

Exercise

Professional Version | US English

Am I Experiencing Depersonalization And Derealization?



Description

Depersonalization-derealization disorder is a condition characterized by feelings of unreality and detachment from your self (your emotions, thoughts, memories, or body sensations), or feelings of unreality and detachment from the world around you. It is experienced by between 1 and 2 people out of every 100 (Stein, 2016; Kessler et al, 2005) but like many anxiety disorders, it is under-diagnosed and often goes unrecognized (Hunter et al, 2017; Kasper, 2006).

Depersonalization describes experiencing the self as strange or unreal, or feeling detached from one's thoughts, feelings, sensations, body, or actions, as if one were an external observer. It may take the form of emotional or physical numbing, or a sense of watching oneself from a distance or 'being in a play'. It can also cause perceptual alterations, such as a distorted sense of time.

Derealization consists of experiencing other persons, objects, or the world as strange or unreal (it might seem dreamlike, distant, foggy, lifeless, colorless, or visually distorted) or feeling detached from one's surroundings.

The DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for depersonalization-derealization disorder include:

- The presence of persistent or recurrent experiences of depersonalization, derealization, or both.
- Intact reality testing during depersonalization or derealization experiences.
- The symptoms cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

The ICD-11 diagnostic criteria for depersonalization-derealization disorder include:

- Persistent or recurrent experiences of either depersonalization or derealization (or both).
- During experiences of depersonalization or derealization, reality testing remains intact. The experiences are not associated with delusions or beliefs that the individual is being controlled by external persons or forces.
- The symptoms are not better accounted for by another mental disorder (e.g., post-traumatic stress disorder, an anxiety or fear-related disorder, another dissociative disorder, personality disorder).
- The symptoms are not caused by a substance or medication on the central nervous system, including withdrawal effects, and are not due to a disease of the nervous system (e.g., temporal lobe epilepsy), head trauma, or another medical condition.
- The symptoms result in significant distress or impairment in personal, family, social, educational, occupational or other important areas of functioning. If functioning is maintained, it is only through significant additional effort.

Am I Experiencing Depersonalization And Derealization? is an indicative screening tool, designed to help clients self-assess whether their experiences might warrant further investigation. It is not intended to give a formal diagnosis or provide a measure of severity.

Instructions

Suggested Question



Some people who report similar experiences to yours have a condition called depersonalization-derealization disorder. Would you like to try a short quiz that could give us an idea of whether this problem troubles you?

References

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Depersonalization and derealization should only be diagnosed by a mental health professional or a doctor. However, answering the questions below can give you an idea of whether you might find it helpful to have a professional assessment.

Do you ever feel strange, as if you are not real, or cut off from the world?

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

Does it ever feel as if you are not in charge of your own movements?

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

Do you ever feel like you are a 'detached observer' of yourself?

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

Do you ever find yourself not feeling any affection towards people who are close to you?

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

Do you ever feel like familiar voices, including your own, sound remote or unreal?

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

Does the world ever seem 'flat' or 'lifeless', as if you are looking at a picture?

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

When you cry or laugh, do you ever seem to 'not feel' any emotions?

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

Do you ever have to touch yourself to make sure that you really exist?

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

If you answered 'sometimes' or 'often' to most of these questions, you might be experiencing depersonalization and derealization. You might find it helpful to speak to your general practitioner, or a mental health professional, about how you're feeling.

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