- There is a well-established association between the therapeutic alliance and outcome, regardless of therapeutic modality (Horvath et al., 2011). Improvements in therapeutic practice might be achieved if therapists have greater knowledge of their own attachment styles and how these interact with their clients' attachment styles to influence the psychotherapy relationship and outcome (Degnan et al., 2014).

Evidence base:

- In addition, the theory of attachment significantly has influenced the reputability of psychoanalytic ideas.
- The greatest criticism of psychoanalytic approaches is that they are unscientific and not backed by research.
- Evidence based practice, based on the gold-standard randomised controlled trial and meta-analysis (Sackett, 2002), are becoming increasingly valued, pressuring psychoanalytic therapies to join the era of empirically supported treatments.
- Attachment theory and interventions are among the most researched psychoanalytic approaches.
- This is in part due to the ability to manualize treatments, such as MBT, which could not be done with more unstructured approaches like Freudian psychoanalytic therapy.
- Meeting the demands of EBP allows for patient access to therapies and provides credibility. In this way, Bowlby's work is helping psychoanalytic intervention stay relevant in current practice (Shaver & Mikulincer, 2004).

Limitations:

- While it is a well supported theory, it does have limitations.
- Attachment theory underemphasises the extent to which humans can self repair. Schnarch (1999) argues that while the drive for connection is powerful in humans, it is not as strong as the need for emotional self regulation and self preservation.
- Attachment theorists have ignored our capacity to stabilise ourselves and our strivings for autonomy, instead focusing on interaction and believing that all soothing must be internalised from others.
- Another aspect unaddressed by attachment theory is the influence of other important figures in the lives of children such as aunts/uncles or grandparents (Ainsworth, 1989).
- Of particular value is the relationship between children and their peers.
- Harris (1998) argues that children will be influenced more by their peers than parental attachment in determining personality and behaviour due to the high value children place on peer acceptance.
- Lastly, cultural differences have been found in attachment styles. For example, German children are found to be avoidant (Grossman et al., 1985).
- This pathologizes the normal variation that occurs due to differing cultural values.
- Furthermore, today's family culture is much different than the nuclear family that Bowlby studied, begging the question of whether this theory is still valid and generalizable.