

Anxious Attachment Worksheet for Teens

The anxious pattern at your age rarely looks like a relationship problem, because you may not even have a relationship. It looks like reading a two-word reply forty times. It looks like knowing exactly who viewed your story and in what order, and feeling the floor tilt when the one person you posted it for has not. Adults get told this pattern is about their partner. Yours is about your whole social world, which is bigger, faster and scored in public. These exercises are built for that version.

Who this is for: Teenagers who spiral when replies slow down, keep score of who reached out first, or feel one unread message cancel out a whole good day.

The five exercises

1. The left-on-read spiral, mapped

Slow your fastest spiral down to walking pace so you can see its parts.

Trigger -- what the screen literally showed:

Story -- what I decided it meant about me:

Body -- where I felt it, physically:

Urge -- what I wanted to do that second:

Action -- what I actually did, and which box I could most easily catch next time:

2. Wait-time training

Stretch the gap between urge and action, starting from your real baseline.

My honest current baseline, in minutes:

My target for this week (baseline + 5):

Attempt 1 -- how long I lasted, and what I did with the gap:

Attempt 2:

Attempt 3, and what changed about the message I eventually sent (if I still sent it):

3. The friendship security audit

Find out which friendships are actually unstable, and which just feel it.

Person 1 -- evidence for / evidence against (events only):

Person 2:

Person 3:

Persons 4 and 5:

Which friendship does the evidence actually flag -- and is that the one I have been worrying about?

4. The steadying list (made in daylight)

Build the list now, because 11pm-you will not be able to.

Two-minute options (at least three):

Fifteen-minute options (at least three):

One-hour options (at least two):

Where I will keep this list so 11pm-me actually finds it:

5. The 2am protocol

A pre-written deal with yourself for the worst hour.

My no-send window (honest hours I will actually keep):

Where drafts live overnight:

What I will do instead if I am still wired after drafting (pick from the steadying list):

Morning review -- did the draft still need sending? What changed?

This worksheet is free to print, photocopy and share, including with clients. It is self-reflection material, not a diagnosis, an assessment or a substitute for professional support. If a relationship involves fear, control or coercion, or if working through this raises more than feels manageable, please speak to a doctor, a therapist or a domestic abuse service.