MODULE: **Developmental Psychology**
SECTION: **The development and pyschology of attachments**
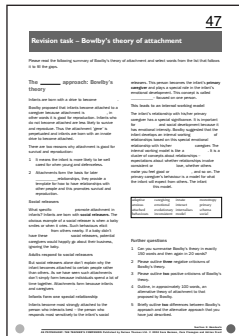TOPIC: **Explanations of attachment**

Revision task: Bowlby's theory of attachment

Handout 47

Research activity: Hazan and Shaver love quiz (1987)

Hazan, C. and Shaver, P.R. (1987) Romantic love conceptualised as an attachment process. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 52, 511–24.

Bowlby's theory of attachment suggests that the infant's relationship with his/her primary caregiver forms the basis of the child's internal working model of relationships. This will affect the child's expectations about what relationships (including romantic ones) will be like. Therefore we would expect a link between early attachments, attitudes about romantic relationships and actual romantic relationships. This is called the *Continuity Hypothesis* and can be taken as support for Bowlby's hypothesis. (Though there is an alternative possibility – that an individual's innate temperament is a key factor in early attachments and in later relationships. This is called the *Temperament Hypothesis*.)

Hazan and Shaver (1987) extended Bowlby's idea that later love relationships should be predictable from knowledge of an individual's early attachment style. In particular, they predicted the consequences shown in the table below.

Hazen and Shaver's study

Hazan and Shaver (1987) tested Bowlby's hypothesis with their 'love quiz'. This was a quiz of nearly 100 questions published in the *Rocky Mountain News*. They received 620 replies to their questionnaire and drew the following conclusions.

Securely attached adults:

● had certain beliefs about relationships (love is enduring);

● reported certain experiences in relationships (e.g. mutual trust);

● were less likely to have been divorced.

	Secure adults	Resistant (anxious) adults	Avoidant adults
Different love experiences	Relationships are positive	Preoccupied by love	Fearful of closeness.
Adults' views of relationships	Trust others and believe in enduring love	Fall in love easily but have trouble finding *true* love	Love is not durable nor necessary for happiness
Memories of the mother–child relationship	Positive image of mother as dependable and caring	Conflicting memories of mother being positive *and* rejecting	Remember mothers as cold and rejecting

Cont'd …

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Insecurely attached adults:

● felt true love was rare, and fell in and out of love easily;

● found relationships less easy;

● were more likely to be divorced.

In terms of attachment style 56 per cent classified themselves as secure, 25 per cent as avoidant and 19 per cent as resistant. Love experience and attitudes towards love (internal working model) were related to attachment type.

In the short version of the quiz on **Handout 48** the questions make assessments as follows:

● Q 1, 2 and 3 assess attachment history.

● Q 4, 5 and 6 assess adult attachment type.

● Q 7, 8 and 9 assess mental models of relationships.

Handout 48
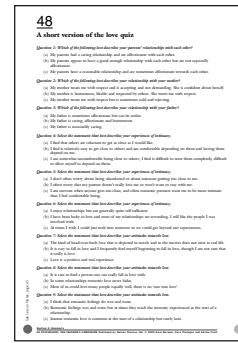
Ethics briefing

This study involves questions that may be related to sensitive information about an individual's early life experiences and which may suggest problematic adult relationships. Always seek informed consent beforehand, where possible, or offer thorough debriefing including the right to withhold individual data. In this case one should emphasise that the suggested correlation between early experience and later relationships is not 100 per cent – there are many individuals who overcome early, unfavourable circumstances. In addition this correlation is not proven.

To work out scores used the table below.

	Question	a	b	c
Part C	1	secure	insecure avoidant	insecure resistant
	2	secure	insecure resistant	insecure avoidant
	3	insecure resistant	secure	insecure avoidant
	Score for part A (the dominant category chosen (secure, insecure-avoidant or insecure-resistant) =			
Part B	4	insecure resistant	insecure avoidant	secure
	5	secure	insecure resistant	insecure avoidant
	6	insecure avoidant	secure	insecure resistant
	Score for part B (the dominant category chosen (secure, insecure-avoidant or insecure-resistant) =			
Part A	7	insecure avoidant	insecure resistant	secure
	8	insecure avoidant	secure	insecure resistant
	9	insecure resistant	secure	insecure avoidant
	Score for part C (the dominant category chosen (secure, insecure-avoidant or insecure-resistant) =			