Transit symptoms of depersonalisation and derealisation are very common in the general population, often during periods of stress or fatigue, or concurrent with a number of medical conditions. They can also occur as a chronic primary mental health disorder called Depersonalisation/Derealisation Disorder (DPRD).

### What your patient may say
- It’s like I’m just watching life from behind glass
- I feel completely detached from everything around me
- I feel like I don’t exist anymore

### Increasing symptom severity

#### 1. Transient symptoms
- Mildly distressing
- Seconds to a few days
- **Typical triggers**
  - Fatigue
  - Jet lag
  - Life-threatening incidents
  - After heavy alcohol use
  - Illicit drug use

#### 2. Secondary to other disorder
- Moderately distressing
- Minutes
- **Typical triggers**
  - Psychiatric disorders
- **Comorbidities and risk factors**
  - Neurological conditions: E.g. migraine or temporal lobe epilepsy
  - Psychiatric conditions: E.g. depression or schizophrenia
- Anxiety disorders: Particularly those with panic or obsessive compulsive disorder

#### 3. Part of PTSD or personality disorder
- Moderately–severely distressing
- Months to years
- **Typical triggers**
  - Period of prolonged stress
- **Comorbidities and risk factors**
  - History of significant childhood abuse and trauma
  - Post-traumatic stress disorder
- Personality disorders: Particularly borderline personality disorder

#### 4. Primary DPRD
- Moderately–severely distressing
- Months to years
- **Typical triggers**
  - Acute stress
- **Comorbidities and risk factors**
  - Use of illicit drugs
  - Particularly after drugs

### Intervention

- **Review after 2 weeks.**
- If symptoms persist, consider other levels of severity

- **Intervention**
  - Give the patient a name for their symptom. Explain why it might have been triggered in their case.
  - Elicit concerns, and offer reassurance and hope that they can recover. Signpost patient to self-help material, online and phone support, particularly recovery stories.

- **Review after treatment.**
- If symptoms persist, consider primary DPRD.

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*CMHT = Community Mental Health Teams

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