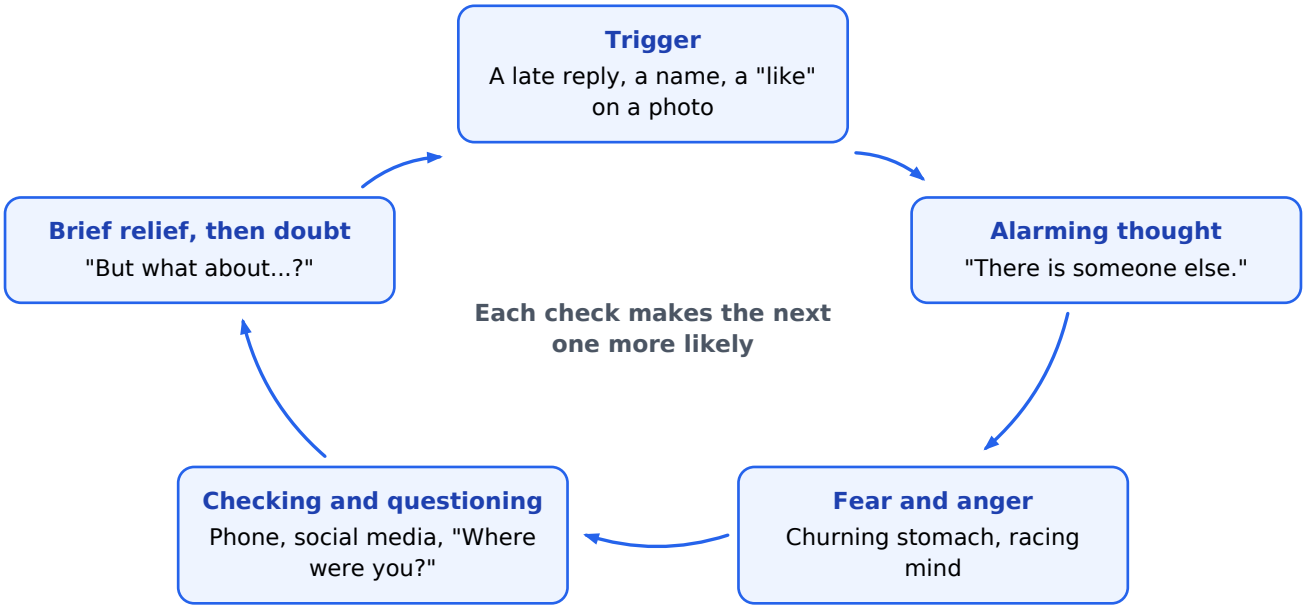
Understanding jealousy

What jealousy is, what feeds it and what helps.

Jealousy is the fear of losing someone important to a rival, real or imagined. Almost everyone feels it at times. A flicker of jealousy is not a problem. It becomes one when it takes up hours of your day, drives you to check and question, and starts to damage the relationship you are trying to protect.

Envy is different. Envy is wanting what someone else has. Jealousy is fearing that someone will take what you have.

How it keeps itself going



Checking gives a few minutes of relief, then the doubt comes back with a new question. Meanwhile the other person feels accused and pulls back, which looks like more evidence.

What helps

1. **Name it.** "This is jealousy" is different from "this is a fact".
2. **Separate what you know from what you fear.** A late reply is a late reply.
3. **Cut back the checking.** Delay it first, then drop it. The urge rises, peaks and passes, like any urge.
4. **Say the fear, not the accusation.** "I felt insecure when..." is better than "Who were you with?"
5. **Look after your own life.** Friends and interests of your own make you less dependent on one person for your sense of worth.
6. **Ask where it comes from.** Being cheated on or left before, or doubting your own worth, can set the alarm too sensitive.

> **When it is more than jealousy**
>
> Sometimes distrust is a response to real lies or broken agreements. That is something to talk about openly, not a habit to treat. And if a partner uses jealousy to control where you go, who you see or what is on your phone, that is control, not love. Women's Aid: freephone 1800 341 900, any time. Men's Aid: 01 554 3811, Monday to Friday, 9am to 5pm.

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When jealousy shows up

Record a jealous moment: the trigger, the urge and what you did.

Name _____ Date _____

What set it off (what I saw, heard or imagined)

What my mind told me

How strong was the feeling?

0 — 1 — 2 — 3 — 4 — 5 — 6 — 7 — 8 — 9 — 10

Mild — Overwhelming

What I felt like doing

- [ ] Checking a phone, email or social media
- [ ] Asking questions I have asked before
- [ ] Looking for reassurance
- [ ] Accusing or testing
- [ ] Following, or turning up unannounced
- [ ] Going quiet or pulling away
- [ ] Comparing myself with someone
- [ ] Something else

What I know for a fact

What I am guessing or fearing

What I would say to a friend who told me this

What I did instead of acting on the urge, or what I will try next time

An hour later: how strong was the feeling, and what did I learn?

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Attachment styles: an introduction

How early experiences of closeness shape what we expect from people now.

As children, we learn what to expect from other people through our earliest relationships: whether comfort comes when we need it, and whether it is safe to depend on someone. Those lessons become a kind of template for closeness.

Attachment styles are tendencies, not fixed types or diagnoses. Most people are a mix. Patterns differ between relationships and can change over time.

Secure
Comfortable with closeness and with being apart. Can ask for support and give it. Trusts that problems can be talked through.

Anxious
Longs for closeness and worries about losing it. Sensitive to signs of distance. May seek a lot of reassurance or find it hard to be alone.

Avoidant
Values independence. Closeness can feel crowding. Tends to pull back, keep feelings private and handle things alone.

Fearful
Wants closeness and fears it. May swing between reaching out and pushing away. Often linked with early experiences of being hurt by people who were meant to be safe.

How this plays out

A common pattern is one person who pursues and one who withdraws. The more one reaches, the more the other backs off, and the more the first reaches. Each is trying to feel safe, in the opposite way. Neither is to blame.

What helps

- **Knowing your pattern,** and what sets it off.
- **Saying the need under the behaviour.** "I get anxious when I do not hear from you" works better than twenty texts. "I need half an hour to myself, and then I will come and find you" works better than disappearing.
- **Relationships that are steady.** Consistent, kind experiences with partners, friends or a therapist gradually update the template.

Note
Your pattern made sense in the situation where you learned it. It can change.

What I recognise in myself, and what I tend to do when I feel insecure with someone

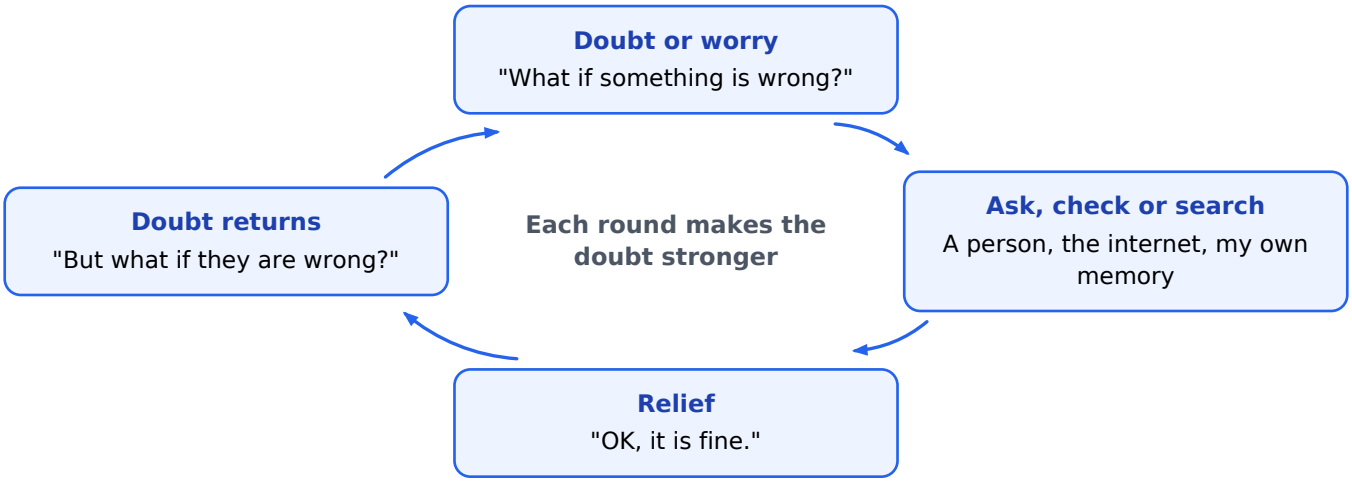
Attachment theory was developed by John Bowlby and Mary Ainsworth.

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Reassurance seeking

Why asking for reassurance keeps anxiety going, and what to do instead.

Asking for reassurance is natural, and now and then it is fine. It becomes a problem when you need it again and again about the same thing, and the relief only lasts a few minutes.



Less obvious kinds of reassurance

- Asking the same question in different ways
- Telling someone your worry and watching their face
- Searching symptoms or stories online
- Going over a conversation in your head to check you did not say something wrong
- Asking for a second and third opinion

What to do instead

1. **Name it.** "This is the urge for reassurance."
2. **Delay.** Wait fifteen minutes before asking or checking. The urge usually drops.
3. **Answer with uncertainty.** "Maybe it is fine, maybe not. I do not need to know right now."
4. **Do something else** that needs your attention.

For the people around you

> *"I care about you, and I can see you are anxious. We agreed that answering that question does not help in the long run. What could you do instead of asking?"*

Expect this

Cutting back on reassurance makes anxiety go up before it comes down. The rise is temporary.

My notes and questions

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Rebuilding trust

What each person needs to do when trust has been broken.

Trust is the belief that someone will be honest with you, will do what they say, and will not knowingly hurt you. When it is broken, by a lie, a betrayal or a let-down, both people have work to do if the relationship is to continue.

If I broke the trust

- Take full responsibility, with no "but"
- Answer questions honestly, even when it is uncomfortable
- Be open about where I am and what I am doing, without being asked
- Be patient. I do not decide when they should be over it.
- Keep small promises, every time
- Show that I understand the hurt

If my trust was broken

- Allow myself to feel what I feel
- Say what I need in order to feel safer
- Notice the efforts being made
- Decide whether I want to rebuild, and say so
- Try not to use it as a weapon in every row
- Get support for myself

What rebuilds trust

- **Consistency over time.** Not grand gestures. Being reliable in small things, week after week.
- **Transparency.** Volunteering information before being asked.
- **Empathy.** Hearing the pain without getting defensive.
- **Repair when there is a slip.** Owning it at once.

What gets in the way

- Pressure to move on quickly
- Minimising ("it was not that bad")
- More secrets coming out later
- Punishing with no end in sight
- Never talking about it at all

What to expect

- Setbacks, bad days and sudden waves of hurt are part of the process.
- Trust comes back in stages, and it is often different afterwards. Different can still be strong.
- Not every relationship should be rebuilt. If there is ongoing dishonesty, or you are not safe, your wellbeing comes first.

What would need to happen for trust to grow here? What is my part?

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