

Dissociation & Grounding

Recognizing disconnection, unreality, numbness, or “spacing out” and gently reconnecting with the present.

What dissociation can feel like

People may feel detached from their body, unreal, foggy, numb, far away, or as though the environment is dreamlike. Dissociation can occur with trauma, stress, panic, and other conditions.

Grounding options

- Keep eyes open and orient to the room.
- Use firm pressure through feet, hands, or a textured object.
- Name five factual details about the present.
- Use movement, temperature, scent, or sound to increase sensory contact.
- Avoid forcing deep inward focus if that makes disconnection worse.

When to get help

Frequent dissociation, lost time, dangerous behavior during episodes, or major functional impairment should be professionally assessed. Grounding is a coping tool, not a diagnosis.

Try this reflection

Which external sense - sight, sound, touch, smell, or movement - helps you reconnect fastest?

Using this resource: For education and skill-building only; not diagnosis, medical advice, or crisis care. If you feel overwhelmed, pause and seek appropriate professional support. In the U.S., call or text 988 for crisis support; call 911 for an immediate emergency.