeness, perception of the self as weak and dependent, and perception of fantasy sexual partners as cruel and abusive.

# Attachment and sexuality in couples seeking marital therapy

(Brassard, Péloquin, Dupuy, Wright, & Shaver, 2012)

- A large clinical sample of 242 French-Canadian *couples seeking marital therapy* completed the ECR and the Index of Sexual Satisfaction.
- Results showed that both attachment anxiety and avoidance predicted individuals' own sexual dissatisfaction (*actor effects*).
- There were also 2 *partner effects*: (a) anxiety in men predicted female partners' sexual dissatisfaction and (b) avoidance in women predicted male partners' sexual dissatisfaction.



# Attachment and caregiving

- Many studies have shown that attachment anxiety and avoidance are related to deficits in caring for relationship partners and engaging in altruistic behavior more generally (e.g., Kuncle & Shaver, 1994; Gillath et al., 2005).
- Anxious people tend to be self-focused when engaged in supposedly caring/altruistic actions, leading to intrusiveness, poor assessment of others' actual needs, and personal distress.
- Avoidant people tend to be less interested in helping others and to derogate needy others. They are relatively deficient in the domain of compassion and love.

# “Security priming” can (at least temporarily) reduce insecure tendencies

We have used various priming techniques to activate mental representations of attachment security:

- Subliminal presentation of pictures or words suggesting attachment security
- Subliminal presentation of the names of people who were nominated as security providers
- Guided imagery suggesting the availability and supportiveness of an attachment figure
- Visualization of the faces of security-enhancing attachment figures

# Overcoming 'mental depletion' when offering support to a partner

(studied in Israel and in California: Mikulincer, Shaver, Sahdra, & Bar-On, *A&HD*, 2012)

- Both members of college-student couples (involved for at least 6 months) were invited to complete questionnaire measures on a website and participate in a lab experiment.
- Each partner independently entered a website from home or work and completed measures, including the Experiences in Close Relationship Scales (attachment anxiety and avoidance)
- Each partner provided names of people (other than their partner) who were their security providers (using the WHOTO Scale), as well as the names of unfamiliar people (from a list we provided)

# Methods

- Couples came to the lab and were informed that they would be videotaped during an interaction in which one of them (whom we view as “the care-seeker”) disclosed a personal problem to the other (“the caregiver”).
- After the instructions, one experimenter took the “caregiver” to another room where security priming and cognitive depletion manipulations were applied.
- The second experimenter remained with the “care-seeker” and asked him or her to think and write about any bothersome personal problem that he or she could discuss (except one that involved conflict with the partner).

## Methods (continued)

- Caregivers performed a Stroop color-naming task during which they were randomly assigned to one of two priming conditions:
  - *Security Priming*: Subliminal exposure (for 20 milliseconds on each trial) to names of security providers nominated in the WHOTO questionnaire (not including the romantic partner).
  - *Neutral Priming*: Subliminal exposure to names of unfamiliar persons.



## Methods (continued)

- Half of the caregivers in each priming condition were asked to state aloud the color of a word as it appeared on the computer screen (e.g., the word GREEN printed in blue). This procedure is known to create cognitive depletion (mental fatigue).
- The other half of the caregivers were asked to state aloud the color of a word which also named the color, which did not require overriding automatic responses and hence did not result in depletion.

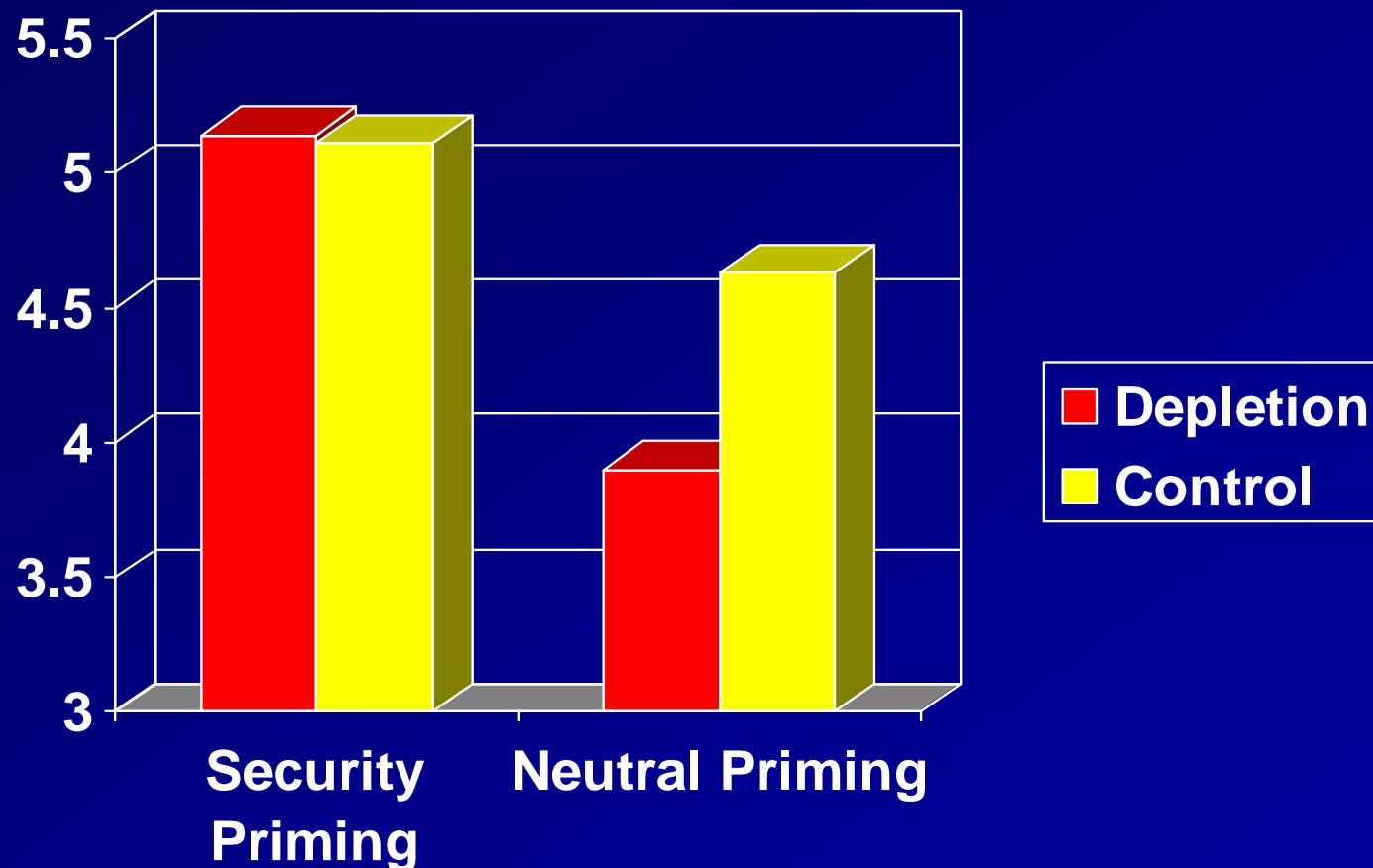
## Methods (continued)

- Following these manipulations, couple members were reunited and videotaped while they talked (for 10 minutes) about the problem the care-seeker wished to discuss.
- Two independent judges, blind to questionnaire measures and experimental conditions provided the following ratings:
  - Caregivers' responsiveness (listening, understanding, supporting, soothing)
  - Caregivers' dismissing/withdrawal behavior
  - Caregivers' criticism

# Results

- There were significant main effects of priming and cognitive depletion: Security priming increased responsiveness, and cognitive depletion reduced it.
- There was also, as predicted, a significant priming-by-depletion interaction, such that security priming erased the negative effects of cognitive depletion.
- The main effects and the priming-by-depletion interaction were significant in both the American and Israeli samples.
- The following slide shows the interaction, averaged across the two countries.

**Means of caregiver's responsiveness in the total sample,  
broken down by priming and depletion conditions  
(the results were virtually identical in Israel and the US)**



$F(1, 205) = 6.09, p < .01$

# Findings for Dispositional Measures

- The higher a caregiver's anxious or avoidant attachment, the lower his or her responsiveness to a partner's disclosure. And the higher a caregiver's self-control or self-esteem, the higher his or her responsiveness.
- The same results were obtained in both countries.
- Conclusion: Security priming, even in a lab setting, can overcome a barrier to responsive support of a partner who is disclosing a distressing problem, but this brief intervention doesn't erase individual differences.



# A more “clinical” study:

## Responses to trauma

- We (Mikulincer, Shaver, & Horesh, 2006) wondered whether the soothing effects of security priming might mitigate the emotional damage caused by traumatic experiences
- We conducted a study based on the concept of posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), which is, as you know, characterized by repeatedly re-experiencing the traumatic event, emotional numbing, and autonomic, affective hyperarousal

# Responses to trauma: Overview

- We primed representations of attachment security and examined the effects on explicit and implicit responses to the trauma of terrorism in Israel
- Explicit responses were assessed with a self-report measure of post-traumatic symptoms
- Implicit responses were indicated by mental accessibility of trauma-related concepts (words) in a Stroop task

# Method

- At the beginning of a semester, 120 Israeli students completed a measure of attachment anxiety and avoidance (ECR, shown earlier today)
- A month later, they completed a PTSD Inventory focused on effects of Palestinian terrorist attacks
- Based on the total PTSD symptom score, two groups of students were selected to participate in a third session
  - One group – the PTSD group (N = 30) – scored above the 75th percentile
  - The other group – the non-PTSD group (N = 30) – scored below the 25th percentile

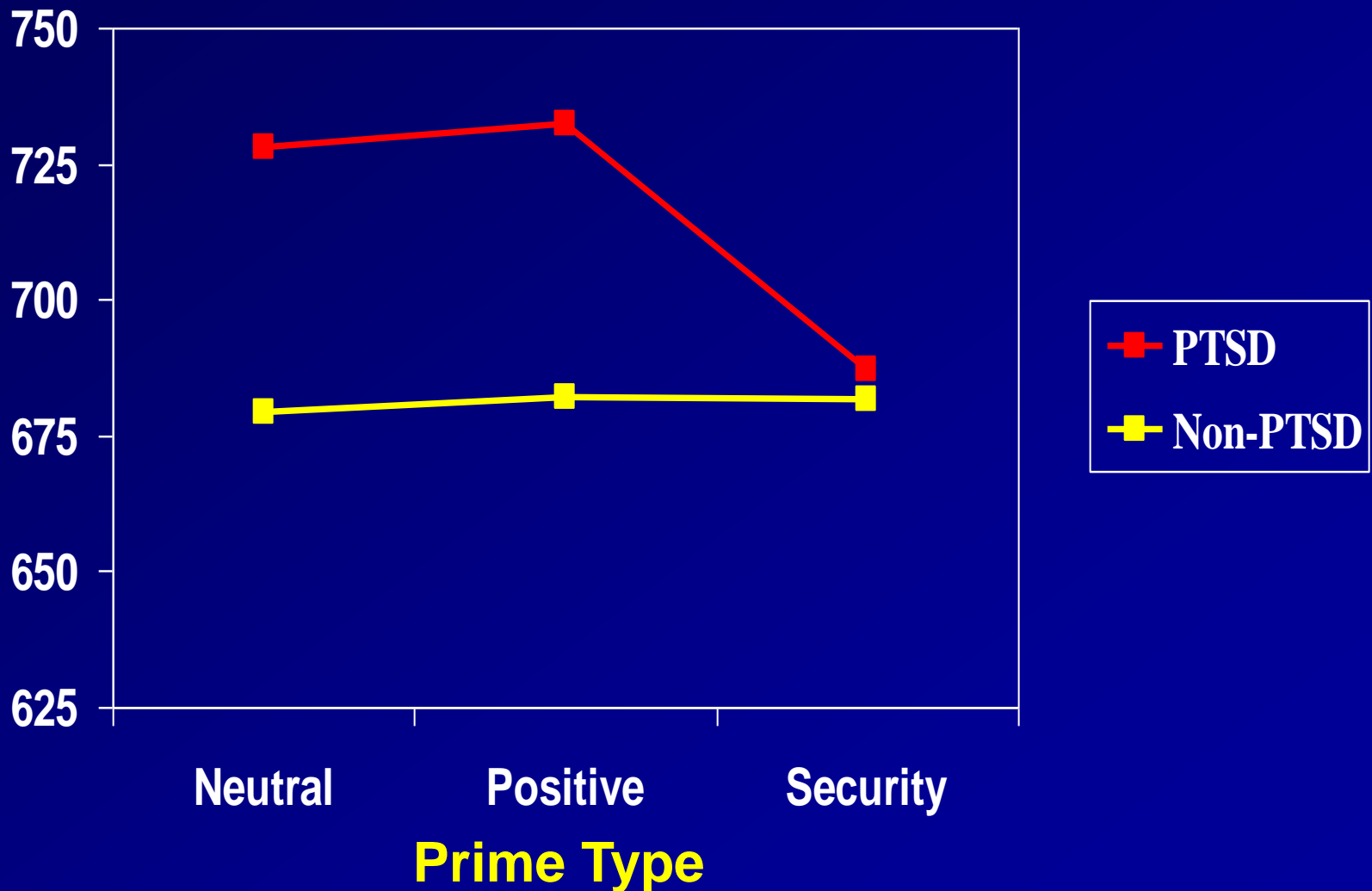
## Method (continued)

- 2 to 3 weeks later, the students were invited to a lab, where they performed a Stroop color-naming task including 10 terror-related words, 10 negatively valenced words unrelated to terror, and 10 neutral words
  - bomb (say “red”)
  - gunfire (say “green”)
- They completed each trial while being subliminally primed with an attachment-security word (“being loved”), a positively valenced word not related to attachment (“success”), or a neutral word (“hat”)

# Results

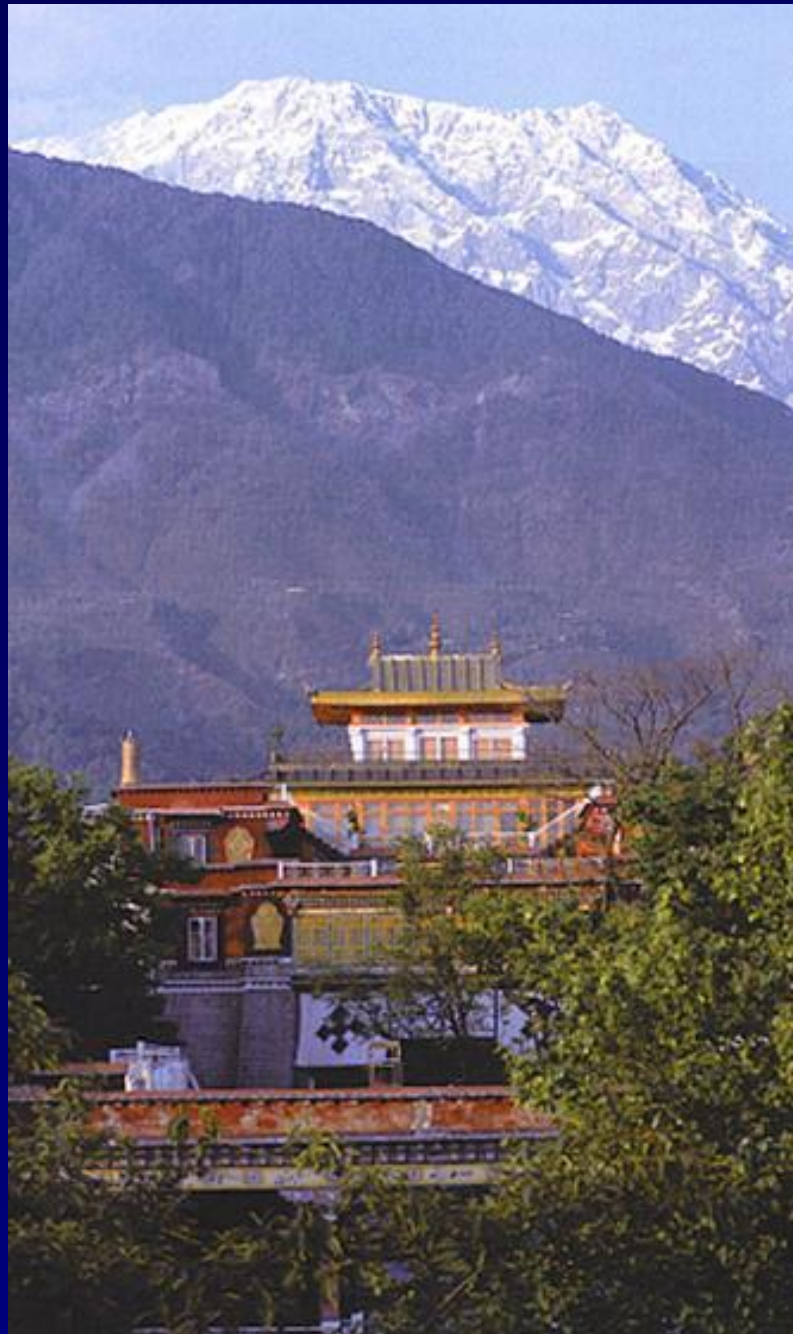
- Anxious students exhibited more post-traumatic thought intrusions and hyper-arousal symptoms
- Avoidant students exhibited more defensive suppression of traumatic thoughts
- Students in the PTSD group had longer color-naming latencies for terror words (implying greater mental accessibility or activation of terror-related thoughts)
- But this effect was qualified by a significant interaction with experimentally strengthened security

# Color-naming latencies (in milliseconds) for terror-related words





# Two final issues if there's time: Mindfulness and “Non-Attachment”



# Relations between the attachment insecurity dimensions and Baer's Five-Factor Mindfulness Scale

Mindfulness Scores	Attachment Anxiety		Attachment Avoidance			
	r	$\beta$	r	$\beta$	F(2, 68)	R <sup>2</sup>
Nonreactivity to inner experience	-.54**	-.43**	-.47**	-.32**	20.63**	.38
Observing/noticing	-.17	-.07	-.30*	-.28*	3.52*	.10
Describing/labeling with words	-.21	-.11	-.31**	-.27*	4.14*	.11
Acting with awareness	-.46**	-.37**	-.38**	-.25*	12.07**	.27
Nonjudging of experience	-.43**	-.32**	-.42**	-.30**	11.99**	.26
Total mindfulness score	-.52**	-.39**	-.53**	-.40**	24.08**	.42

# Poll #3

Are you familiar with the Buddhist  
Concept of non-attachment?

- No
- Somewhat
- Yes, very familiar

# Attachment and Non-Attachment in Buddhism

## Attachment

(Sanskrit: *Rāgā, Upādāna*)

Possessiveness, a sense of ownership of persons or things, jealousy, clinging, preoccupation, obsession, defensiveness, compulsion, acquisitiveness, defensive avoidance, and anxiety about gaining, escaping, or being able to avoid

## Non-Attachment

(Sanskrit: *Virāga*)

Psychological flexibility (lack of fixation), non-reactivity, more quickly recovering from upsets, allowing, releasing, supporting other's capacity to choose, and a sense of ease



# Sample Items from the Non-Attachment Scale (NAS)

(Sahdra, Shaver, & Brown, 2010)

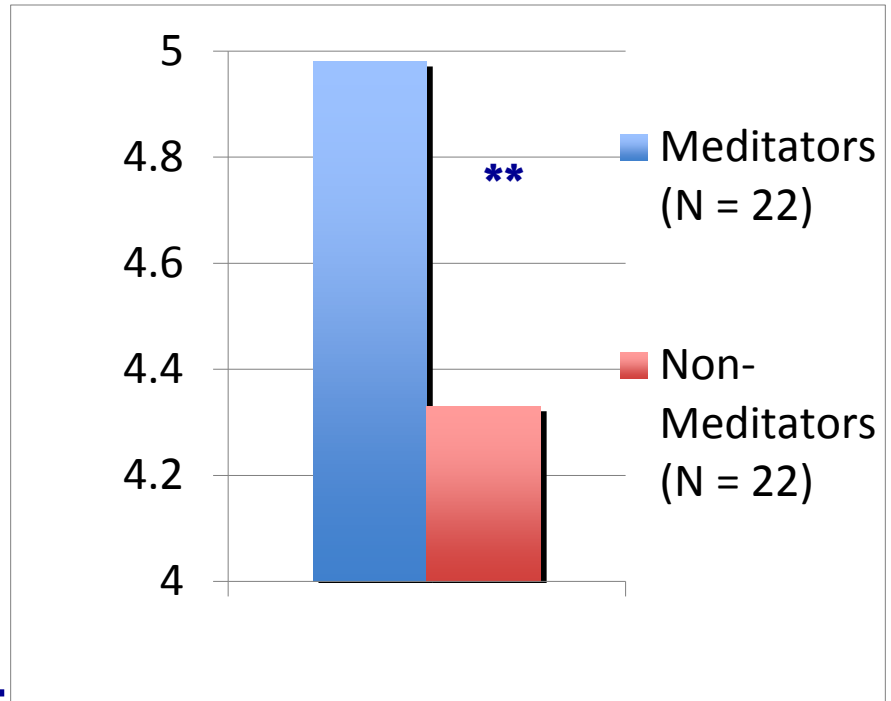
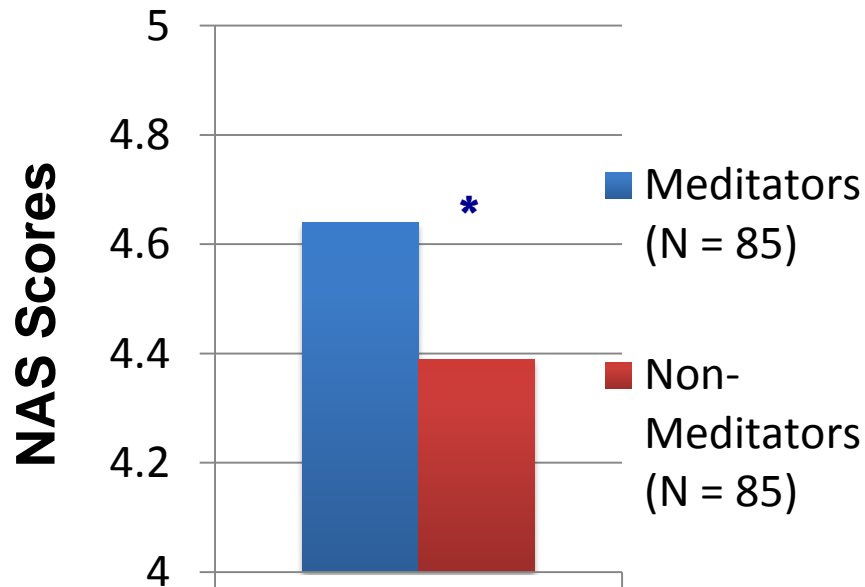
- I can enjoy the pleasures of life without feeling sad or frustrated when they end.
- Instead of avoiding or denying life's difficulties, I face up to them.
- I don't have to hang on to the people I love at all costs; I can let them go if they wish to go.
- If things aren't turning out the way I want, I get upset. (R)
- I experience and acknowledge grief following significant losses, but I don't become overwhelmed, devastated, or incapable of meeting life's other demands.

# Correlates of the NAS with other constructs

Construct (Scale)	Sample Size(s)	Alpha	Correlation(s) with the NAS
Anxious Attachment (ECR)	331, 91	.90, .90	-.55***, -.56***
Avoidant Attachment (ECR)	331, 91	.93, .90	-.26***, -.22*
Mindfulness (MAAS)	331, 91	.87, .89	.35***, .43**
Personal Growth (PWB)	331, 98	.70, .73	.56***, .45***
Positive Relationships (PWB)	331, 98	.77, .86	.45***, .40***
Self-Compassion (SCS)	331, 98	.92, .92	.59***, .50***
Non-Contingent Happiness (LI)	331, 98	.74, .60	.55***, .40***
Materialism (MS)	91	.88	-.53***
Autonomous Motivation (GCO)	331, 98	.83, .83	.38***, .50***



## Meditation Practice and NAS Scores



Among Meditators, NAS related to:  
Weekly hours of meditation:  $r = .25^*$   
Years of meditation practice:  $r = .23^*$

Meditators who  
practiced > 3 hours/week

\*  $p < .05$ , \*\*  $p < .01$

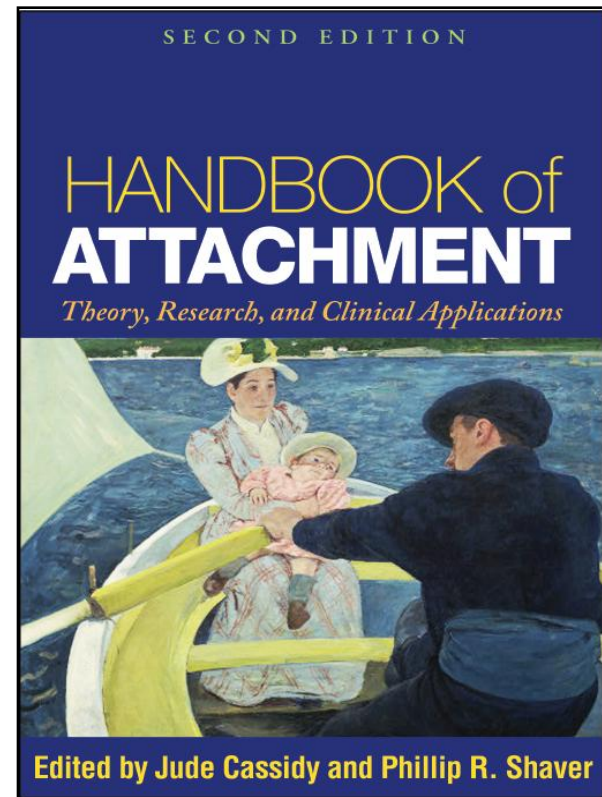
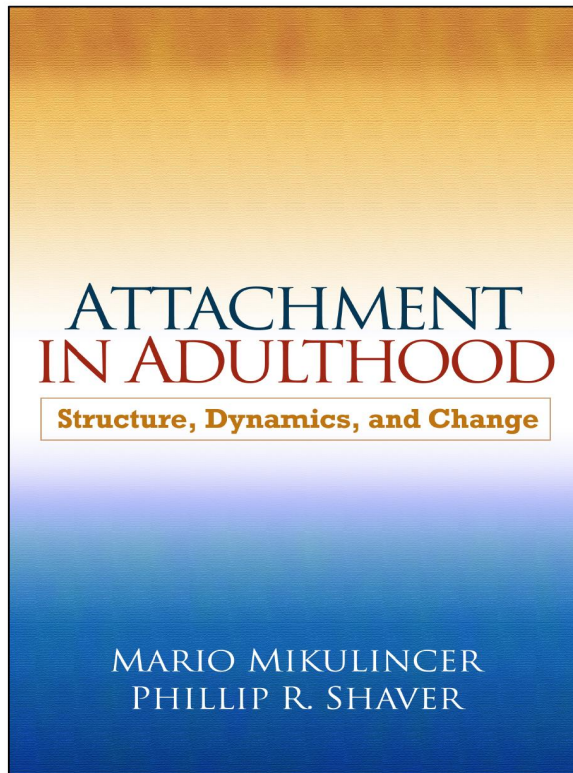
# Some Other Issues We Have Studied

- Attachment security, compassion, and altruism
- Attachment security and reduced ethnic prejudice and reduced out-group aggression
- Attachment security, honesty, and authenticity
- Attachment security and images of God
- Attachment security and hurt feelings
- Attachment security and eating disorders
- Attachment security as a buffer against caregiver and therapist burnout

## A few of many clinically oriented books based partly on our research

- Johnson, S. (2008). *Hold me tight: Seven conversations for a lifetime of love*. New York, NY: Little, Brown.
- Johnson, S. (2013). *Love sense: The revolutionary new science of romantic relationships*. New York, NY: Little, Brown.
- Levine, A., & Heller, R. (2010). *Attached: The new science of adult attachment and how it can help you find - and keep - love*. New York, NY: Tarcher/Penguin.
- Marmarosh, C. L., Markin, R. D., & Spiegel, E. B. (2013). *Attachment in group psychotherapy*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Obegi, J. H., & Berant, E. (Eds.) (2008). *Attachment theory and research in clinical work with adults*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.

# The End . . . Thanks!



A publication list can be obtained from the Glendon Association or by emailing me at [prshaver@ucdavis.edu](mailto:prshaver@ucdavis.edu)

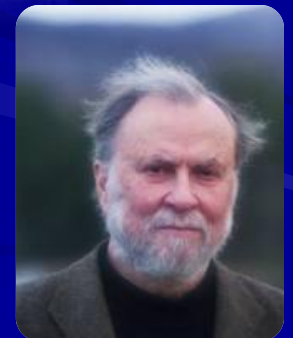
# Overall Conclusions

- Attachment theory has proven to be a very fruitful framework for studying social and psychological processes
- Our priming studies show that security infusions, whether administered consciously or subliminally, have beneficial effects on mental health and interpersonal relations
- This suggests that insecurity lies at the heart of many psychological and social pathologies (as Bowlby suspected from the beginning)
- Similar mental and social processes occur in different contexts: romantic relationships, teacher-student relationships, leader-follower relationships, etc.; and many attachment-related mental processes occur in religious/spiritual contexts (prayer, meditation)
- Humans' social-relational nature shows up everywhere and perhaps can eventually be conceptualized in a general theory

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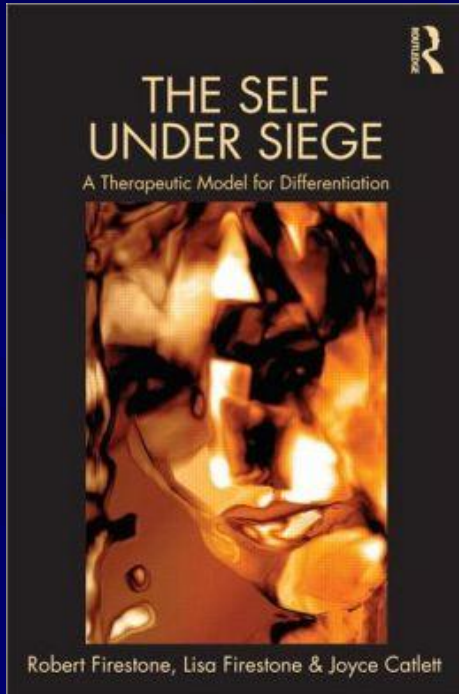
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■ Enter CODE: FIRE1

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Ojai, CA

November 8-10, 2013

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\* Includes mindfulness exercises throughout and meals provided.

Presenters: Joyce Catlett and Lisa Firestone

**Contact** [Jina@glendon.org](mailto:Jina@glendon.org) **or call** [800-663-5281](tel:800-663-5281)  
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