

Healing Avoidant Attachment: An 8-Week Workbook

Most avoidant-attachment advice is a list of things to do more of — open up, share feelings, stay in the room. Handed to someone whose nervous system reads closeness as a demand, a list like that produces either compliance that costs enormously and cannot be sustained, or nothing at all. The order matters more than the items do.

Who this is for: You have read the explanations of avoidant attachment, recognised yourself, and still have no idea what to actually do on a Tuesday evening when your partner wants to talk.

The eight weeks

Weeks 1–2: Build the vocabulary

You cannot report a state you have no word for.

Day and time I will do this (fixed, same slot each day):

Today, three words that are not fine/tired/stressed/busy:

Where it sits physically — chest, jaw, gut, shoulders, throat:

End of week: which word did I reach for most, and what was going on those days?

Weeks 3–4: Catch the deactivation

Name the shutdown while it is still happening, not afterwards.

What happened immediately before? (The event, not your reading of it.)

First physical change I noticed:

The first thought — quote it exactly, including how reasonable it sounded:

What I did with the next hour:

Weeks 5–6: Tolerance in small doses

Stay thirty seconds past the exit point.

The moment I noticed the pull to leave (day, situation, what was said):

What I expected the extra thirty seconds to feel like:

What it actually felt like, and how it changed across the thirty seconds:

Did the other person notice anything? Did anything bad happen?

Weeks 7–8: Repair, not explanation

Come back on purpose instead of drifting back.

Name it: "I went quiet after ____."

One true internal sentence: "What happened for me was ____."

What I want now: "____."

When exactly I will say it — day and time, not "soon":

The eight-week review

Judge it on behaviour, not on how you feel about it.

Deactivations caught in the first minute: weeks 3–4 ____ vs weeks 7–8 ____

Thirty-second stays completed:

Repairs actually said out loud (not drafted):

Longest withdrawal-to-repair gap, in hours or days:

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.