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Depersonalization & derealization: The unexplored scope of homeopathy

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Abstract

Depersonalization and derealization (DP/DR) are dissociative symptoms where individuals feel detached from themselves or the world. Although increasingly recognized in psychiatry, these conditions remain misunderstood, underdiagnosed, and undertreated. Homeopathy-through its holistic, constitutional, and mind-body approach-offers unique tools to address the emotional, psychological, and energetic dimensions underlying DP/DR.

This article discusses the phenomenology, triggers, and underlying mechanisms of DP/DR and presents a homeopathic perspective with key remedy pictures and repertorial rubrics.

Keywords: Depersonalization (DP), derealization (DR), depersonalization-derealization disorder (DPDR)

Introduction

Depersonalization and derealization are experiences where reality itself feels altered.

Depersonalization (DP)

The person feels detached from their own body, thoughts, or emotions.

“I feel like I’m watching myself from outside.”

“I feel robotic-like I’m not me.”

Derealization (DR)

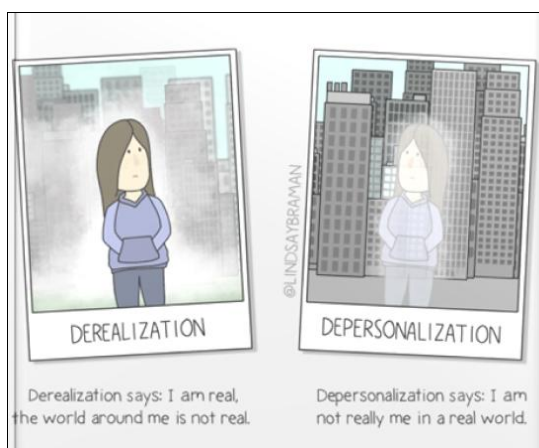
The world feels unreal, distant, dream-like, or foggy.

“Everything feels artificial.”

“I feel like I’m in a movie.”

Modern psychiatry considers DP/DR a part of Dissociative Disorders, commonly triggered by anxiety, trauma, exhaustion, or overstimulation.

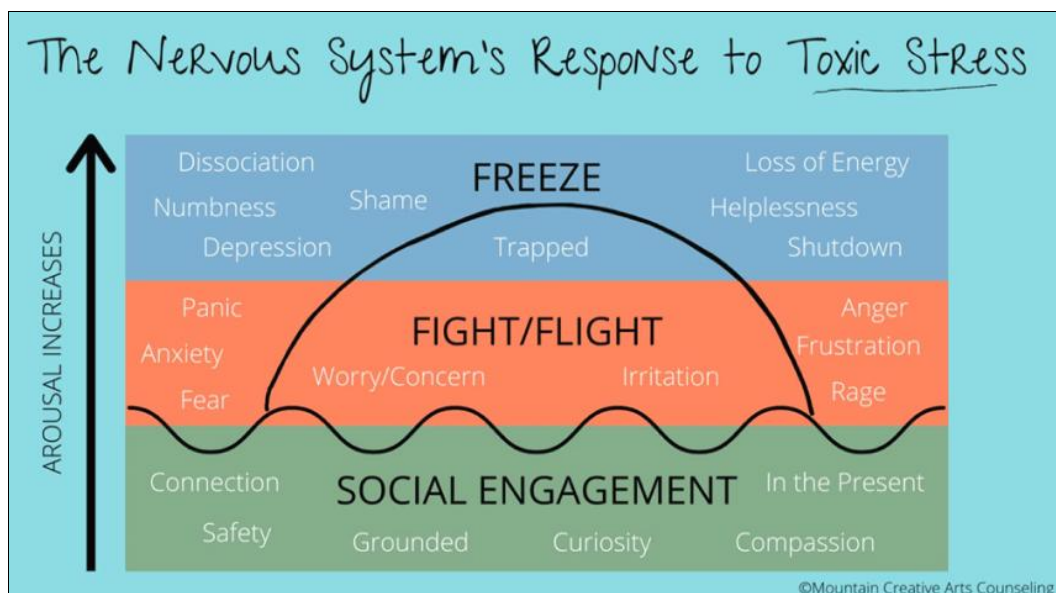
For homeopaths, DP/DR is a deep central disturbance-a break in the vital force’s connection with the self and environment.



Source: Braman L. *Derealization and Depersonalization Illustrated* [Internet]. 2022 [cited 2025 Dec 11]. Available from: <https://lindsaybraman.com/derealization-depersonalization/>

Why Depersonalization & Derealization Happen (Holistic View)

DP/DR act as protective dissociation, triggered by:



Source: Mountain Creative Arts Counseling. *The Nervous System's Response to Toxic Stress* [Internet]. 2020 [cited 2025 Dec 11]. Available from: <https://mountaincreativeartstherapy.com>

1. Emotional trauma

- Neglect
- Loss
- Relationship wounds
- Childhood emotional invalidation

2. Anxiety or panic attacks

DP/DR is common during or after high sympathetic arousal.

3. Chronic stress + burnout

When emotional overload exceeds coping capacity.

4. Sensory overload

Seen in autism, ADHD, SPD.

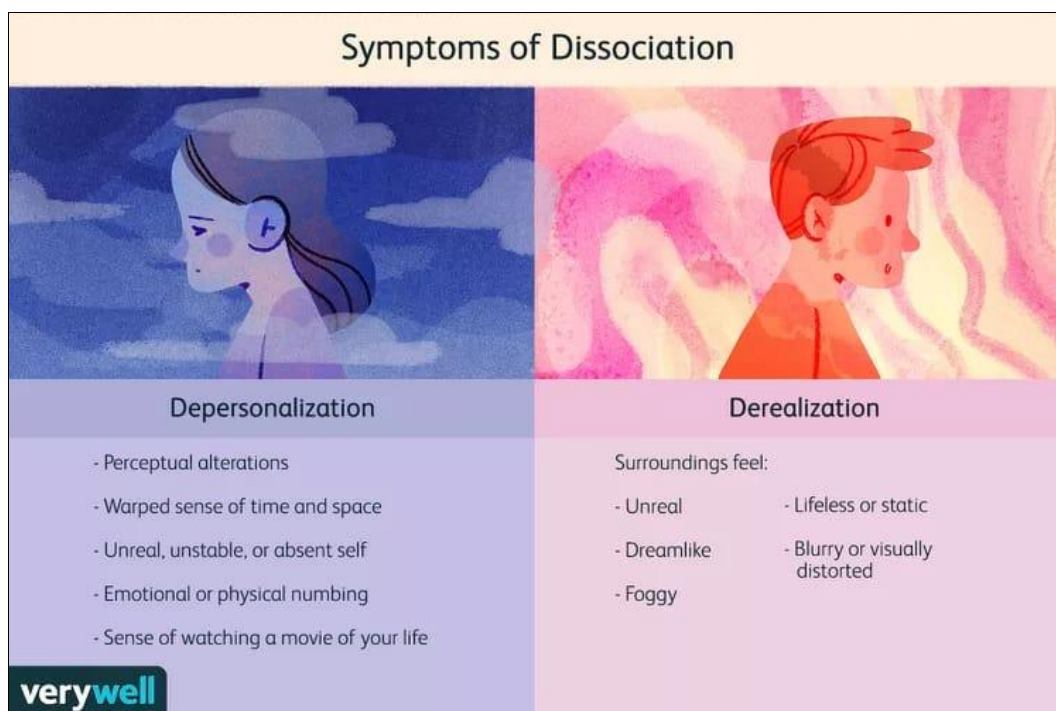
5. Sleep deprivation & exhaustion

6. Substance use (especially cannabis)

7. Identity conflict or inner fragmentation

From a homeopathic perspective, DP/DR is a disruption of the organism's sense of coherence—often matching deep-acting remedies with dissociative tendencies.

Clinical Features Suggesting DP/DR



Source: Murray B. *Symptoms of Dissociation: Depersonalization vs Derealization* [Internet]. Verywell Mind; 2021 [cited 2025 Dec 11]. Available from: <https://www.verywellmind.com>

Depersonalization Signs

1. Feeling detached from body
2. Observing oneself from outside
3. Numb emotions
4. Altered body perception
5. Robotic or mechanical feeling
6. Loss of sense of identity
7. “I feel like I don’t exist”

Derealization Signs

1. Foggy, unreal world
2. Colors look dull
3. Sounds feel distant
4. Time distortion
5. Feeling like dreaming
6. Not connecting emotionally with surroundings

These symptoms may fluctuate, lasting minutes or persisting for months.

Homeopathic Perspective

DP/DR points toward a central disturbance of self-identity, a “disconnect” in the vital force.

Key homeopathic themes include

- a) Dissociation
- b) Duality
- c) Loss of will
- d) Identity confusion
- e) Emotional suppression
- f) Shock or trauma history
- g) Oversensitivity

Such states align with deep constitutional remedies, often from plant and animal kingdoms with altered perception themes.

Key Homeopathic Remedies for Depersonalization & Derealization**1. Cannabis Indica - Extreme Altered Perception**

The most prominent remedy for DP/DR.

Clinical Picture

- Time dilation (“minutes feel like hours”)
- Feeling body expanding/shrinking
- Watching self from outside
- Surreal, dream-like world
- Intense fear of losing control

Indications

- DP/DR after substance use
- Anxiety-triggered dissociation
- Sensory distortions

2. Anacardium Orientale - Split Identity; Inside Conflict**Clinical Picture**

- Sense of two wills inside
- Feeling disconnected from self
- Loss of self-confidence
- “I am not myself” sensation
- Poor emotional grounding

Indications

- DP/DR from emotional neglect
- Identity confusion

- Moral conflict

3. Stramonium - Terrifying Dissociation After Trauma**Clinical Picture**

- Dissociation with fear
- Feels disconnected during panic
- Night terrors
- Visual distortions
- Feeling possessed or detached

Indications

- Trauma-induced DP/DR
- After fright, violence, or abuse

4. Lachesis - Detached Mind, Overheated Emotions**Clinical Picture**

- Feeling mind and body are separate
- Internal pressure, talkativeness
- Emotional intensity leading to exhaustion

Indications

DP/DR during emotional overwhelm

5. Natrum Muriaticum - Emotional Freezing After Hurt**Clinical Picture**

- Emotional numbness
- Detached despite longing for connection
- Feeling “unreal” when overwhelmed

Indications

- Chronic DP/DR from emotional neglect
- Suppressed grief

6. Phosphorus - Loss of Boundaries**Clinical Picture**

- Dissolved sense of self
- Feels transparent, as if soul leaving body
- Sensitive to external impressions

Indications

DP/DR with anxiety and sensitivity

7. Aurum Metallicum - Alienation From Self During Depression**Clinical Picture**

- Feeling separated from life
- Internal emptiness
- Loss of meaning

Indications

DP/DR with severe depression or guilt

8. Medorrhinum - Escape From Reality; Identity Blurring**Clinical Picture**

- Feeling life is unreal
- Impulsive, extreme behaviour
- Forgetting who they are for moments

Indications

DP/DR in trauma or hyperstimulation

9. Pulsatilla - Soft Dissociation From Emotional Overload**Clinical**

- Inability to feel emotions fully

- “I feel disconnected”
- Floaty, dream-like state

Indications

Teenagers under emotional stress

Repertorial Rubrics for DP/DR

Depersonalization

Mind - Delusion - body not his own

Mind - Duality, sense of

Mind - Identity, loss of sense of

Mind - Disconnected, feeling

Derealization

Mind - Unreal, everything seems

Mind - Delusion, objects seem strange

Mind - Delusion, mind separated from body

Mind - Dreams, as if in

Associated Rubrics

Mind - Indifference, apathy

Mind - Floating sensation

Mind - Space and time, altered sense of

Mind - Numbness, emotional

These rubrics guide remedy matching with patient's exact

dissociative signature.

Management Beyond Remedy

- Grounding exercises
- Nervous system regulation
- Sleep correction
- Trauma-informed counselling
- Reduce stimulants / screen overload
- Mindfulness and breathing work

Homeopathy enhances the nervous system's ability to reintegrate the self, making grounding far more effective.

Conclusion

Depersonalization and derealization are dissociative experiences that deeply disturb the sense of self and reality. Despite their growing prevalence, they remain poorly addressed in conventional psychiatry. Homeopathy offers a powerful, holistic approach that treats not just symptoms but the underlying emotional, traumatic, and constitutional roots. By recognizing remedy patterns reflecting dissociation, altered perception, and identity disturbance, homeopaths can provide profound relief in this overlooked yet highly distressing condition.

Table 1: Summary Table of Key Remedies in Depersonalization and Derealization

Remedy	Core Theme	Depersonalization Features	Derealization Features	Key Indications
Cannabis Indica	Altered perception, expansion of consciousness	Feels outside body, time distortion, floating	World appears unreal or dream-like	After panic, overstimulation, perceptual distortions
Anacardium Orientale	Split identity, conflict of will	“Two wills,” robotic feeling, weak self-connection	Disconnected from environment	Identity conflict, strict upbringing, moral pressure
Stramonium	Terror, fright, dissociation	Detachment during panic, fear-induced dissociation	Visual distortions, dream-like reality	Trauma, fear of dark, night terrors
Natrum Muriaticum	Emotional suppression	Emotional numbness, internal isolation	Surroundings feel distant	Grief, heartbreak, emotional neglect
Phosphorus	Boundary loss, hypersensitivity	Transparent feeling, hollow, easily drained	Reality blurs during anxiety or overstimulation	Grief, heartbreak, emotional neglect
Aurum Metallicum	Alienation, emptiness	Detachment from life and meaning	Bleak, distant perception of world	Guilt, depression, loss of purpose
Medorrhinum	Hyperstimulation, impulsivity	Disconnected sensation, forgetfulness	Life feels unreal	Excess screen exposure, impulsive behaviour
Pulsatilla	Emotional overload	Mild depersonalization with emotional instability	Floaty, drifting sensation	Teenagers, hormonal imbalance, stress

Flowchart for Remedy Selection in Depersonalization and Derealization

Differential Diagnosis (Psychiatric and Homeopathic Perspectives)

Panic Disorder

Psychiatric View

Depersonalization and derealization arise during panic episodes due to intense physiological hyperarousal.

Homeopathic Correlates

Cannabis Indica, Phosphorus, Aconite, Ignatia.

Major Depressive Disorder

Psychiatric View

Emotional blunting, numbness, and disconnection from surroundings appear in severe depression.

Homeopathic Correlates

Aurum Metallicum, Natrum Muriaticum, Sepia.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)

Psychiatric View

DP/DR functions as a protective mechanism against overwhelming trauma.

Homeopathic Correlates

Stramonium, Opium, Phosphorus, Ignatia.

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

Psychiatric View

Intense rumination and existential obsessions may trigger dissociative episodes.

Homeopathic Correlates

Anacardium, Arsenicum, Syphilinum.

Personality Disorders

Psychiatric View

Identity instability in borderline or dissociative personality disorders may produce chronic depersonalization.

Homeopathic Correlates

Medorrhinum, Lachesis, Hyoscyamus.

Substance-Induced Dissociation**Psychiatric View**

Cannabis, stimulants, and hallucinogens frequently trigger DP/DR.

Homeopathic Correlates

Cannabis Indica, Nux Vomica, Opium.

Conflict of Interest

Not available.

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