WORKSHEET 50 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Which language do I feel in?

Emotions, memories and languages when living between two languages

AIM

Help the person observe how their languages influence the way they feel, remember and talk about themselves, and use that knowledge (for example, choosing the language in which to talk about a difficult topic).

WHO IT IS FOR

Bilingual or multilingual people, therapy in a language that is not one's mother tongue.

DURATION

15 min in session

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Explain that words in one's mother tongue are often felt more intensely and that some memories are "stored" in the language in which they were lived.
2. Explore: in which language does the person tell stories, dream, swear, talk to themselves when sad or angry?
3. Identify the topics that are easier or harder to approach in each language.
4. Discuss use in session: the second language can provide a protective distance; the mother tongue, more direct access to emotions.
5. Suggest writing the same difficult sentence in both languages and observing the difference.

POINTS TO WATCH

> There is no "right" language for therapy: respect the person's choice and pay attention to possible avoidance of emotions through the second language.

REFERENCES

Pavlenko, A. (2005). Emotions and Multilingualism. Cambridge University Press.

Dewaele, J.-M. (2010). Emotions in Multiple Languages. Palgrave Macmillan.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 50 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Which language do I feel in?

When you live between two languages, emotions don't sound the same in each one. An "I love you" or an insult can weigh very differently. Observe your languages: they say something about you.

1. In which language do I tell stories, dream, talk to myself when I'm sad or angry?
2. The topics that are easiest to approach in each language.
3. Write a difficult sentence in both your languages.
4. Note what you feel with each one.

Situation or sentence	Language	What I feel /10	What I notice

In which language would I like to talk about what touches me most?

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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