Clinical Toolkit — Document 2

Engagement Spectrum Quick-Reference Card

AI Companionship in Clinical Practice | Amy Clark

The Four Dimensions of AI Companion Engagement

Use this card to map where a client sits on each dimension. A client may sit at different points on each.

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DIMENSION 1: ROLE
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
Supplementary                    Substitutive

AI adds to human         AI replaces human
connection                connection

Ask: "Does this person have other
relational resources, or is AI the
primary/sole source?"
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DIMENSION 2: AWARENESS
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
Self-aware                   Reality-blurred

Maintains understanding    Attributes sentience,
that AI is not sentient    consciousness, or
                           genuine emotion to AI

Ask: "Does this person hold the
distinction between AI and human?
Is relational language metaphorical
or literal?"
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DIMENSION 3: AUTONOMY
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
Boundaried                     Dependent

Can disengage without      Functioning impaired
significant distress       without AI access

Ask: "What would happen if the AI
were unavailable for a day? A week?
Does the thought cause distress?"
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DIMENSION 4: FUNCTION
|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
Growth-oriented              Avoidance-driven

AI supports personal       AI enables avoidance
development, skill-        of real-world relational
building, processing       or psychological work
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Ask: "Is the AI helping this person
grow — or helping them avoid?"
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Intervention Matching

Profile	Response
Adaptive (supplementary, self-aware, boundaried, growth-oriented)	Support, validate, monitor. No intervention needed.
Emerging risk (shifting on 1-2 dimensions)	Gentle exploration. Motivational interviewing. Build awareness.
High risk (substitutive, reality-blurred, dependent, avoidance-driven)	Active collaborative intervention. Address underlying attachment needs.
AI relationship grief (any profile, post-disruption)	Grief-informed response. Validate. Apply disenfranchised grief and ambiguous loss frameworks.

Vulnerability Factors (heighten clinical attention)

- Pre-existing insecure attachment (especially anxious-preoccupied, fearful-avoidant)
- Social isolation or loneliness
- Recent grief or loss
- Neurodivergence (especially autism)
- Trauma histories
- Adolescent developmental stage
- Existing mental health conditions (depression, anxiety, social phobia)

Key Reminders

- This is a **spectrum**, not a binary. Avoid "healthy vs unhealthy" framing.
- A client can be **adaptive on some dimensions and at-risk on others**.
- **Reassess over time** — engagement patterns can shift.
- The goal is **formulation**, not labelling.