WORKSHEET 92 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

The container

Setting aside, for a while, what overwhelms you

AIM

Build in the imagination a safe container in which the person can temporarily store intrusive memories, images or emotions between sessions, to retrieve them later in therapy.

WHO IT IS FOR

Stabilisation phase, intrusive memories between sessions. To be built in session.

DURATION

15-20 min in session; use when needed

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Invite the person to imagine a container solid enough to hold what overwhelms them (a chest, a box, a vault), with sensory details.
2. Suggest putting into it what feels intrusive, in whatever form they prefer (an image, a word, a colour).
3. Check that the container closes properly and that the contents stay there until the next session.
4. Remind them that the contents are not forgotten: they will be retrieved and worked on in therapy.

POINTS TO WATCH

> The container is a temporary aid, not a means of lasting avoidance. If the person can't close it or feels worse, adapt the resource.

REFERENCES

Shapiro, F. (2018). Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) Therapy: Basic Principles, Protocols, and Procedures (3rd ed.). Guilford.

Korn, D. L. & Leeds, A. M. (2002). Preliminary evidence of efficacy for EMDR resource development and installation in the stabilization phase of treatment of complex posttraumatic stress disorder. Journal of Clinical Psychology, 58(12), 1465-1487.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 92 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

My container

Best done with your psychologist

Between two sessions, some memories or emotions can spill over. You can imagine a solid container to store them in, for a while. They are not lost: you will retrieve them in session, when the time is right.

1. My container (shape, material, colour, lock): _____
2. What I put inside, in whatever form I like (an image, a word, a colour).
3. I close it firmly and put it in a safe place.
4. I notice how I feel when the container is closed.

Day	What I stored	Did it close properly? (yes/no)	Calm afterwards /10

What makes my container more solid?

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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