# **Tendencies Interview: Instructions**

# **Construction**

The interview is based on a number of basic principles:

# Attachment dyads and their behavioral tendencies

This sample interview form is structured like a questionnaire with answers in the form of Likert scales. It is particularly suitable in the context of anamnesis or other exploration and for generating hypotheses. The interview has a dual purpose: diagnostic screening and psychoeducation. The answers allow a rough impression of the governing attachment-related tendencies between the two people and secondly, by going through the interview, the attachment theory is explained to the client and the basis for the subsequent consultation is laid.

The interview is very highly structured. With the closed questions, it offers neither the specialist nor the client freedom. The figures are manipulated exclusively by the specialist and only according to a pattern given for each question. As a result, the implementation is very uniform and conveys a high level of security to both the specialist and the client. It is therefore well suited for specialists who want to gain initial experience in working with the BondingBoard and for clients who have their first contacts with the instrument. They can also familiarize themselves with the material in this way and can then probably be integrated more freely in other types of interviews or in free use.

At the same time, it is a very varied interview if you leave the formulated question forms. Even in a free consultation, you can always fall back on the closed rating question templates presented here and adapt them to the current consultation process.

To make it easier to start using the interview, the texts are formulated so that they can be read 1 to 1. It is not a standardized procedure, so you can of course deviate from these formulations. However, it is advisable to observe certain principles that were observed during construction:

The insecure attachment patterns are often spontaneously classified as inferior. Self-assessments are subject to the risk that the answers will be falsified in the direction of social desirability. In order to counteract this effect, the descriptions were formulated as value-neutral as possible, and they should also be presented paraverbally in a value-neutral manner.

In the sequence, it was also ensured that the behavior of the other person was asked first and then the behavior of the carer. So the resounding question of causality and guilt should not move into the center.

The terms for the people were chosen in such a way that the interview can be used both in an educational and in an adult context. "People/Counterpart" and "Relationship person" can be replaced by the terms that correspond to the specific client, i.e. "Child/Adolescent", "Parents/Mother/Father", "Teacher/Special Education Teacher", "Carer", "supervisor", "partner" or even "boss and employee". In this way, the interview is transformed from an original tool for parent and teacher counseling to an instrument in individual or couple therapy, in self-awareness or in leadership coaching. However, we do not yet have any empirical experience for such variants. Feedback would be welcomed.

#### Gradual

This interview reflects the attitude, that all humans carry within themselves all four orientations of attachment to a certain extent, the distribution is simply very different from person to person. So the focus

is not on a categorical diagnosis. It's not about being able to assign "their" attachment type to a person. The interview therefore bears the term "tendencies" and not "type" or "style" in the title. This also makes it easier to point out to individuals who want to change a reaction tendency the aspects they already share in other patterns, making the BondingBoard a useful tool for all variants of resource-oriented approaches or for working with inner parts.

It should therefore be pointed out that the gradations that are collected in this survey only indicate the answers of the respondents and must not be interpreted as a type of attachment. Due to the theory-based structure, a face validity of the instrument can be assumed, but no standard data is available for this interview, and it was not checked whether the questions statistically correlate with validated attachment diagnostics.

We also know that attachment types are not evenly distributed across the population. It may very well be the case, that a person who assesses their disorganized tendencies lower than their safe ones nevertheless exhibits a disorganized pattern, since this must already be assessed as conspicuous if occurring rarely.

# **Attachment and exploration specific**

The attachment theory shows that attachment and exploration behavior are closely associated and are influenced by the experienced caregiving behavior. Just as a complementary parental caring pattern is assigned to the child's attachment pattern, a parental "encouragement behavior" is assigned to the child's exploratory behavior and designated with Greek letters for differentiation.

Attachment theory does not postulate a construct supporting exploratory behavior, which I would call an "encouragement behavioral system". These parental patterns of behavior are subsumed under attuned caregiving. However, when talking to clients, such as when they are overprotective or have high expectations of performance, it can be helpful to make a clear distinction between "licking fur" as opposed to "poking" and "taking under the wings" as opposed to "throwing out of the nest", even if all of these actions, carried out according to the situation, fall under sensitive and responsive care.

For the description in the following table, two exemplary behaviors were selected for each question. Note, that this differentiation still needs to be refined.

	Question 1 attachment of "B"	Question 2 caregiving by "A"	Pattern	Question 3 exploration of "B"	Question 4 encouragement by "A"	Pattern	
0'	ver/counter reaction blockage	anxiety neglect	D	over/counter Reaction blockage	humiliation refusal of help	δ	
	alinging turning away	unreliability tension	С	dependency inconsistency	failure expectancy readyness to quit	g	
	independence distraction	belittle wait and see	А	factualness perseverance	disinterest permissiveness	а	
	soothability help-seeking	soothing acceptance	В	flexibility confidence	flexibility encouragement	β	

The distinction between attachment versus exploration or caregiving versus encouragement makes it possible, even in a child with a predominant C-pattern in the area of attachment, to name high levels of avoidance in the area of exploration. In this case one would speak of increased C and  $\alpha$  tendencies. Likewise, the attachment figure's pattern of ability to facilitate calming or stimulate activity can be broken down.

# **Dyad specific**

We bring basic behavioral tendencies with us and the transmission of child attachment patterns from primary to secondary caregivers has been proven. However, we can behave differently in different situations and environments, for example at home or at school, and towards different people, including mother and father.

This interview presents itself as an instrument to record dyad-specific attachment and exploration tendencies and to use them for advice on the problems between these two people. The focus is not a priori on *problem behavior, problematic attachment patterns* or even a *problem person*, but rather the *fit* between the two people.

If you would like to use this instrument for a more general view of the attachment pattern of person B, which goes beyond the dyad, the passage meaning "in your presence" can be omitted from questions 1 and 3. Or at the end of the block, an optional question like this can be added: "Does B only behave like this when you are present, or is this a general pattern? How is it with person C, D, E?"

# **Situation specific**

This interview is designed for a rough assessment of behavioral tendencies. If an individual problem situation is to be examined in an attachment focused manner, it is more advisable to conduct the Situation Interview. However, the types of question presented here can also be modified in relation to a situation, which can be useful if you want to contrast a general tendency with a particular situation.

The questions are then modified as follows:

- "1. People often show one or more of the following reaction patterns when they have a stress or a problem like the one we want to discuss .... " "
- 2. People in relationships often also show one or several of the following reaction patterns when the other person is exposed to such a stress or problem as we are just discussing. Again, think about which occurs with you and how often when B gets into this stress. ..."
- "3. When it comes to going to be active, approaching a job, trying something new, doing something on your own, there are also typical patterns in people's behavior. Again, think about which pattern B follows and how often, when B is faced with this or a similarly difficult task as we are now discussing and it is unclear whether B can do it..."
- "4. Relationship figures also have typical behavior when it comes to offering a counterpart space or encouraging to do something difficult. Again, consider what pattern you often follow with B in the situation discussed."

Alternatively, it is also possible to carry out the interview as specified and to add after each question or at the end of the four questions in each question block: "This is how it looks in general. And in the specific situation that we have discussed?"

#### More variants

**Questioning B:** The wording is designed for questioning the person "A" who is responsible for the care of the person named "B". Depending on the situation, it may be useful to conduct the same interview with a "B" person, such as a child or other person who is under stress. The wording must then be adjusted accordingly.

**Systemic:** The BondingBoard, including this interview, is also suitable for systemically oriented questioning for example in family and other multi-person settings. If the questions are presented to mother and father, it will be perfect setting to exchange observations, possibly agreeing on a common perspective, naming differences or identifying differences between the dyads mother-child and father-child. If parents and child and possibly teachers are interviewed together, further perspectives are added, which open up further circular question possibilities. For example: "Peter, what do you think your mom will answer if I ask this question? .... And is she right?"

**Group-oriented:** You can proceed in a similar way if you want to illuminate not only an individual in the system but also groups in the system. A character or possibly a game piece can be selected to be put on the B side, symbolically standing for a specific group. The question then is not how does individual "B" behave, but how, for example, "your school class", "the group of girls in your class" behaves or how "your employees" or "the employees of the marketing department" behave. The A-side can also be represented as a group, for example if 'leadership 'questions are to be considered. "What is the basic tenor of the faculty towards this class?" or "How is management reacting in this crisis?" Likewise, when you talk about "the parents...", you also implicitly form a group.

**Self-reflective:** If you shift the point of observation of adults, such as parents and teachers, from the present to their own childhood, the result is a self-reflective interview. The beginning of question 1 is then, for example, like this: "Think about which reaction pattern you presented how often when you were still a child, for example at primary school age?" This raises parallels between parent and child or questions of self-reflection and compatibility. "Do I bring similar pattern with me?", "How did I experience school as a child?", etc. For therapists, this form of questioning can be used for self-awareness and for reviewing transference and countertransference issues. These are questions that are also options in the training of other specialists.

Historical or hypothetical-future-oriented: The interview can also be used flexibly regarding the time axis without role reversal. One can ask from a historical perspective, "What was the adolescent like when he was younger?", "How did the teacher behave before the child had shown the problem behavior?", "What type were you before you had experienced the trauma" etc. In the same way one can ask hypothetically or with a focus on therapy goals and the future: "What will it be like when this and that is achieved", "What would the distribution be like if everything were 'good'?", etc.

# **Administration & Evaluation**

# **Presentation and Coding**

The interview can be read, presented in free form or in a modification as described above. Clients respond on the scaling template provided in the BondingBoard box. The windows or tokens used to set the

response are either placed in the client's hand with no baseline set or placed on the mean baseline 3 preset. The questioning specialist encodes the answers on the "Behavioral tendencies answer sheet" contained in this document.

y-axis: emotion / arousal

AX4Y4	AX3Y4	AX2Y4	AX1Y4	BX1Y4	BX2Y4	BX3Y4	BX4Y4	4
AX4Y3	AX3Y3	AX2Y3	AX1Y3	BX1Y3	BX2Y3	BX3Y3	BX4Y3	3
AX4Y2	AX3Y2	AX2Y2	AX1Y2	BX1Y2	BX2Y2	BX3Y2	BX4Y2	2
AX4Y1	AX3Y1	AX2Y1	AX1Y1	BX1Y1	BX2Y1	BX3Y1	BX4Y1	1
4	3	2	1	1	2	3	4	
A				В				

x-axis: closeness

## **Interpretation**

There are no norms charts (yet). Whether clients choose a score of 2 or 4 or 5 says nothing about how that score compares to an overall population, let alone to different client or age groups. The value only gets its

score compares to an overall population, let alone to different client or age groups. The value only gets its signification by comparing it with the other values on the answer sheet.

### Comparison within a question:

Comparisons within a question allow statements such as: "Mrs. X estimates the behavioral tendency of B according to question 1a (blue) at 4, and to question 1b (green) significantly lower, namely at 2." In the present example, the value of 2 for the disorganized, red pattern, which usually occurs relatively infrequently, could already be significant, especially since the safe pattern, blue, which tends to occur more frequently, ranks just slightly above the mean value of 3.

### Comparisons in the dyad:

Question 1 & 2: It may be interesting to compare the top row questions on the dyad's attachment and caregiving behaviors. The rule of thumb is: if there is a complementary – ie just as high – reaction to behavioral patterns that show high values, this will be reinforced. In our example, the two patterns are similar and only in blue we see complementary reactions.

Question 3 & 4: The same principle applies to

the comparison within the dyad in the bottom row, regarding exploring and encouraging behavior. In our example you can see that the avoidant, green part is not being reinforced by A. On the other hand, it is worth taking a second look at the red scale. The caregiver shows a very balanced profile with no clearly

dominant pattern. Therefore, it may be worthwhile to have a more detailed look at the slightly increased value for the overreactions.

## Comparisons within the individual:

**Questions 1 & 3:** By comparing the values in the left-hand column, differences in how B deals with situations relevant to attachment (top) and exploration (bottom) can be examined.

In the example shown, in contrast to question 1, question 3 shows a clear tendency towards avoidance. It could be further examined here why this person reduces the rate of overreactions under performance requirements, but then reacts more avoidantly at the expense of the secure pattern.

**Question 2 & 4:** The right column compares care (top) and encouragement (bottom) from the caregiver. The example suggests two differences: If the person changes from caregiving to encouragement behavior, the tendency to overreact increases, while that to remain calm decreases.

# **Crosswise comparisons:**

In theory, crosswise biases should be less significant. However, since attachment and exploration are associated, effects can also be expected here. If we visualize the sequence of movements of secure attachment and secure exploration on the BondingBoard, one could postulate the following:

**Questions 1 & 4:** Secure attachment is only dependent on secure care, which is sufficient to be able to accompany a child towards 'close' and 'calm' (BX1Y1). The values for question 4, the encouraging behavior, are therefore not irrelevant but likely to be less relevant for question 1, the attachment behavior, so this cross-comparison makes little sense.

**Question 2 & 3:** The secure exploration movement relies on a calm starting point (BX1Y1). So it is not enough if a child is encouraged to explore if security had not be established beforehand. Learning encouragement starting off from a stressed situation (yellow/Y=3) does not lead to good learning effects. It would therefore be plausible here, that negative effects can be assumed in exploration if either care *or* encouragement turn out to be unfavorable. A cross comparison of question 2 and 3 makes therefore sense.

# **Evaluation:**

It is important to point out again, that the values or graphic profiles that can be displayed on the evaluation sheet must not be overinterpreted as "attachment patterns" or even "attachment styles". They are assessments by person A about their relationship to person B. If the interview is not to be used 'only' as a basis for advice for this dyad, but rather as part of a more general attachment diagnostics, then it should at most be used as a screening instrument for generating hypotheses or as a validation instrument in addition to an established attachment diagnostics procedure.

### **Administration**

#### Introduction

People who do not yet know the BondingBoard are introduced like this or something similar:

This is a kind of game board on which typical behavior patterns can be represented or reenacted. The child has one side of the board to move around in, and the caregiver has their own, which can be the mother, father, or even a teacher or other caregiver.

Now there are four columns on each side where emotional closeness can be represented. Either the person is emotionally close to the other person or seeks closeness, or they are available, reachable, ie a child may be playing or working on something and the mother, father, teacher or other caregiver is otherwise busy, maybe that child is even out of sight in the children's room or in a play area, but if it were to call, the caregiver would be available and would come because they are emotionally responsive. In the third column, the person is no longer reachable emotionally, closed off, maybe sulking. And all the way to the side the person is physically absent, in another room or place.

Then there are four lines that represent the emotional behavior. Blue is calm, green is active, yellow is stressed, and red is scared or angry.

#### Questions

The procedural sequence recommended here, question 1-2-3-4, has proven its worth. However, it can be adapted as desired without the client having to fear problems of understanding due to a lack of prior information. The reverse sequence of questions "How do you behave" (question 2), followed by "how does B behave" (question 1) implicitly leads to the attribution "B reacts to A's previous behavior". Since every behavior in relationships represents action and reaction, this is not wrong and can also be specifically chosen depending on the goal of the interview.

The topic of exploration has less of an impact on the topic of attachment. It is therefore conceivable to omit questions 3 and 4 in the case of a purely attachment/care issue. On the other hand, secure attachment/caring is also a prerequisite for exploration. It is therefore advisable to include the attachment/care components, and thus questions 1 and 2, even in the case of purely exploratory or performance-related questions.

# Attachment: copy template

- Question sheet: 2 pages
- Scoring sheet & supplementary questions: 2 pages

Status: BBB-Ten, version 2.2, September 2022

Professionals interested in contributing to the validation and further development of this interview can contact hello@bondingboard.com. Anyone who agrees to participate in the further development will receive our questionnaire templates and scoring sheets free of charge.

Tendencies-Interview BBB- Ten-V2.2

### 1. Counterpart in stressful situation (attachment behavior)

Often when people are stressed or faced with a problem, they display one or more of the following four response patterns. Consider how often B displays each pattern when B is around you. I'll give you a colored marker to place at the appropriate value on this scale. It goes from 0 to 6, which means 0 to 100% or "never or almost never" going up to "always or almost always".

Suppose B is in your vicinity (BX2Y2) and a stress arises (on BX2Y3).

- a) One reaction pattern would then be like this: B seeks help or proximity (on BX1Y3), experiences some stress, but generally accepts help and can be calmed down easily, if it is not something really serious (on BX1Y1). This is the blue pattern.
  - >> Now place the blue marker where you spontaneously think it fits best. You can always adjust it later if I read out on new reaction pattern and the comparisons shift. They are estimates.
- b) The green pattern: B (back to BX2Y2) usually solves problems independently. Some stress may arise (on BX2Y3), but B does not immediately seek help, but can usually calm down without assistance, seeking distraction, engaging in a new activity (BX2Y2) or withdrawing (BX4Y2). And if offered help, B is more likely to say "Everything is fine". >> Place the green marker.
- c) The yellow pattern: B (back to BX2Y2) gets stressed very easily (BX2Y3) seeks proximity (BX1Y3) can often not be calmed down (B briefly move towards blue and back), tends to cling (B briefly slightly over the border in field BX1Y3 and back), and if it takes a while for help to come, B might get angry (BX1Y4) or turn away upset (BX4Y3). >> Place the yellow marker.
- d) The Red Pattern: B (back to BX2Y2) can unexpectedly or completely overreact to certain types of stress or minor incidents, like a switch flicking and B cannot be reached anymore. This can mean panic, complete shutdown or even aggression (BX4Y4). >> Place the red marker.

If necessary, the patterns can be recalled again, and the markers can be moved again. Finally, the position of each color is marked.

#### Optional supplementary questions:

Change focus: Is it good the way it is, or would you wis, the distribution to be different? How?

Dyad-specific: That's how it is between A and B. How about (father, special education teacher, ...)?

Situation-specific: This is how it looks in general. And in the specific situation we discussed?

#### 2. Relationship person with counterpart in stressful situation (caregiving behavior)

People in relationships often show one or more of the following reaction patterns when the other person is exposed to stress. Again, consider which one is most common for you when B is getting stressed.

- a) The blue pattern would be like this: You realize that B is under stress. You check, offer help (AX1Y2), if something serious has happened you may also become somewhat stressed (AX1Y3), but when the danger is over you calm down so that B can also calm down >> Place the blue marker.
- b) The green pattern: (A back on AX2Y2) You notice that B is stressed. You might get a little nervous yourself (A briefly on AX2Y3) but intervene cautiously and remain calm for now (stay on AX2Y2) and perhaps not even interrupt your activity. Then it can be, that B calms down and solves the problem independently (on BX2Y2), and then everything is OK. >> Place the green marker.
- c) The yellow pattern: (A back on AX2Y2) When you realize that B is under stress, you also tend to become nervous (AX2Y3). Then it depends a bit on how much you can handle at the moment: sometimes you are full of energy and rush in, check, help, comfort, ask what exactly happened, etc., are close and active, maybe even a bit over-engaged. And sometimes you realize that you can't take much at the moment and prefer to withdraw (AX4Y3) or stay close but not really calm (on AX1Y3). >> Place the yellow marker.
- d) The red pattern: (A back on AX2Y2) In certain situations, B can drive you crazy or an incident can stress you out completely. This can slowly build up through yellow (move to AX2Y3) until you finally lose it (AX2Y4) or it can suddenly flip from green to red (move from AX2Y2 straight to AX2Y4). Then, it can either get loud, close and even heated (AX1Y4), or you show your disapproval by vehemently turning away (straight to AX4Y4). >> Place the red marker.

If necessary, briefly repeat the pattern, correct the placement of the markers and note the final position.

## Optional supplementary questions:

Change focus: Is it good the way it is, or would you wish the distribution to be different? How?

Dyad-specific: That's how it is between A and B. How about C (father, special education teacher, ...)?

Situation-specific: This is how it looks in general. And in the specific situation we discussed?

### 3. Counterpart in challenge situation (exploration behavior)

When it comes to engaging in an activity, starting a task, trying something new, doing something on one's own, there are also typical patterns in people's behavior. Again, consider what pattern B follows and how often, when you are nearby and B is facing a difficult task of which it is unclear whether B can handle it:

- a) The blue pattern: (BX2Y2) The blue pattern is when the person can tell if something is hard, which might make them a little nervous (BX2Y3), but then they ask for help or advice. This makes them feel more secure and calm (B11), and then they can take action (BX2Y2) while staying in touch. How often does B follow this pattern? >> Place blue marker Or If it's hard to say because it depends on the situation, e.g. school vs. home / math vs. writing? >> then use 2 blue markers.
- b) The green pattern: (BX2Y2) This kind of pattern means, one doesn't seek much help (very briefly only halfway to BX2Y1 and back), is independent and doesn't actively share what one is up to (BX2Y3). If at all, one shows something when it's going well. When things get difficult, one prefers to tough it out alone or work around the challenge somehow. >> Place the green marker (2 green markers if necessary).
- c) The yellow pattern: (BX2Y2) This type of pattern shows a rather stressed and inconsistent reaction to demands or freedoms (BX2Y3). The level of confidence varies a lot. Sometimes they manage to take it on with a lot of support (BX2Y1), while other times they are simply blocked (BX2Y3). >> Place yellow marker, maybe 2.
- d) The Red Pattern: (BX2Y2) This pattern is more difficult to grasp. Sometimes, even small things related to expectations or rules are enough to trigger complete overreactions (BX1Y4 to X4Y4). >> Place red marker, possibly 2.

If necessary, briefly repeat the pattern, correct the placement of the markers and note the definitive position.

Exploration-specific supplementary question: Is that only the case with duties, or is this also B's pattern for dealing with freedoms? >> Mark additional information with F=freedoms

#### Optional supplementary questions:

Change focus: Is it good the way it is, or would you wish the distribution to be different? How?

Dyad-specific: That's how it is between A and B. How about C (father, special education teacher, ...)?

Situation-specific: This is how it looks in general. And in the specific situation we discussed?

### 4. Relationship person with counterpart in challenge situation (encouraging behavior)

Relationships also have typical behaviors when it comes to giving someone space or encouraging to do something difficult. Again, consider the pattern you often follow with B:

- a) The blue pattern: (AX2Y2) This pattern is rather calm and confident (AX2Y1), motivates and supports when needed (AX1Y1), but if one believes in B's ability, one holds back (AX2Y1), remains available or checks things briefly, without interfering unnecessarily (AX2Y1 on Y2). >> Place the blue marker. Possibly 2.
- b) The green pattern: (AX2Y2) This pattern motivates B to judge independently whether the task is manageable. If so, one tends to step back (AX4Y2) and let B have the experience positive or negative. If no, it doesn't matter either, because it's OK too (AX2Y2). >> Place the green marker, maybe 2.
- c) The yellow pattern: (AX2Y2) This pattern is rather unstable and comes into play when one is not so sure what can be handled by B (AX2Y3). On one hand, one sympathizes and helps more than necessary (AX1Y3), and on the other hand, one needs to set boundaries if it becomes too much or if the help is not really being accepted (AX4Y3). >> Place yellow marker, possibly 2.
- d) The red pattern: (AX2Y2) This type is also more difficult to classify in relation persons. One thing they have in common, however, is that there are overreactions or intensities, such as statements or actions that one may later regret or abrupt withdrawal (AX1Y4 to X4Y4). >> Place red marker, possibly 2.

If necessary, briefly repeat the pattern, correct the placement of the markers and note the definitive position.

### Optional supplementary questions:

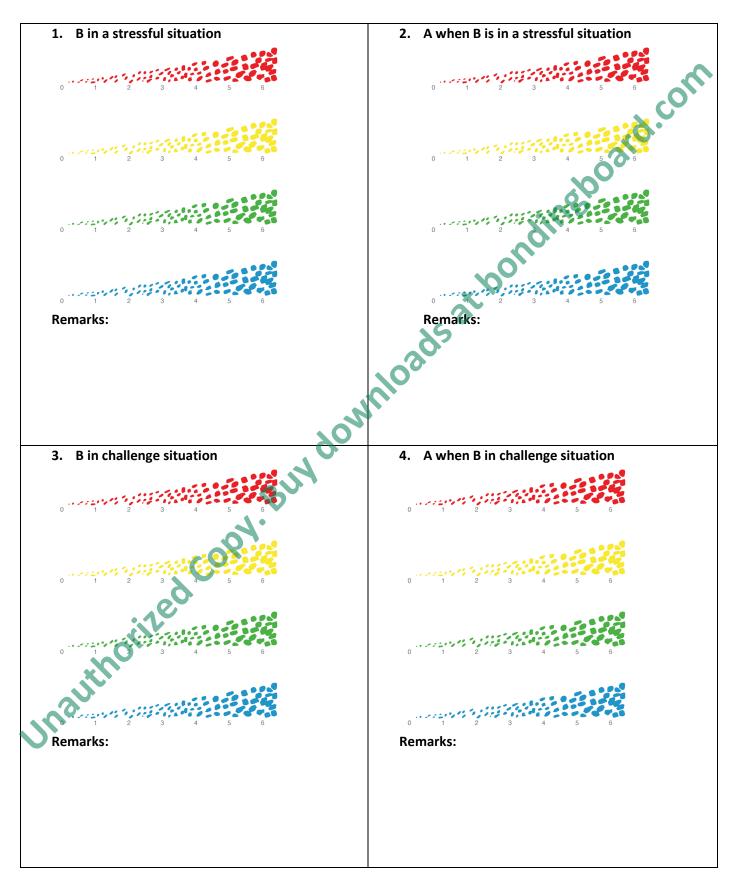
Change focus: Is it good the way it is, or would you wish, the distribution to be different? How?

Dyad-specific: That's how it is between A and B. How about C (father, special education teacher, ...)?

Situation-specific: This is how it looks in general. And in the specific situation we discussed?

# **Behavioral Tendencies Answer Sheet**

Name: ...... Date: ....... TA: ...... TA: ......



### Suggestions for reflection with clients:

Was it easy to answer? If not, where not? Why do you think?

Did anything stand out to you when answering the questions?

s there a particular aspect you would like to explore further?

Which markers' positions do you feel good about and why?

Which markers do you not feel good about? How would you like them to shift?

### Suggestions for reflection by the specialist:

oads at bonding to a the oat of t Compare attachment/caring (question 1 with question 2) and/with exploration/encouragement (3 with 4). And compare tendencies of B / child (question 1 with 3) and/with tendencies with A / parents (2 with 4).

From an attachment theory perspective, what stands out in the client's responses?

Is it worth incorporating additional perspectives?

Are there any psychoeducational aspects that could be communicated to the client?

Are there any indications for helpful attachment-guided measures? Any red flags?

Which area should be explored further? Attachment, caregiving, exploration, encouragement? The client's perspective, the perspective of others?

Are there any connections to other theoretical approaches? Any contradictions?