WHAT IS DEREALISATION?

WHEN THE WORLD AROUND YOU SUDDENLY FEELS UNREAL

Derealisation is a strange feeling of being disconnected from the world around you. Everything is still real, but it may not feel real.

www.anxietyhelpbox.com

WHAT DOES IT FEEL LIKE?

You might look around and think:

"Everything feels unreal."
"I feel like I'm in a dream."
"People seem far away or somehow different."
"Everything looks strange or unfamiliar."

Your surroundings may seem foggy, distant, flat or strangely different. Sounds may seem different too, and time may feel too fast or too slow.

AM I LOSING TOUCH WITH REALITY?

With derealisation, you usually know that the world around you is real, even though it does not feel real.

That is an important difference.

The experience can feel frightening, especially when you do not know what is happening.

WHY DOES IT HAPPEN?

Derealisation is a type of dissociation, which means feeling disconnected from yourself or the world around you.

It can happen during intense stress or fear and can occur with anxiety or panic attacks. It can also happen after trauma or alongside some other health problems.

WHAT CAN HELP?

Ground yourself in what is happening right now.

Feel your feet against the floor. Name things you can see and hear. Hold something cold or textured and focus on how it feels.

Do something ordinary that needs your attention, such as walking, talking to someone, listening to music or completing a simple task.

Try not to keep checking whether things feel real. The more you keep checking, the more your attention can get stuck on the feeling.

Remind yourself:

"This feels strange and frightening, but it is a feeling. I'm here, and the world around me is real."

If it keeps happening, lasts for a long time or is affecting your everyday life, speak to a health professional.

Anxiety Help Box

Free Anxiety Resources

www.AnxietyHelpBox.com

Worksheets | Self-Help Guides | Coping Tools

1 See our website **www.AnxietyHelpBox.com** for more **FREE** resources.

2 Follow us on **Facebook** to stay up-to-date.

Anxiety Tools and Resources - free, www.AnxietyHelpBox.com

3 Please respect our work.

©EDITA STIBOROVA (2026) ALL RIGHTS RESERVED.

This printable PDF resource may be used free of charge by individuals and not-for-profit organisations for work with families and for training purposes, provided that no changes are made to the content.

You may not upload this resource to your own website, social media page, social media group, file-sharing platform, or any other online location.

You may share a link to www.AnxietyHelpBox.com from your website, social media page, or group. You may also share our resources directly from our Facebook, Instagram, or Pinterest pages using the platform's share function.

We regularly monitor websites, social media, and file-sharing platforms for unauthorised copies of our resources and take action to protect our copyright.

FREE PDF DOWNLOAD

What is derealisation

What is derealisation is a one-page psychoeducation handout about feeling disconnected from the world, as though surroundings are unreal, strange or dreamlike. It is likely to be helpful for teenagers and adults who experience dissociation alongside anxiety, panic attacks, high stress or trauma-related feelings.

Print it for a wellbeing folder, use it as a conversation starter in a support session, or keep it nearby as a reminder during episodes of derealisation. The page combines reassurance about recognising reality with practical grounding techniques, including sensory noticing, feeling the floor beneath your feet and focusing on a simple everyday task.