WORKSHEET 59 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

From here and from there

Telling your migration story and your identity

AIM

Help the person build a narrative of their migration journey that links the different stages and integrates both belongings, instead of an identity experienced as broken or “neither from here nor from there”.

WHO IT IS FOR

Feeling of not belonging anywhere, second generations, journeys through several countries.

DURATION

20-30 min in session; writing between sessions

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Suggest telling the journey in chapters: before leaving, the departure, the arrival, today and the imagined future.
2. For each chapter: places, important people, what the person learnt about themselves.
3. Notice what runs through all the chapters (values, strengths, bonds): it is the thread of identity.
4. Explore the sentences that sum up identity (“neither from here nor from there” / “from here and from there”) and how each one feels.
5. Invite the person to write a version of their story that feels like them.

POINTS TO WATCH

> In journeys involving violence, forced exile or trauma, the narrative must be approached carefully and in a suitable framework (stabilisation, EMDR): don’t push for an account of traumatic events.

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 59 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

From here and from there

When you have lived in several countries, you sometimes wonder “where am I really from?”. Telling your story in chapters helps you connect the pieces and find the thread that runs through them.

1. Divide your story into chapters (before, departure, arrival, today, tomorrow).
2. For each chapter: places, people, what I learnt about myself.
3. What runs through all the chapters (values, strengths, bonds): _____
4. My sentence about who I am today: _____

Chapter	Places and people	What I learnt about myself

What changes when I tell myself “from here and from there”?

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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