WORKSHEET 94 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Recognising when I disconnect

Spotting the signs of dissociation and coming back

AIM

Help the person recognise their signs of dissociation (absence, unreality, numbness, memory gaps), their triggers and ways of coming back to the present.

WHO IT IS FOR

People with traumatic experiences who describe moments of absence or disconnection. To be worked on with a psychologist.

DURATION

20 min in session

HOW TO RUN IT

1. Normalise: dissociation is the brain's protective reaction to something that is too intense.
2. List the person's own signs (fixed gaze, feeling of floating, unreal world, numb body, losing track of time).
3. Identify the triggers and the early signs.
4. Prepare ways of coming back (sensory stimulation, movement, orientation, worksheet 93) and what the people around them can do.

POINTS TO WATCH

> Frequent or marked dissociation requires specialist assessment and adapting the pace of therapy (extended stabilisation before any reprocessing).

REFERENCES

Van der Hart, O., Nijenhuis, E. R. S. & Steele, K. (2006). The Haunted Self: Structural Dissociation and the Treatment of Chronic Traumatization. Norton.

Ogden, P., Minton, K. & Pain, C. (2006). Trauma and the Body: A Sensorimotor Approach to Psychotherapy. Norton.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

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WORKSHEET 94 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Recognising when I disconnect

Best done with your psychologist

When something is too intense, the brain can “cut the power”: you feel far away, unreal, numb, as if absent. It is a protection. Recognising it helps you come back gently.

1. My signs of disconnection (fixed gaze, floating, unreal world, numb body…).
2. What usually triggers these moments.
3. The early signs, before I go completely.
4. What helps me come back (moving, touching something cold, saying where I am).

When	Trigger	Signs	What helped me come back

What the people around me can do to help me come back:

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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