WORKSHEET 46 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

The map of my losses

Naming everything migration has made me lose (migratory grief)

AIM

Help the person identify the different losses linked to migration (loved ones, language, culture, landscapes, status, belonging…), often experienced without being named, so as to recognise a legitimate grief.

WHO IT IS FOR

Expatriates or migrants, whatever the reason for leaving, even when it was chosen and “went well”.

DURATION

20-30 min in session

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Explain that migrating involves several griefs at once, often partial and recurring (you can go back, loved ones are still alive), which makes them less visible.
2. Go through the areas on page 2: loved ones, language, culture and customs, landscapes and climate, social and professional status, sense of belonging, safety.
3. For each one, the person notes what they miss and how strongly.
4. Also identify what has been gained: migrating is not only losing, and both coexist.
5. Validate: feeling sad does not invalidate the decision to leave.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Don’t pathologise a normal process. If the losses go together with intense, lasting stress (loneliness, insecurity, fear, failure of the migration plan), think of the accumulation of stressors described by Achotegui (“Ulysses syndrome”) and assess mental health more broadly. With people in exile or who have experienced violence, adapt (trauma).

REFERENCES

Achotegui, J. (2009). Estrés límite y salud mental: el síndrome del inmigrante con estrés crónico y múltiple (síndrome de Ulises). Gaceta Médica de Bilbao, 106(4), 122-133.

Bhugra, D. & Becker, M. A. (2005). Migration, cultural bereavement and cultural identity. World Psychiatry, 4(1), 18-24.

PSYCHOLOGIST’S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 46 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

The map of my losses

Leaving, even by choice, means losing many things at once: loved ones in daily life, a language, customs, landscapes, a place. These losses rarely have a name. Writing them down helps you recognise what you are going through.

1. For each area in the table, note what you miss.
2. Rate from 0 to 10 how much you miss it today.
3. Also note what you have found or gained in that area.
4. Look at the whole picture: what weighs most right now?

Area (people, language, culture, landscapes, status, belonging…)	What I miss	Missing /10	What I have found

What have I never said out loud about what I have lost?

These exercises do not replace therapy. If you are in distress or having suicidal thoughts: 112 (European Union), 3114 (France) or the emergency number of the country where you live.

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