

**Attachment
Styles
in the
Workplace**



Michael LeBlanc
Licensed Counselling Therapist

2

Questions

How do you think your early experiences with your parents or caregivers have influenced how you relate to others in your adult relationships?

How do you handle conflict or disagreements in your current relationships? Are there any patterns you have noticed?

What is Attachment?

Lasting psychological connectedness

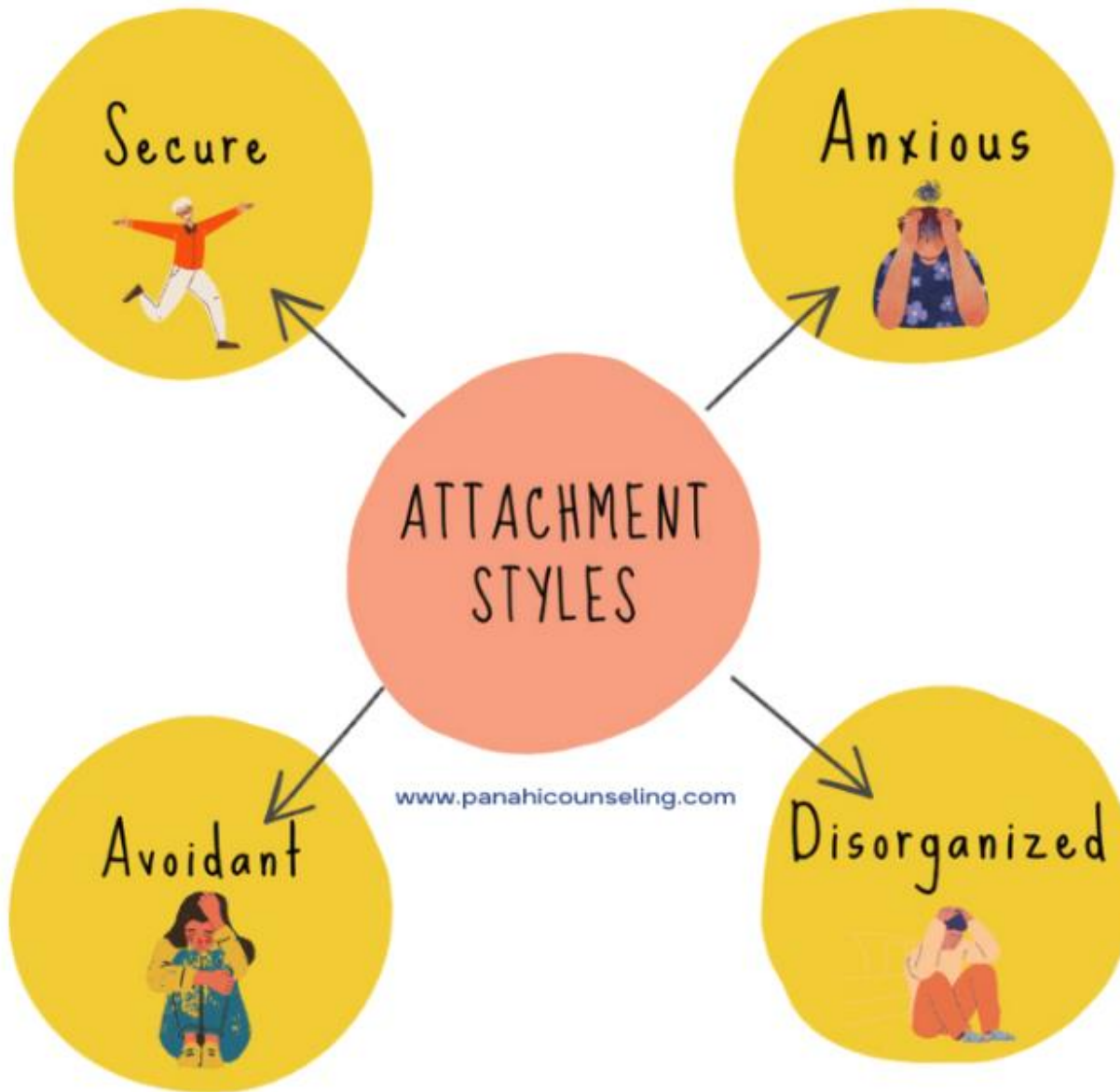
What are Attachment Styles?

Different ways of interacting in relationships - based mainly on early childhood experiences with primary caregivers

Better Yourself 365

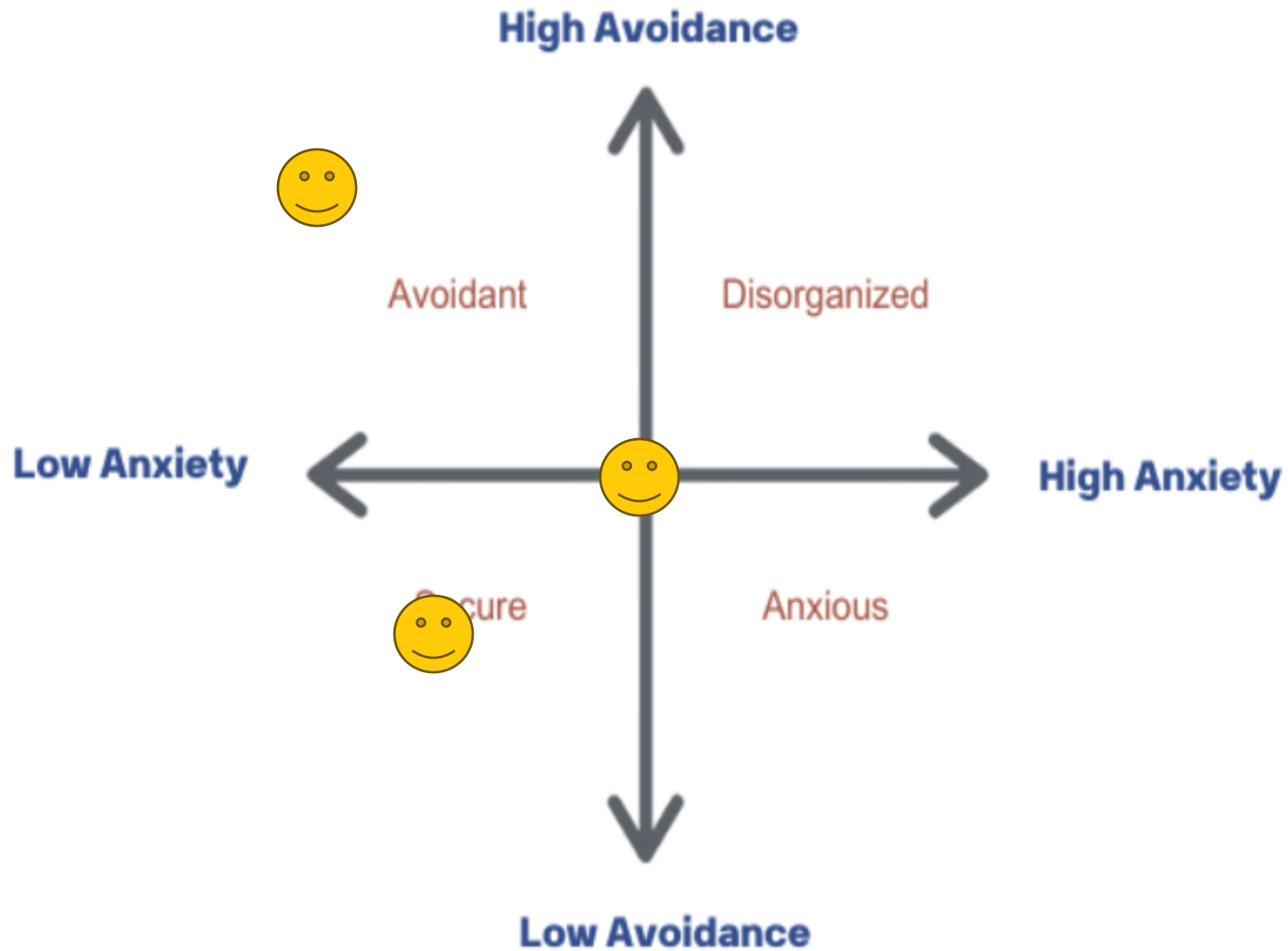
Why Should You Care About This?

- Secure attachment amongst colleagues is one of the highest predictors of contentment at work (Leiter & Maslach, 1999)
- It can be a guide to help you make positive changes in your work relationships
- It may help explain why some people treat you the way they do
- It may help explain why you treat colleagues the way you do



What are
the four
Attachment
Styles?

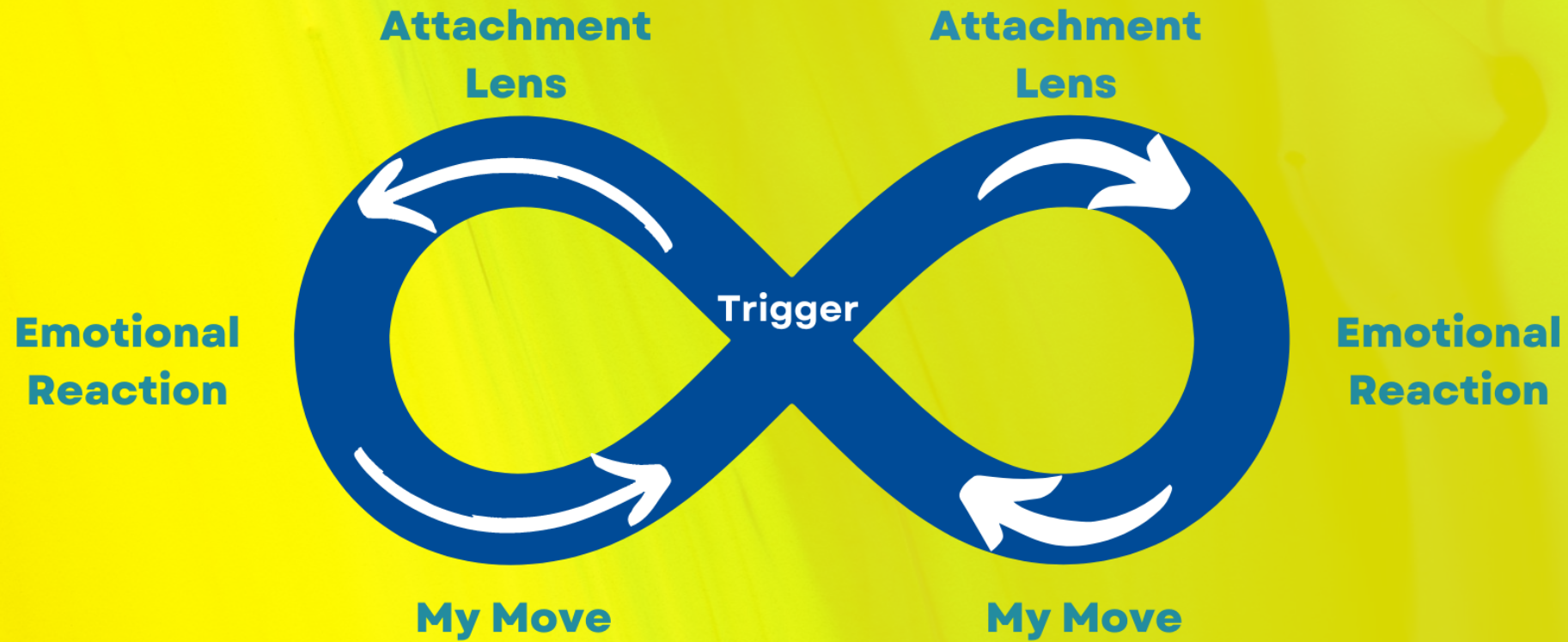
What are the four Attachment Styles?



Other tidbits about attachment styles

- Your attachment style at work is likely your attachment style with your romantic partner
- You can have a mixture of anxious/avoidant, but we generally have a dominant style
- You can have *different styles with different people*
- You can **learn** to make different moves in relationships and alter your style

The Cycle of Interaction



Better yourself 365

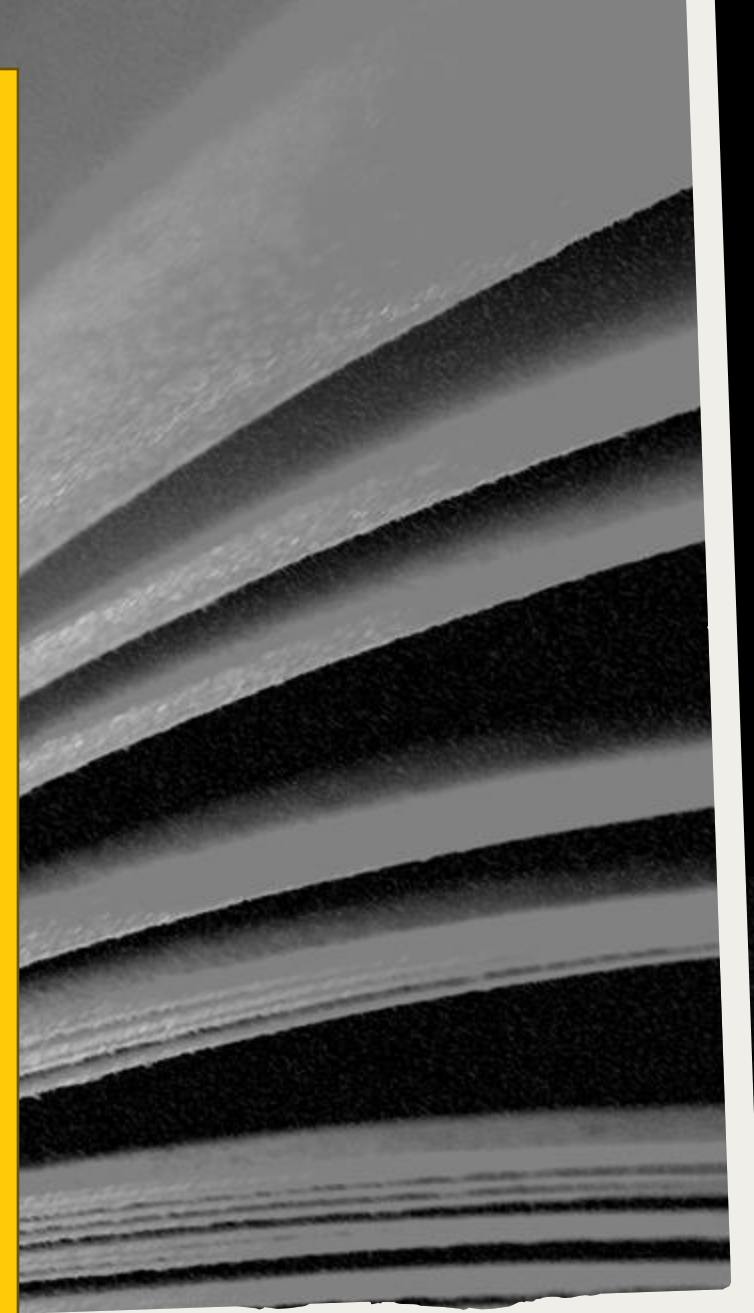
When do attachment styles show up?

- Conflict
- During Connection Situations
- Emotional Pain
- Physical Pain
- Sense of *Abandonment*

Secure Attachment

- You feel at ease relying on others
- You feel confident that others will offer to help you when you need it
- You rarely worry that your work colleagues are upset with you
- You rarely worry about someone feeling emotionally connected to you
- You are comfortable with others relying on you
- You are, for the most part, consistent with how you relate to others
- You are engaged in the lives of at least some of your colleagues

better yourself 365



Anxious (Pre-occupied) Attachment (a.k.a. Connection-Seeker)

- Seeking approval & concerned about being accepted
- **Overwhelming desire for interpersonal closeness**
- Investing in social relationships in the workplace
- **Conforming to group wishes**
- Intense fear of rejection and negative evaluation
- **Hypersensitivity to feedback**
- Feeling underappreciated
- **Occasionally over-rely on others - especially supervisors (a lot of checking)**
- Really notice the gaps or disconnection times

Better Yourself 365

Attachment in the Workplace

What Are the Superpowers of Employees With Preoccupied (Anxious) Attachment?

- They are highly alert to their own potential deficiencies.
- They are always seeking ways to improve themselves.
- They are better at detecting and responding to risks.
- They are more accurate in detecting deceit.
- They are high performers.
- They create less friction in the workplace.

Avoidant (Dismissive) Attachment (Safety-Seeker)

- Avoiding interpersonal closeness and group tasks & preference for working alone
- Keeping distance & using 'work commitments' to avoid socializing with colleagues
- Being resistant to leadership and new information learning/projects
- Rarely seek support from colleagues - and even less from supervisors
- Don't feel obligated to conform to the group's wishes
- Viewed as 'less optimism' with more negative emotions in the workplace
- Makes jokes/humour to exit from 'heavy' conv's



BETTER YOURSELF 365

Attachment in the Workplace

What Are the Superpowers of Employees With Dismissive (Avoidant) Attachment?

- They have great capacity to sustain their focus on the tasks at hand and get the job done.
- They work well independently.
- In times of danger, they are usually the quickest to act - effectively and without hesitation.
- They stimulate the team to focus on the tasks at hand.
- They are results-oriented.

The
Attachment
Project

Better Yourself 365



What Anxiously Attached staff can do to move toward *Secure* attachment

- Sit a bit longer with the urge to seek support and see if you can work it out yourself.
- Notice how often you ask others for their opinions out of worry about making the wrong choice.
- Notice when you worry about the meaning of another staff members' behaviour. Ask, "Is that really what they meant?"
- Let certain people know that you need to feel appreciated and let them know how you prefer it.
- Re-interpret feedback as a way to grow rather than an indication that you are not enough.

Better Yourself 365

What Avoidantly Attached staff can do to move toward *Secure* attachment

- Become aware of your possible negativity and how it might affect your colleagues.
- Take risks to emotionally connect with one or two staff.
- Take the risk to reach out for support more often.
- Join group projects to allow you to warm up to your hard-working colleagues.
- Initiate difficult but respectful conversations with colleagues who upset you instead of holding it in.

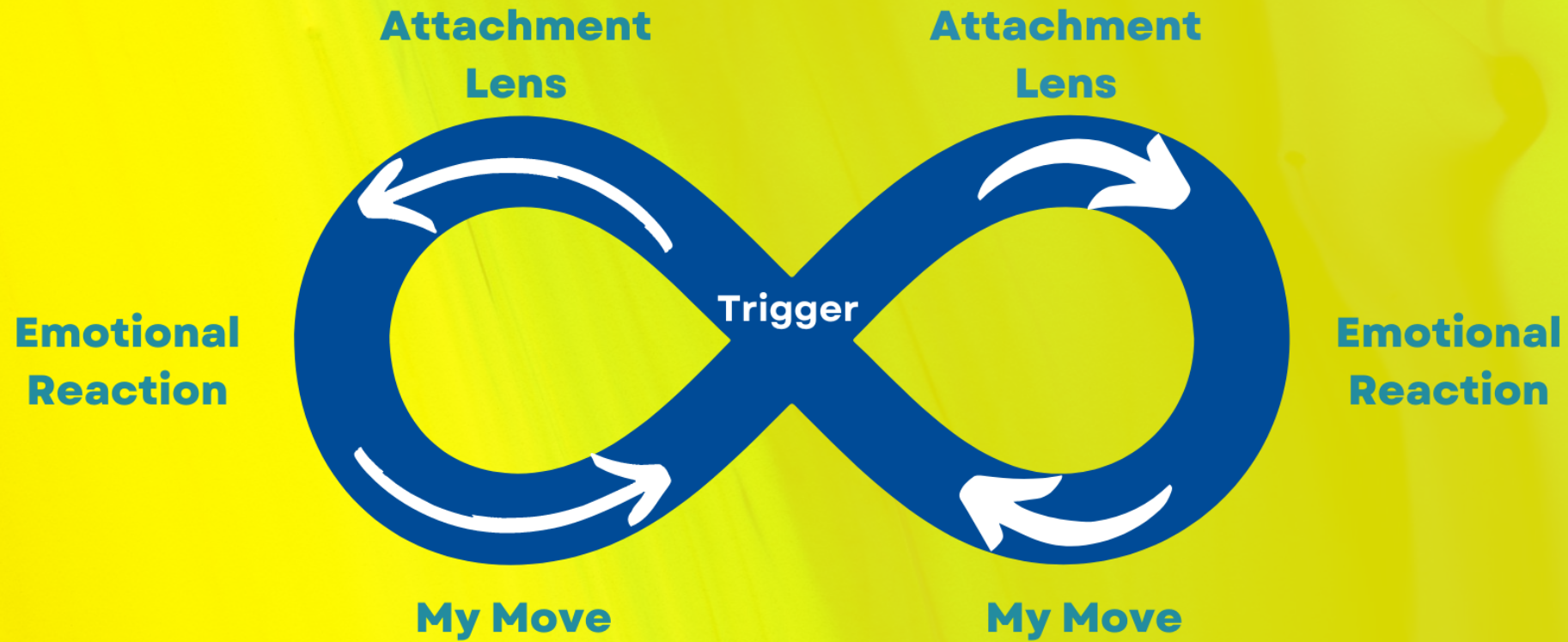
Better Yourself 365

**How Will You
Increase
Secure
Attachment
at work?**

better yourself 365



The Cycle of Interaction



Better yourself 365

Better Yourself 365



Michael LeBlanc

Better Yourself 365

506-476-0369

Michael@betteryourself365.com