WORKSHEET 48 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

My suitcase

What I take with me, what I leave behind, what I discover

AIM

Help the person identify what creates continuity between “before” and “now” (values, customs, objects, bonds), what they have left behind and what they are discovering, to build an identity that connects rather than cuts.

WHO IT IS FOR

Life abroad, migration, returning home, repeated moves (“third culture kids”).

DURATION

15-20 min in session

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Suggest the image of the suitcase: what you have brought with you (visible and invisible), what you have left behind, what you find in the new country.
2. Explore the invisible: values, know-how, humour, recipes, music, ways of relating.
3. Look at what was left behind: are there things to recover, replace or grieve?
4. Identify what the new country brings that could go into the suitcase.
5. Choose a concrete gesture of continuity for the week (cooking a dish, calling someone, taking up a practice again).

POINTS TO WATCH

> Respect the person’s pace: for some people, looking at what they left behind brings up a lot of pain. Avoid imposing an “it’s all enrichment” view.

REFERENCES

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

Berry, J. W. (1997). Immigration, acculturation, and adaptation. Applied Psychology: An International Review, 46(1), 5-34.

PSYCHOLOGIST’S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 48 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

My suitcase

When you left, you took visible and invisible things with you: objects, but also values, know-how, ways of being. You left others behind. And you are discovering new things. Let's take an inventory of your suitcase.

1. What I took with me (objects, values, customs, know-how).
2. What I left behind and miss.
3. What I am discovering here and want to keep.
4. A gesture of continuity this week: _____

I took	I left	I am discovering

What is there in me that stays the same in any country?

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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