UNDERSTAND DISSOCIATION TEENS







WHAT IS DISSOCIATION?

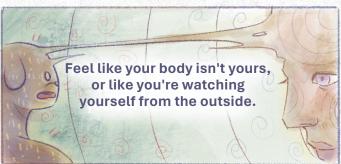
Dissociation is when you feel disconnected from yourself or the world around you. It's your brain's way of coping when things feel too overwhelming or unsafe. It's kind of like going on "autopilot" to get through something scary or stressful. It's a normal response to frightening and overwhelming situations, but if it keeps happening, it can start to affect your relationships, school, and everyday life.



WHAT DOES DISSOCIATION FEEL LIKE?











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These are all signs that your brain is trying to protect you.

WHY DOES DISSOCIATION HAPPEN?

It usually happens in response to trauma or overwhelming stress, like abuse, bullying, loss, neglect, or scary situations. Sometimes it starts during the traumatic event and continues afterwards, especially if you still don't feel totally safe.

HOW CAN I HELP MYSELF?

Know what's going on:

Understanding that dissociation is a survival response can help you feel less confused or ashamed. You're not broken - your brain is doing its best to protect you.



- T: Temperature- splash cold water on your face to cool down.
- E: Eat/chew something strong tasting like mint/gum.
 N: Name 5 things you can see, 4 things you can touch, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell, 1 thing you can taste.
- S: Say to yourself, "My name is ___, the month is ___ I live in ___, I am in the present, not the past".
 - E: Exercise or stretch- make it short and intense!



Talk to someone you trust:

It's okay to tell someone what's happening. You might say: "Sometimes I feel far away, like I'm not really here." Or "I forget things that happen, and I don't know why." Talking can help you feel more connected and supported.



Take care of your body:

Get enough sleep, eat regularly, move your body, and spend time in nature. A healthy body helps your brain feel safer.

Write, draw, or create music about your parts or feelings:

If you experience different "parts" or voices inside, it can help to draw them, name them, write, or sing what they want to say. They might be trying to protect you, even if they seem bossy, scared, or angry.



Remind vourself vou're safe now:

When you start to dissociate, gently say things to yourself like: "That was then, this is now." "I'm safe. I'm here." "I can get through this."



Notice what situations, people, or feelings lead to dissociation. You can then work on managing those triggers or talking about them with a therapist.



WHEN TO ASK FOR HELP?

You should reach out to a trusted adult, GP, school counsellor, or mental health professional if:

- You're dissociating often and it's affecting school, friendships, or safety
- You lose time or feel like you're not in control of what you're doing
- You hear voices or parts inside that are mean or scary
- You feel hopeless, unsafe, or like you don't want to be here

YOU'RE NOT ALONE.

Lots of young people dissociate after tough experiences.

Healing takes time, but it is possible with support, understanding, and patience.

Need support now?

- Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 (24/7) | kidshelpline.com.au
- Lifeline 13 11 14
- eheadspace eheadspace.org.au
- for more information about trauma and dissociation recovery for teenagers, visit:
 phoenixaustralia.org and go to 'Your Recovery' -> 'Helping Children & Teens' -> 'Are you a teenager?'