REVIEW ARTICLE

WILEY

Attachment security and how to get it

William J. Chopik[1] | Rebekka Weidmann[1,2] | Jeewon Oh[3]

[1]Department of Psychology, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, USA

[2]University of Basel, Basel, Switzerland

[3]Department of Psychology, Syracuse University, Syracuse, New York, USA

Correspondence
William J. Chopik, Department of Psychology, Michigan State University, 316 Physics Rd, East Lansing, MI 48824, USA.
Email: chopikwi@msu.edu

Abstract

Attachment theory has become a dominant framework for understanding people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors with respect to close relationships. People often want to and are motivated to improve their personalities and their relationships. Can attachment orientations change across the lifespan? And if so, what facilitates change? Will insecure people stay insecurely attached across their life or is there hope for change? The current review provides a bird's eye view of the research on how and why attachment orientations change in adulthood. We provide some descriptive information for how attachment changes across the lifespan and how much of this variation is attributable to early life experiences. Then, we focus on the processes that are thought to engender attachment-related changes over time. Finally, we provide some directions for future research to help fill some holes in the field's understanding about attachment orientations and how they change over time.

KEYWORDS
adult attachment, close relationships, lifespan development, personality, volitional change

1 | INTRODUCTION

Attachment theory postulates that the interactions between caregivers and their children shape children's working models of how relationships work and that these working models continue to guide relational behavior across the lifespan (Bowlby, 1969/1982; Shaver & Fraley, 2008). More responsive caregiving is thought to contribute to attachment security—a relative ease in forming close relationships and depending on close others (Roisman & Fraley, 2012).

The theory has been extended into adulthood by both developmental and social/personality psychologists, particularly in the realm of romantic relationships (Antonucci, 1976; Fraley, 2019; Hazan & Shaver, 1987; Sroufe, 2005; Sroufe et al., 2005). Since then, research has proliferated in linking individual differences in *attachment orientations*—people's characteristic approaches to social relationships—and individual and relationship outcomes (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2017). Within the study of romantic relationships, researchers have often focused on variation in different forms of attachment insecurity, such as anxiety (a preoccupation with the availability of close others) and avoidance (a discomfort with emotional and physical intimacy), in an effort to describe why people act the way they do in romantic relationships (Crowell et al., 2008).

Over the past half-century, due in part to this proliferation, attachment theory has become a dominant framework for understanding people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors with respect to close relationships. It has also entered the public zeitgeist, providing non-academics and clinicians with a framework to understand themselves and their clients, respectively (Levine & Heller, 2012; Slade & Holmes, 2019). In both academic and public-facing work, there is often an invocation of fatalism—that our early life experiences set us on a trajectory from which we are unable to deviate, even if the evidence around this idea is suspect (Fraley & Roisman, 2015; Lewis, 1997). However, people often want to and are motivated to improve their personalities and relationships (Hudson et al., 2020; Hudson & Fraley, 2016). Many people probably want to change for the better because attachment security is associated with positive life outcomes in close relationships, health, and well-being (Pietromonaco & Carnelley, 1994; Pietromonaco et al., 2013). But can attachment orientations change across the lifespan? And if so, what facilitates change? Will insecure people stay insecurely attached throughout their life, or is there hope for change?

2 | HOW STABLE IS SOMEONE'S ATTACHMENT ORIENTATION?

In the social/personality literature, an individual's attachment orientation is conceptualized as their position on two conceptually distinct dimensions: avoidance and anxiety. The avoidance dimension is characterized by a deliberate evasion of emotional and physical intimacy and a lower likelihood of providing emotional support for close others (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2017). The anxiety dimension is characterized by a preoccupation with the availability of close others and a hypervigilance to signs of rejection and abandonment (Shaver et al., 2005).

In discussing whether attachment orientations are stable or change over time, it is important to clarify conceptually what researchers are referring to. In this paper, we distinguish between "stability" and "change" in ways that are consistent with the literature on individual differences and developmental change (e.g., Donnellan, 2023; Edmonds et al., 2008). Here, *stability* refers to the rank-ordering of individuals over time (i.e., whether one person's attachment anxiety is higher than another person's). Mean-level *change* refers to how people's mean-levels of attachment anxiety change over time. Thus, when researchers refer to attachment orientations being stable, they are often referring to test-retest correlations. Of course, these two types of change (i.e., stability and mean-level change) can occur simultaneously, but not necessarily. For example, a sample of participants might all experience declines in attachment anxiety over time. However, because their individual mean-levels all changed at a comparable rate, the sample might demonstrate near-perfect rank-order stability (i.e., everyone declined one point in anxiety, so the same people are still high in attachment anxiety relative to others). Likewise, it may appear that there are not very dramatic mean-level changes, but a dramatic reordering of individuals over time might imply a low degree of stability in attachment. Thus, when someone characterizes themselves as being anxiously attached, they could simultaneously mean that they have high (mean) levels of anxiety and are more anxious than most of the people they know (higher in a rank order). In the sections below, we will distinguish between these different types of changes as they have different implications for understanding if and how people move toward security over time.

Before we can describe how attachment changes on a mean-level, it is worth acknowledging that several forces push people toward *stability* in their attachment orientation. Research shows that attachment is relatively stable over time, and stability increases over time and with age (e.g., Chopik et al., 2019; Fraley, 2002; Fraley & Brumbaugh, 2004; Fraley et al., 2011; Jones et al., 2018). In studies that assess attachment over long intervals, either from early childhood

into young adulthood (Fraley, 2002) or from early adulthood to older adulthood (Chopik et al., 2019), people are relatively moderate in their rank-order stability (i.e., their standing relative to others), such that test-retest correlations will fall around $r = 0.40$, although there is variation in the size of this correlation depending on the interval (longer interval = smaller correlation), attachment measure used, and life stage (earlier in life = smaller correlation) (Dinero et al., 2022; Fraley, 2002; Fraley et al., 2011; Zhang & Labouvie-Vief, 2004).

Part of the reason attachment orientations and other psychological characteristics stabilize is that there are dynamic person-environment interactions that privilege stability (Fraley & Roberts, 2005; Roberts & Caspi, 2003). In short, people select and interpret situations in ways that align with their existing beliefs about how the world works. As a result, people may not have the opportunity to accrue evidence that challenges these working models of relationships. For example, avoidant people may be less likely to find themselves in a relationship, preventing them from experiencing some of the processes that create changes in attachment (Schindler et al., 2010). Likewise, insecure people might "twist" relationship memories and disagreements to be more negative but ultimately more consistent with how they think about relationships (Feeney & Cassidy, 2003; Hudson & Chopik, 2023; Simpson et al., 2010). Finally, insecure people might behave in ways that evoke negative reactions from partners, such as making overly negative attributions about themselves, their partners, and their relationships (Collins, 1996; Collins & Feeney, 2004; Collins & Read, 1990). These negative attributions often guide behavior with their partner—resulting in cold, distant behavior, a biting remark, or outlandish accusations about their motives and feelings about the relationship. In this way, insecurely attached people's cognitive and emotional patterns can lead to behavior that undermines their relationships, creating a self-fulfilling prophecy.

Although these factors might paint a pessimistic picture for insecure adults that attachment orientations do not change at all or that we are fully entrenched in how we view the world and relationships, there is also plenty of evidence to suggest that attachment orientations are not set in stone from birth.

First, critical reviews of one of the foundational assumptions of attachment theory (i.e., that early caregiving environments predict later relationship behavior and approaches), suggest a relative waning influence of these early environments on later behavior, with some studies showing small or near-zero associations over time (Fraley & Roisman, 2015, 2019; Fraley, Roisman, Booth-LaForce, et al., 2013; Fraley, Roisman, & Haltigan, 2013; Raby et al., 2015; Roisman & Fraley, 2012, 2013). Thus, although there is evidence that early experiences can play a role in influencing individual and social outcomes later in life (Eller et al., 2022; Farrell et al., 2019), the magnitude of these correlations is far from the size that would suggest a deterministic interpretation of attachment theory.

Second, more recent work quantifying within-person and situational changes in attachment (i.e., more situational fluctuations from a person's baseline attachment style) suggests that knowing the stability of attachment orientation from the between-person studies presented above might not be telling the whole story when researchers try to make predictions about how people behave in particular situations (Girme et al., 2018). Rather, evidence from these studies suggests that the stability of attachment orientations may be even lower—and these short-term fluctuations over shorter intervals could be attributable to specific relational situations that people find themselves in and related to important outcomes for individuals (Dugan et al., 2022; Stanton et al., 2017). In some cases, less stability (i.e., greater fluctuations) may be beneficial for helping fledgling relationships continue and transition into longer-term relationships (Eastwick et al., 2019). Altogether, although there is some evidence that attachment orientations might be moderately stable over time, the small links to early caregiving environments and the often-underappreciated within-person fluctuations that people experience suggest that it is far from destiny. So, given that there is evidence that attachment is not perfectly stable over time, what are the particular ways that attachment orientations change across adulthood?

3 | DO ATTACHMENT ORIENTATIONS CHANGE OVER TIME?

One of the fascinating mysteries about adult attachment is whether it can and does change over time. Although longitudinal data are relatively rare in the field, there have been some illustrations of how attachment orientations change during adulthood (e.g., Chopik et al., 2014; Chopik et al., 2019; Davila et al., 1997; Davila et al., 1999; Fraley et al., 2021; Kirkpatrick & Hazan, 1994; Klohnen & Bera, 1998; Klohnen & John, 1998; Zhang & Labouvie-Vief, 2004).

More common are cross-sectional investigations comparing the attachment orientations of people of different ages (Chopik & Edelstein, 2014; Chopik et al., 2013; Hudson et al., 2015; Mickelson et al., 1997; Segal et al., 2009). There is heterogeneity across studies, but generally, people trend toward security (e.g., lower levels of anxiety and avoidance, although some studies occasionally see increases or no changes in avoidance).

Gauging whether any one individual will become secure someday is more difficult. This is because—although average changes suggest movement toward security on average across age—the changes are relatively modest, occur mostly over longer periods of time, and there are individual differences in change (i.e., some people become more insecure over time). In other words, people might become more secure over time on average, but the exact degree to which this happens and why may differ across individuals. So, if attachment orientations do change over time, why do they change? Researchers have produced many arguments to explain variation in attachment changes and the conditions under which attachment can be modified. We broadly organized them into two areas—(1) maturational, volitional, life event, and cognitive processes and (2) strictly relational processes (in which relational or environmental influences are exerted or studied).

4 | WHY MIGHT ATTACHMENT ORIENTATIONS CHANGE OVER TIME?

Researchers have proposed a few different reasons why people might naturally migrate toward attachment security over time. The prototype model suggests that the influence of early life experiences continues at a modest level over time but weakens as people experience new relationship contexts (Fraley, 2002; Jones et al., 2018). Instead of early experiences continuing to affect attachment in adulthood, some of the normative change toward security has been attributed to maturation (i.e., becoming more agreeable, emotionally stable, conscientious, and responsive) and attachment-related events that happen in adulthood (Fraley et al., 2021; Hudson et al., 2015; Noftle & Shaver, 2006; Schwaba et al., 2022). General theories of personality development suggest investing in social roles and institutions that foster commitment and responsibility as one driving force underlying personality maturation over time (Roberts et al., 2005; Roberts & Nickel, 2017). For example, becoming a romantic partner is accompanied by many additional expectations that might alter behavior, such as taking other people's perspectives and needs into account, sacrificing one's needs and desires for others', and being an attentive, responsive partner. As a result, people might alter how they think about themselves, their relationships, and themselves in the context of relationships. Thus, on average, people are rewarded by rising to these expectations. These relational transitions and changes in expectations occur throughout the entire lifespan, although there are individual differences in the degree to which people can do this. Indeed, new roles and attachment-related events, such as being a caregiver for an elderly parent and experiencing bereavement, can shape people's attachment (Magai, 2008). Changes in these non-attachment-related constructs (e.g., Big Five personality traits) have been shown to correlate with simultaneous changes in positive relational traits (Lehnart & Neyer, 2006), and positive relational changes are observable by close others (Schwaba et al., 2022).

Relatedly, repeated pursuit of and success in personal goals can invoke feelings of autonomy and less dependency on others, which help people feel more secure about themselves over time (Arriaga et al., 2014, 2018; Deci & Ryan, 2000). This is known as the Attachment Security Enhancement Model (ASEM; Arriaga et al., 2018), and it suggests that especially attachment anxiety can be reduced through experiences that foster a secure model of the self (an intrapersonal process) in people's daily lives. These processes can be seen across different life transitions—both personal and interpersonal. For example, during the transition to parenthood, people who felt competent and efficacious reported more attachment security (Arriaga et al., 2021). In contrast, people who lost a job showed enduring increases in attachment anxiety (Fraley et al., 2021). Both of these findings focus somewhat on an individual's self-perception, although both events likely have interpersonal consequences. Because avoidantly attached people have more trouble with forming well-functioning models of *others*, the process of fostering a secure model of others likely involves interpersonal processes that will be described in the upcoming section.

Despite average changes toward security across the lifespan, there are variations in patterns of change. Variation may come from experiencing certain life events (Davila & Sargent, 2003). For example, starting a new relationship and having positive relationship experiences are associated with increased attachment security. But plenty of other,

ostensibly non-relationship-related events and experiences were also associated with increases in security (failing health, receiving a promotion at work, moving to a new location, at least in the short-term (Fraley et al., 2021)). However, not all events lead to *enduring* changes (sometimes attachment security decreased on average over more extended periods of time after these events, or attachment security was largely unrelated to events over an extended time; Fraley et al., 2021). These ephemeral patterns could be due to differences in people's perceptions of the events. Among people who experienced the same type of life event, those who experienced events as more positive tended to show lasting decreases in attachment anxiety (Fraley et al., 2021). It could also be due to people's pre-existing individual differences having little to do with their current attachment orientation.[1]

Researchers suggest that people with risk factors such as parental divorce or psychopathology may be more susceptible to changes and fluctuations in the face of new interpersonal events (Davila & Cobb, 2003; Davila et al., 1999). But *when* people experience certain events can explain some additional variability. Socialization effects are suggested to have a greater say in earlier life. It is assumed that people are more easily influenced by their environment earlier in life. Later in life, people are more likely to select and shape their environments (i.e., socialization-selection asymmetry; Fraley & Roisman, 2019). There is also a possible confounding (e.g., genetic) factor that might jointly explain selection and socialization processes across the lifespan (Briley et al., 2019; Kandler et al., 2012). This might be particularly true to the extent that attachment orientations reflect expressions of particular genes (although the extent to which this matters is less clear due to inconsistencies and small sample sizes in the literature; Picardi et al., 2020). Other intrapersonal situations have been proposed as possible triggers of change in attachment, including events such as spiritual influences or the winnowing of social networks (Arriaga et al., 2014).

Another exciting reason for explaining changes in attachment might be because people *want* to change and become more secure.[2] In a recent longitudinal study that followed people for four months, the majority of the participants wanted to be more secure, and this desire was linked with future ratings of security (Hudson et al., 2020). Specifically, people reported on goals related to changing attachment (e.g., "I want to be less concerned about rejection or abandonment." = an adapted item from a standard attachment measure). Participants rated their attachment and the extent to which they would like to change at the start of the study and continued to give weekly ratings of attachment. Over time, people tended to change in the desired direction of their goals. In other words, changes toward security occurred even without direct researcher, partner, or therapeutic intervention of specific strategies. Although people may want to be more secure on average, particularly those who are insecurely attached (Hudson et al., 2020), we mention this as a possible mechanism to acknowledge that changes in attachment likely do not occur in a vacuum—people have desires for what their ideal selves and relationships are like. There are possibly scenarios in which people may desire to feel more insecure toward close others, as might be predicted from ecological models providing evidence that attachment insecurity might be beneficial in some contexts (e.g., in particularly dangerous environments; Ein-Dor et al., 2010). Importantly, volitional change processes such as these can often happen regardless of whether or not people believe they can change in desirable ways (Hudson et al., 2021). The individual and their desire to change are rarely considered as catalysts of change in attachment orientations, but there is evidence to suggest that knowing what people want out of their relationships might be a useful starting point.

Other studies also suggest that priming security—showing attachment-security-related words, pictures, or recalling memories or scenarios—is helpful too. However, long-term effectiveness of these strategies is rarely examined (see Gillath et al., 2022 for a meta-analysis on priming attachment security; also see Sakaluk, 2014). Interestingly, priming attachment anxiety also increases security, particularly for highly anxious people perhaps because it reminds them to attend to and process their attachment insecurity (Hudson & Fraley, 2018). Should highly anxious people dwell on their insecurities as a way of eventually overcoming them (Kross et al., 2005; Selcuk et al., 2012)? Not necessarily, according to researchers: security primes are more recommended because security primes have shown links with more positive outcomes, and the exact mechanism for insecurity primes leading to greater security is yet to be discovered (Gillath et al., 2008, 2010; Hudson & Fraley, 2018; Mikulincer et al., 2001).

In sum, people become more secure over time, possibly because many common life experiences allow people to modify working models of the self and others. However, there are individual differences in trajectories based on

factors like perceptions of events and existing risk factors. Nevertheless, there seems to be room for volitional change in attachment—that people might be able to change if they want to.

5 | RELATIONAL PROCESSES AFFECTING VARIATION IN ATTACHMENT ORIENTATION

Adult attachment does not develop independently from people's relationships and relational partners. Indeed, attachment orientations are often sensitive to relationship transitions (Fraley et al., 2021; Kirkpatrick & Hazan, 1994; Lehnart & Neyer, 2006; Umemura et al., 2018). Moreover, other life experiences shared among romantic partners can contribute to attachment changes. For example, one study showed that when people report getting in a fight with their partner, they increase in both attachment anxiety and avoidance (Fraley et al., 2021).

The evidence that shared experiences—such as a joint argument—could change *both* partners' attachment orientations simultaneously is in line with the assumption that partners co-regulate their attachment orientations in adult romantic relationships. Partners might respond similarly to a shared environment they find themselves in (e.g., having an argument). For instance, a recent study found that having frequent daily positive relationship events brought more attachment security to avoidantly attached individuals over time (Bayraktaroglu et al., 2022). Similarly, in a longitudinal study of reciprocal attachment changes across 12 months, Hudson et al. (2014) found that if one person became more avoidant, for instance, their partner would also become more avoidant across the same time period. In addition, people who were more anxious or avoidant at a given time point had partners who were more avoidant at a subsequent time point—suggesting that romantic partners also directly influenced each other. Thus, it might not only be shared experiences that shape both partners' attachment simultaneously, but that one partner's insecure attachment fosters avoidance in the other partner. On a more positive note, though, this also means that more secure individuals might create safer relationship environments that lead their partners to become more secure (Hudson et al., 2014). The idea that close others can enhance individual functioning or relational closeness is one of the core features of many relationship theories and phenomena, such as self-expansion theory and social baseline theory (Aron et al., 2013; Beckes & Coan, 2011). Social baseline theory in particular provides a broad framework under which people expect to have access to social relationships and that this access helps people mitigate risk and outsource effort through including others within one's conceptualization of the self, both at the metaphorical and even neurological levels (Coan & Sbarra, 2015). Being deprived of these experiences forces individuals to move away from their social baseline, which greatly affects their perceptions of risk and makes emotion regulation more difficult.

In addition, the perceptions that people hold of their relationship and their partner seem to be impactful for attachment changes as well, and the list of factors contributing toward becoming more secure has been growing in recent years. For example, partnered people who become more secure tend to: (a) report more responsiveness from their partner, (b) have more positive expectations towards their partner, (c) report less demand-withdraw communication, (d) perceive their partner to be more trustworthy and goal-validating, (e) experience more gratitude towards their partner, (f) report more sexual desire and intimacy, and (g) are more satisfied with their relationship (Arriaga et al., 2014; Bühler et al., 2020; Givertz & Safford, 2011; Mizrahi et al., 2016; Park et al., 2019).

In addition to these "actor effects" (i.e., *intra*personal effects within romantic partners and their perceptions), there are also "partner effects" (i.e., *inter*personal effects between romantic partners) found in the literature. Partner effects are the associations between one person's reports (i.e., their behavior, emotions, and thoughts) and their partner's outcomes (in our case, attachment changes). Worth noting, partner effects may be occasionally overstated in the literature (Joel et al., 2020). Nevertheless, if people cannot change their partners' attachment orientations, they can at least reduce how harmful their insecurity can be to their relationships (Arriaga et al., 2018; Arriaga & Kumashiro, 2019; Simpson & Overall, 2014). More specifically, one person's insecure attachment might be activated by a specific trigger (i.e.., stress or threat), and their partner can buffer the hyper-activated reaction (in the case of anxious attachment) or deactivating reaction of the partner (in the case of avoidant attachment). The buffering has

immediate consequences for the insecure partner (e.g., feeling greater security) and long-term consequences for both partners (e.g., higher relationship satisfaction; Simpson & Overall, 2014).

What are some of the buffering actions that partners of insecurely attached individuals can employ? For anxiously attached individuals, it is helpful if the partner uses "safe" strategies to mitigate the harmful effects of anxiety (Arriaga et al., 2018). This could involve exaggerating positive feelings towards them while being relatively mute about any negative feelings (Lemay & Dudley, 2011) or expressing feelings of guilt when the anxiously attached person is hurt (Overall et al., 2014). For avoidantly attached people, on the other hand, it seems to be most helpful if the partner uses "soft" strategies—a way to change other-oriented working models to become more secure (Arriaga et al., 2018). For instance, when people want to suggest changes for their avoidant partners, they might most effectively communicate this in a softer way (e.g., being sensitive to the person's autonomy and communicating that they value the person). This has been shown to attenuate the avoidantly attached person's negative reactions (Overall et al., 2013). This also appears to be the case when partners express confidence that an avoidant person can facilitate a request they make, exude high feelings of trust, and appropriately acknowledge the sacrifices they make (Farrell et al., 2016; Shallcross & Simpson, 2012). Indeed, perceptions of trust following potentially upsetting or threatening relationship interactions might help regulate the negative consequences of potential rejection and ultimately *enhance* closeness and security (Cavallo et al., 2014; Murray, 2005). Another buffering strategy includes the couple's sexuality. One study found that the negative link between attachment anxiety and relationship satisfaction was attenuated by people's higher sexual satisfaction, while the link between attachment avoidance and relationship satisfaction was non-existent in people who reported higher sexual frequency (Little et al., 2010).

Another potential way for both partners to develop greater attachment security is through directed couples therapy. For instance, Emotion Focused Couple Therapy (including a 'blamer softening") has been shown to reduce partners' attachment anxiety and avoidance over time (Burgess Moser et al., 2016; Wiebe et al., 2017). Altogether, addressing insecurity through therapeutic approaches derived from attachment theory might provide some promising strategies for cultivating attachment security.

In sum, people may strive toward security independently, but romantic partners are involved in the co-regulation of attachment orientation, shape their partner's attachment development, and can buffer negative attachment dynamics in the couple.

6 | WHAT DO WE NOT KNOW ABOUT HOW ATTACHMENT ORIENTATIONS CHANGE ACROSS LIFE?

As discussed in this article, many studies have examined what drives changes toward greater security. Nevertheless, the exact antecedents of attachment security and theories that give rise to them, particularly in adulthood, are just now being enumerated in the literature. So far, many examinations of attachment orientation changes do not adopt an approach that considers the personal and interpersonal considerations highlighted above (often focusing on description rather than explanation). As a field, we likely need studies that formally test many of the mechanisms reviewed above and, importantly, examine the relative effectiveness of these mechanisms when they are contrasted against each other within one or a series of related studies. Do the mechanisms highlighted above act synergistically, such that the more that are present necessarily spell greater security? Can one mechanism promoting security compensate for another mechanism that is absent, or do multiple factors need to be present to promote security? As it stands now, there are a few isolated, albeit promising, tests of many of these ideas, but researchers may need to test multiple mechanisms simultaneously in a more holistic way. This focus may also necessitate a move from purely observational studies with two goals: to conduct studies to determine specific mechanisms as causal factors predicting security and to develop more targeted interventions for couples. The field has historically struggled to create long-lasting and effective interventions, even when the goal was to improve relationship satisfaction and longevity (Bradbury & Lavner, 2012; Finkel et al., 2013; Karney & Bradbury, 2005; Loewenstein et al., 2015; Stanley

et al., 2000). However, the observational studies on the promotive factors for security provide some actionable directions for creating new interventions aimed at improving people's relationships.

In the current paper, we focused almost exclusively on cultivating attachment security in the context of adult romantic relationships. Little is known about how people's attachment orientations towards *other* relationship partners (e.g., parents, friends) co-develop and shape adult attachment in romantic relationships (Hudson et al., 2015). Can improvements in one relational domain spill over and improve our other relationships (Welker et al., 2014)? For example, people might think that repairing a relationship with a parent might resolve insecurities and improve their romantic lives. It is likely, however, that relationships towards peers and friends might be more important for attachment changes toward partners rather than relationships toward parents (for a review, see Dugan et al., 2022).

Lastly, a large portion of attachment research has been conducted with young adults and is "missing" middle and later life (Magai, 2008). This omission is particularly concerning given that significant attachment-related phenomena such as caregiving for one's partner, marriages (and re-marriages), and widowhood often happen in later life, and the role and manifestation of attachment might not be identical across the lifespan. Challenges in late life include physical and cognitive health declines, which also have implications for attachment-related processes. Studies have also examined whether attachment is a protective factor for healthy aging (e.g., physical and cognitive health; Monin et al., 2013; Waldinger et al., 2015; Weidmann & Chopik, 2022). With the increasing older adult population in the next 20 years, data to assess how changes in attachment are linked with people's health and well-being over longer periods of time among older adults is needed.

7 | CONCLUSION

In general, there is ostensibly good news—there are lifespan shifts toward attachment security. However, there are also many caveats—the changes are small, there are individual differences (i.e., some people become more insecure or do not change at all), and the field is a bit unsure exactly how and why the changes happen, although we provided the current best guesses for why attachment changes. Although there is still much to learn about attachment across the lifespan, there is a sense that people do indeed change and that early experiences are not as determinant for adult relationships as originally thought.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST STATEMENT
All authors approve the content of this paper. There were no competing interests or financial conflicts of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT
No data were used in this manuscript.

ORCID
William J. Chopik https://orcid.org/0000-0003-1748-8738

ENDNOTES
[1] In discussing life events, we are not making a value judgment that a person has entire control over their life circumstances. Many of the life events can be conceptualized as whether or not someone has a romantic partner as an attachment figure—a source of comfort and support. One limitation of life event research to date has been a relative neglect of the characteristics and contexts of these particular life events. For example, a new relationship might bring insecurity in a way that was not present in someone's life when they were single (and a divorce might bring comfort). Being a long-term

single (someone who "misses" relationship events) also does not doom someone to a life of attachment insecurity (Brumbaugh, 2017; Girme et al., 2022; Oh et al., 2022; Pepping et al., 2018). Altogether, researchers are currently building taxonomies for characterizing life events (Luhmann et al., 2021), and linking individual differences in attachment to these perceptions will be invaluable moving forward.

[2] Worth noting, not all insecure people see their insecurity as a problem. For example, it may be perfectly reasonable (from their perspective) for avoidant people to see others as untrustworthy or to avoid intimate relationships. Likewise, anxious people may think of very good reasons to be suspicious or hypervigilant about partners' intentions. In a way, we wanted to take the opportunity to not pathologize attachment insecurity, especially given the many functional explanations that exist (Belsky et al., 1991; Ein-Dor et al., 2010).

REFERENCES

Antonucci, T. (1976). Attachment: A life-span concept. *Human Development*, *19*(3), 135–142. https://doi.org/10.1159/000271524

Aron, A., Lewandowski, G. W., Jr., Mashek, D., & Aron, E. N. (2013). The self-expansion model of motivation and cognition in close relationships. In *The Oxford handbook of close relationships* (pp. 90–115). Oxford University Press.

Arriaga, X. B., & Kumashiro, M. (2019). Walking a security tightrope: Relationship-induced changes in attachment security. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *25*, 121–126. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2018.04.016

Arriaga, X. B., Eller, J., Kumashiro, M., Rholes, W. S., & Simpson, J. A. (2021). Self-efficacy and declines over time in attachment anxiety during the transition to parenthood. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *12*(5), 658–666. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550620933411

Arriaga, X. B., Kumashiro, M., Finkel, E. J., VanderDrift, L. E., & Luchies, L. B. (2014). Filling the void: Bolstering attachment security in committed relationships. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *5*(4), 398–406. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550613509287

Arriaga, X. B., Kumashiro, M., Simpson, J. A., & Overall, N. C. (2018). Revising working models across time: Relationship situations that enhance attachment security. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *22*(1), 71–96. https://doi.org/10.1177/1088868317705257

Bayraktaroglu, D., Gunaydin, G., Selcuk, E., Besken, M., & Karakitapoglu-Aygun, Z. (2022). The role of positive relationship events in romantic attachment avoidance. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *124*(5), 958–970. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000406

Beckes, L., & Coan, J. A. (2011). Social baseline theory: The role of social proximity in emotion and economy of action. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *5*(12), 976–988. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2011.00400.x

Belsky, J., Steinberg, L., & Draper, P. (1991). Childhood experience, interpersonal development, and reproductive strategy: An evolutionary theory of socialization. *Child Development*, *62*(4), 647–670. https://doi.org/10.2307/1131166

Bowlby, J. (1969/1982). *Attachement and loss: Vol. 1. Attachment*. Basic Books.

Bradbury, T. N., & Lavner, J. A. (2012). How can we improve preventive and educational interventions for intimate relationships? *Behavior Therapy*, *43*(1), 113–122. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.beth.2011.02.008

Briley, D. A., Livengood, J., Derringer, J., Tucker-Drob, E. M., Fraley, R. C., & Roberts, B. W. (2019). Interpreting behavior genetic models: Seven developmental processes to understand. *Behavior Genetics*, *49*(2), 196–210. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10519-018-9939-6

Brumbaugh, C. C. (2017). Transferring connections: Friend and sibling attachments' importance in the lives of singles. *Personal Relationships*, *24*(3), 534–549. https://doi.org/10.1111/pere.12195

Burgess Moser, M., Johnson, S. M., Dalgleish, T. L., Lafontaine, M.-F., Wiebe, S. A., & Tasca, G. A. (2016). Changes in relationship-specific attachment in emotionally focused couple Therapy. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, *42*(2), 231–245. https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12139

Bühler, J. L., Weidmann, R., Wünsche, J., Burriss, R. P., & Grob, A. (2020). Daily responsiveness, expectations, and self-disclosure: How the average levels and within-person variability of three relationship components mediate personality-relationship transactions in romantic couples. *European Journal of Personality*, *34*(3), 367–392. https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2255

Cavallo, J. V., Murray, S. L., & Holmes, J. G. (2014). Risk regulation in close relationships. In M. Mikulincer & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Mechanisms of social connection: From brain to group* (pp. 237–254). American Psychological Association.

Chopik, W. J., & Edelstein, R. S. (2014). Age differences in romantic attachment around the world. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *5*(8), 892–900. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550614538460

Chopik, W. J., Edelstein, R. S., & Fraley, R. C. (2013). From the cradle to the grave: Age differences in attachment from early adulthood to old age. *Journal of Personality*, *81*(2), 171–183. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-6494.2012.00793.x

Chopik, W. J., Edelstein, R. S., & Grimm, K. J. (2019). Longitudinal changes in attachment orientation over a 59-year period. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *116*(4), 598–611. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000167

Chopik, W. J., Moors, A. C., & Edelstein, R. S. (2014). Maternal nurturance predicts decreases in attachment avoidance in emerging adulthood. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *53*(0), 47–53. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2014.08.004

Coan, J. A., & Sbarra, D. A. (2015). Social baseline theory: The social regulation of risk and effort. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *1*, 87–91. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2014.12.021

Collins, N. L. (1996). Working models of attachment: Implications for explanation, emotion, and behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *71*(4), 810–832. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.71.4.810

Collins, N. L., & Feeney, B. C. (2004). Working models of attachment shape perceptions of social support: Evidence from experimental and observational studies. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *87*(3), 363–383. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.87.3.363

Collins, N. L., & Read, S. J. (1990). Adult attachment, working models, and relationship quality in dating couples. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *58*(4), 644–663. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.58.4.644

Crowell, J. A., Fraley, R. C., & Shaver, P. R. (2008). Measurement of individual differences in adolescent and adult attachment. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (2nd ed., pp. 599–634). Guilford Press.

Davila, J., & Cobb, R. J. (2003). Predicting change in self-reported and interviewer-assessed adult attachment: Tests of the individual difference and life stress models of attachment change. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *29*(7), 859–870. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167203029007005

Davila, J., & Sargent, E. (2003). The meaning of life (events) predicts changes in attachment security. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *29*(11), 1383–1395. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167203256374

Davila, J., Burge, D., & Hammen, C. (1997). Why does attachment style change? *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *73*(4), 826–838. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.73.4.826

Davila, J., Karney, B. R., & Bradbury, T. N. (1999). Attachment change processes in the early years of marriage. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *76*(5), 783–802. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.76.5.783

Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (2000). The 'what' and 'why' of goal pursuits: Human needs and the self-determination of behavior. *Psychological Inquiry*, *11*(4), 227–268. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327965pli1104_01

Dinero, R. E., Donnellan, M. B., & Hart, J. (2022). Developmental trajectories of adult romantic attachment: Assessing the influence of observed interactions with family of origin. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *39*(3), 652–669. https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075211044123

Donnellan, M. B. (2023). Personality stability and change. In R. Biswas-Diener & E. Diener (Eds.), *Noba textbook series: Psychology*. DEF publishers. Retrieved from http://noba.to/sjvtxbwd

Dugan, K. A., Fraley, R. C., Gillath, O., & Deboeck, P. R. (2022). Changes in global and relationship-specific attachment working models. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *39*(10), 3015–3043. https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075211051408

Eastwick, P. W., Finkel, E. J., & Simpson, J. A. (2019). Relationship trajectories: A meta-theoretical framework and theoretical applications. *Psychological Inquiry*, *30*(1), 1–28. https://doi.org/10.1080/1047840x.2019.1577072

Edmonds, G. W., Jackson, J. J., Fayard, J. V., & Roberts, B. W. (2008). Is character fate, or is there hope to change my personality yet? *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *2*(1), 399–413. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2007.00037.x

Ein-Dor, T., Mikulincer, M., Doron, G., & Shaver, P. R. (2010). The attachment paradox: How can so many of us (the insecure ones) have no adaptive advantages? *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *5*(2), 123–141. https://doi.org/10.1177/1745691610362349

Eller, J., Magro, S. W., Roisman, G. I., & Simpson, J. A. (2022). The predictive significance of fluctuations in early maternal sensitivity for secure base script knowledge and relationship effectiveness in adulthood. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *39*(10), 3044–3058. https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075221077640

Farrell, A. K., Simpson, J. A., Overall, N. C., & Shallcross, S. L. (2016). Buffering the responses of avoidantly attached romantic partners in strain test situations. *Journal of Family Psychology*, *30*(5), 580–591. https://doi.org/10.1037/fam0000186

Farrell, A. K., Waters, T. E. A., Young, E. S., Englund, M. M., Carlson, E. E., Roisman, G. I., & Simpson, J. A. (2019). Early maternal sensitivity, attachment security in young adulthood, and cardiometabolic risk at midlife. *Attachment & Human Development*, *21*(1), 70–86. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616734.2018.1541517

Feeney, B. C., & Cassidy, J. (2003). Reconstructive memory related to adolescent-parent conflict interactions: The influence of attachment-related representations on immediate perceptions and changes in perceptions over time. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *85*(5), 945–955. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.85.5.945

Finkel, E. J., Slotter, E. B., Luchies, L. B., Walton, G. M., & Gross, J. J. (2013). A brief intervention to promote conflict reappraisal preserves marital quality over time. *Psychological Science*, *24*(8), 1595–1601. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797612474938

Fraley, R. C. (2002). Attachment stability from infancy to adulthood: Meta-analysis and dynamic modeling of developmental mechanisms. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *6*(2), 123–151. https://doi.org/10.1207/s15327957pspr0602_03

Fraley, R. C. (2019). Attachment in adulthood: Recent developments, emerging debates, and future directions. *Annual Review of Psychology*, *70*(1), 401–422. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-psych-010418-102813

Fraley, R. C., & Brumbaugh, C. C. (2004). A dynamical systems approach to conceptualizing and studying stability and change in attachment security. In W. S. Rholes & J. A. Simpson (Eds.), *Adult attachment: Theory, research, and clinical implications* (pp. 86–132). Guilford Publications.

Fraley, R. C., & Roberts, B. W. (2005). Patterns of continuity: A dynamic model for conceptualizing the stability of individual differences in psychological constructs across the life course. *Psychological Review*, *112*(1), 60–74. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-295x.112.1.60

Fraley, R. C., & Roisman, G. I. (2015). Do early caregiving experiences leave an enduring or transient mark on developmental adaptation? *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *1*, 101–106. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2014.11.007

Fraley, R. C., & Roisman, G. I. (2019). The development of adult attachment styles: Four lessons. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *25*, 26–30. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2018.02.008

Fraley, R. C., Gillath, O., & Deboeck, P. R. (2021). Do life events lead to enduring changes in adult attachment styles? A naturalistic longitudinal investigation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *120*(6), 1567–1606. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000326

Fraley, R. C., Roisman, G. I., & Haltigan, J. D. (2013b). The legacy of early experiences in development: Formalizing alternative models of how early experiences are carried forward over time. *Developmental Psychology*, *49*(1), 109–126. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027852

Fraley, R. C., Roisman, G. I., Booth-LaForce, C., Owen, M. T., & Holland, A. S. (2013a). Interpersonal and genetic origins of adult attachment styles: A longitudinal study from infancy to early adulthood. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *104*(5), 817–838. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031435

Fraley, R. C., Vicary, A. M., Brumbaugh, C. C., & Roisman, G. I. (2011). Patterns of stability in adult attachment: An empirical test of two models of continuity and change. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *101*(5), 974–992. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0024150

Gillath, O., Karantzas, G. C., Romano, D., & Karantzas, K. M. (2022). Attachment security priming: A meta-analysis. *Personality and Social Psychology Review*, *26*(3), 183–241. https://doi.org/10.1177/10888683211054592

Gillath, O., Selcuk, E., & Shaver, P. R. (2008). Moving toward a secure attachment style: Can repeated security priming help? *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, *2/4*(4), 1651–1666. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9004.2008.00120.x

Gillath, O., Sesko, A. K., Shaver, P. R., & Chun, D. S. (2010). Attachment, authenticity, and honesty: Dispositional and experimentally induced security can reduce self- and other-deception. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *98*(5), 841–855. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0019206

Girme, Y. U., Agnew, C. R., VanderDrift, L. E., Harvey, S. M., Rholes, W. S., & Simpson, J. A. (2018). The ebbs and flows of attachment: Within-person variation in attachment undermine secure individuals' relationship wellbeing across time. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *114*(3), 397–421. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000115

Girme, Y. U., Park, Y., & MacDonald, G. (2022). Coping or thriving? Reviewing intrapersonal, interpersonal, and societal factors associated with well-being in singlehood from a within-group perspective. *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, *0*(0), 17456916221136119. https://doi.org/10.1177/17456916221136119

Givertz, M., & Safford, S. (2011). Longitudinal impact of communication patterns on romantic attachment and symptoms of depression. *Current Psychology*, *30*(2), 148–172. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-011-9106-1

Hazan, C., & Shaver, P. (1987). Romantic love conceptualized as an attachment process. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *52*(3), 511–524. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.52.3.511

Hudson, N. W., & Chopik, W. J. (2023). Seeing you reminds me of things that never happened: Attachment anxiety predicts false memories when people can see the communicator. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *124*(2), 396–412. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000447

Hudson, N. W., & Fraley, R. C. (2016). Do people's desires to change their personality traits vary with age? An examination of trait change goals across adulthood. *Social Psychological and Personality Science*, *7*(8), 847–856. https://doi.org/10.1177/1948550616657598

Hudson, N. W., & Fraley, R. C. (2018). Moving toward greater security: The effects of repeatedly priming attachment security and anxiety. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *74*, 147–157. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2018.04.002

Hudson, N. W., Chopik, W. J., & Briley, D. A. (2020). Volitional change in adult attachment: Can people who want to become less anxious and avoidant move closer towards realizing those goals? *European Journal of Personality*, *34*(1), 93–114. https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2226

Hudson, N. W., Fraley, R. C., Briley, D. A., & Chopik, W. J. (2021). Your personality does not care whether you believe it can change: Beliefs about whether personality can change do not predict trait change among emerging adults. *European Journal of Personality*, *35*(3), 340–357. https://doi.org/10.1002/per.2289

Hudson, N. W., Fraley, R. C., Brumbaugh, C. C., & Vicary, A. M. (2014). Coregulation in romantic partners' attachment styles: A longitudinal investigation. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *40*(7), 845–857. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167214528989

Hudson, N. W., Fraley, R. C., Chopik, W. J., & Heffernan, M. E. (2015). Not all attachment relationships develop alike: Normative cross-sectional age trajectories in attachment to romantic partners, best friends, and parents. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *59*, 44–55. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2015.10.001

Joel, S., Eastwick, P. W., Allison, C. J., Arriaga, X. B., Baker, Z. G., Bar-Kalifa, E., Bergeron, S., Birnbaum, G. E., Brock, R. L., Brumbaugh, C. C., Carmichael, C. L., Chen, S., Clarke, J., Cobb, R. J., Coolsen, M. K., Davis, J., de Jong, D. C., Debrot,

A., DeHaas, E. C., ... Wolf, S. (2020). Machine learning uncovers the most robust self-report predictors of relationship quality across 43 longitudinal couples studies. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, *117*(32), 19061–19071. https://doi.org/10.1073/pnas.1917036117

Jones, J. D., Fraley, R. C., Ehrlich, K. B., Stern, J. A., Lejuez, C. W., Shaver, P. R., & Cassidy, J. (2018). Stability of attachment style in adolescence: An empirical test of alternative developmental processes. *Child Development*, *89*(3), 871–880. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12775

Kandler, C., Bleidorn, W., Riemann, R., Angleitner, A., & Spinath, F. M. (2012). Life events as environmental states and genetic traits and the role of personality: A longitudinal twin study [journal article]. *Behavior Genetics*, *42*(1), 57–72. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10519-011-9491-0

Karney, B. R., & Bradbury, T. N. (2005). Contextual influences on marriage: implications for policy and intervention. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *14*(4), 171–174. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0963-7214.2005.00358.x

Kirkpatrick, L. A., & Hazan, C. (1994). Attachment styles and close relationships: A four-year prospective study. *Personal Relationships*, *1*(2), 123–142. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.1994.tb00058.x

Klohnen, E. C., & Bera, S. (1998). Behavioral and experiential patterns of avoidantly and securely attached women across adulthood: A 31-year longitudinal perspective. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *74*(1), 211–223. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.74.1.211

Klohnen, E. C., & John, O. P. (1998). Working models of attachment: A theory-based prototype approach. In J. A. Simpson & W. S. Rholes (Eds.), *Attachment theory and close relationships* (pp. 115–140). Guilford Press.

Kross, E., Ayduk, O., & Mischel, W. (2005). When asking "why" does not hurt distinguishing rumination from reflective processing of negative emotions. *Psychological Science*, *16*(9), 709–715. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2005.01600.x

Lehnart, J., & Neyer, F. J. (2006). Should I stay or should I go? Attachment and personality in stable and instable romantic relationships. *European Journal of Personality: Published for the European Association of Personality Psychology*, *20*(6), 475–495. https://doi.org/10.1002/per.606

Lemay, E. P., & Dudley, K. L. (2011). Caution: Fragile! Regulating the interpersonal security of chronically insecure partners. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *100*(4), 681–702. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0021655

Levine, A., & Heller, R. S. F. (2012). *Attached: The new science of adult attachment and how it can help you find--and keep--love.* Penguin House LLC.

Lewis, M. (1997). *Altering fate: Why the past does not predict the future*. Guilford Press.

Little, K. C., McNulty, J. K., & Russell, V. M. (2010). Sex buffers intimates against the negative implications of attachment insecurity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *36*(4), 484–498. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167209352494

Loewenstein, G., Krishnamurti, T., Kopsic, J., & McDonald, D. (2015). Does increased sexual frequency enhance happiness? *Journal of Economic Behavior & Organization*, *116*, 206–218. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2015.04.021

Luhmann, M., Fassbender, I., Alcock, M., & Haehner, P. (2021). A dimensional taxonomy of perceived characteristics of major life events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *121*(3), 633–668. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000291

Magai, C. (2008). Attachment in middle and later life. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (2nd ed., pp. 532–551). Guilford Press.

Mickelson, K. D., Kessler, R. C., & Shaver, P. R. (1997). Adult attachment in a nationally representative sample. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *73*(5), 1092–1106. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.73.5.1092

Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2017). *Attachment in adulthood: Structure, dynamics, and change*. The Guilford Press.

Mikulincer, M., Hirschberger, G., Nachmias, O., & Gillath, O. (2001). The affective component of the secure base schema: Affective priming with representations of attachment security. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *81*(2), 305–321. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.81.2.305

Mizrahi, M., Hirschberger, G., Mikulincer, M., Szepsenwol, O., & Birnbaum, G. E. (2016). Reassuring sex: Can sexual desire and intimacy reduce relationship-specific attachment insecurities? *European Journal of Social Psychology*, *46*(4), 467–480. https://doi.org/10.1002/ejsp.2184

Monin, J. K., Schulz, R., & Kershaw, T. S. (2013). Caregiving spouses' attachment orientations and the physical and psychological health of individuals with Alzheimer's disease. *Aging & Mental Health*, *17*(4), 508–516. https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2012.747080

Murray, S. L. (2005). Regulating the risks of closeness: A relationship-specific sense of felt security. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *14*(2), 74–78. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0963-7214.2005.00338.x

Noftle, E. E., & Shaver, P. R. (2006). Attachment dimensions and the big five personality traits: Associations and comparative ability to predict relationship quality. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *40*(2), 179–208. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2004.11.003

Oh, J., Chopik, W. J., & Lucas, R. E. (2022). Happiness singled out: Bidirectional associations between singlehood and life satisfaction. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *48*(11), 1597–1613. https://doi.org/10.1177/01461672211049049

Overall, N. C., Girme, Y. U., Lemay, E. P., Jr., & Hammond, M. D. (2014). Attachment anxiety and reactions to relationship threat: The benefits and costs of inducing guilt in romantic partners. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *106*(2), 235–256. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0034371

Overall, N. C., Simpson, J. A., & Struthers, H. (2013). Buffering attachment-related avoidance: Softening emotional and behavioral defenses during conflict discussions. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *104*(5), 854–871. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031798

Park, Y., Impett, E. A., MacDonald, G., & Lemay, E. P., Jr. (2019). Saying "thank you": Partners' expressions of gratitude protect relationship satisfaction and commitment from the harmful effects of attachment insecurity. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *117*(4), 773–806. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000178

Pepping, C. A., MacDonald, G., & Davis, P. J. (2018). Toward a psychology of singlehood: An attachment-theory perspective on long-term singlehood. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *27*(5), 324–331. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721417752106

Picardi, A., Giuliani, E., & Gigantesco, A. (2020). Genes and environment in attachment. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, *112*, 254–269. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neubiorev.2020.01.038

Pietromonaco, P. R., & Carnelley, K. B. (1994). Gender and working models of attachment: Consequences for perceptions of self and romantic relationships. *Personal Relationships*, *1*(1), 63–82. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.1994.tb00055.x

Pietromonaco, P. R., Uchino, B., & Dunkel Schetter, C. (2013). Close relationship processes and health: Implications of attachment theory for health and disease. *Health Psychology*, *32*(5), 499–513. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029349

Raby, K. L., Roisman, G. I., Fraley, R. C., & Simpson, J. A. (2015). The enduring predictive significance of early maternal sensitivity: Social and academic competence through age 32 years. *Child Development*, *86*(3), 695–708. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdev.12325

Roberts, B. W., & Caspi, A. (2003). The cumulative continuity model of personality development: Striking a balance between continuity and change in personality traits across the life course. In U. Staudinger & U. Lindenberger (Eds.), *Understanding human development* (pp. 183–214). Springer US.

Roberts, B. W., & Nickel, L. (2017). A critical evaluation of the neosocioanalytic model of personality. In J. Specht (Ed.), *Personality development across the lifespan* (pp. 157–177). Elsevier.

Roberts, B. W., Wood, D., & Smith, J. L. (2005). Evaluating Five Factor Theory and social investment perspectives on personality trait development. *Journal of Research in Personality*, *39*(1), 166–184. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2004.08.002

Roisman, G. I., & Fraley, R. C. (2012). The legacy of early interpersonal experience. *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, *42*, 79–112.

Roisman, G. I., & Fraley, R. C. (2013). Developmental mechanisms underlying the legacy of childhood experiences. *Child Development Perspectives*, *7*(3), 149–154. https://doi.org/10.1111/cdep.12030

Sakaluk, J. K. (2014). Problems with recall-based attachment style priming paradigms. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, *31*(7), 888–906. https://doi.org/10.1177/0265407513508728

Schindler, I., Fagundes, C. P., & Murdock, K. W. (2010). Predictors of romantic relationship formation: Attachment style, prior relationships, and dating goals. *Personal Relationships*, *17*(1), 97–105. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-6811.2010.01255.x

Schwaba, T., Bleidorn, W., Hopwood, C. J., Manuck, S. B., & Wright, A. G. (2022). Refining the maturity principle of personality development by examining facets, close others, and comaturation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *122*(5), 942–958. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspp0000400

Segal, D. L., Needham, T. N., & Coolidge, F. L. (2009). Age differences in attachment orientations among younger and older adults: Evidence from two self-report measures of attachment. *International Journal of Aging and Human Development*, *69*(2), 119–132. https://doi.org/10.2190/ag.69.2.c

Selcuk, E., Zayas, V., Günaydin, G., Hazan, C., & Kross, E. (2012). Mental representations of attachment figures facilitate recovery following upsetting autobiographical memory recall. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *103*(2), 362–378. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028125

Shallcross, S. L., & Simpson, J. A. (2012). Trust and responsiveness in strain-test situations: A dyadic perspective. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *102*(5), 1031–1044. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026829

Shaver, P. R., & Fraley, R. C. (2008). Attachment, loss, and grief: Bowlby's views and current controversies. In J. Cassidy & P. R. Shaver (Eds.), *Handbook of attachment: Theory, research, and clinical applications* (2nd ed., pp. 48–77). Guilford Press.

Shaver, P. R., Schachner, D. A., & Mikulincer, M. (2005). Attachment style, excessive reassurance seeking, relationship processes, and depression. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, *31*(3), 343–359. https://doi.org/10.1177/0146167204271709

Simpson, J. A., & Overall, N. C. (2014). Partner buffering of attachment insecurity. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, *23*(1), 54–59. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721413510933

Simpson, J. A., Rholes, W. S., & Winterheld, H. A. (2010). Attachment working models twist memories of relationship events. *Psychological Science*, *21*(2), 252–259. https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797609357175

Slade, A., & Holmes, J. (2019). Attachment and psychotherapy. *Current Opinion in Psychology*, *25*, 152–156. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2018.06.008

Sroufe, L. A. (2005). Attachment and development: A prospective, longitudinal study from birth to adulthood. *Attachment & Human Development*, *7*(4), 349–367. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616730500365928

Sroufe, L. A., Egeland, B., Carlson, E. A., & Collins, W. A. (2005). *The development of the person: The Minnesota study of risk and adaptation from birth to adulthood*. Guilford Press.

Stanley, S. M., Bradbury, T. N., & Markman, H. J. (2000). Structural flaws in the bridge from basic research on marriage to interventions for couples. *Journal of Marriage and Family*, 62(1), 256–264. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1741-3737.2000.00256.x

Stanton, S. C., Campbell, L., & Pink, J. C. (2017). Benefits of positive relationship experiences for avoidantly attached individuals. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 113(4), 568–588. https://doi.org/10.1037/pspi0000098

Umemura, T., Lacinova, L., Kraus, J., Horska, E., & Pivodova, L. (2018). Adolescents' multiple versus single primary attachment figures, reorganization of attachment hierarchy, and adjustments: The important people interview approach. *Attachment & Human Development*, 20(5), 532–552. https://doi.org/10.1080/14616734.2018.1464040

Waldinger, R. J., Cohen, S., Schulz, M. S., & Crowell, J. A. (2015). Security of attachment to spouses in late life: Concurrent and prospective links with cognitive and emotional well-being. *Clinical Psychological Science*, 3(4), 516–529. https://doi.org/10.1177/2167702614541261

Weidmann, R., & Chopik, W. J. (2022). Romantic attachment, stress, and cognitive functioning in a large sample of middle-aged and older couples. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 98, 104233. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jrp.2022.104233

Welker, K. M., Baker, L., Padilla, A., Holmes, H., Aron, A., & Slatcher, R. B. (2014). Effects of self-disclosure and responsiveness between couples on passionate love within couples. *Personal Relationships*, 21(4), 692–708. https://doi.org/10.1111/pere.12058

Wiebe, S. A., Johnson, S. M., Burgess Moser, M., Dalgleish, T. L., & Tasca, G. A. (2017). Predicting follow-up outcomes in emotionally focused couple Therapy: The role of change in trust, relationship-specific attachment, and emotional engagement. *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 43(2), 213–226. https://doi.org/10.1111/jmft.12199

Zhang, F., & Labouvie-Vief, G. (2004). Stability and fluctuation in adult attachment style over a 6-year period. *Attachment & Human Development*, 6(4), 419–437. https://doi.org/10.1080/1461673042000303127

AUTHOR BIOGRAPHIES

William J. Chopik (PhD) is an Associate Professor at Michigan State University. He studies the continuity and change of relationship processes across the life span and individual differences in responses to intimacy.

Rebekka Weidmann (PhD) is a Postdoctoral Research Associate at Michigan State University and holds a senior adjunct research position at University of Basel. She studies how people become who they are due to their romantic partners, families, and peers, and how personality shapes these relationships.

Jeewon Oh (PhD) is an Assistant Professor at Syracuse University. She studies how people find health and happiness both inside and out of close relationships.