DSS

Depersonalization Severity Scale (DSS)

The DSS is a self-report scale used to measure the intensity of depersonalization symptoms in adults. It explores experiences such as feeling detached from oneself, feeling like an outside observer of one's thoughts or body, subjective numbing, and a sense of unreality of the self. In clinical practice, it is mainly used for symptom identification, estimating baseline severity, and monitoring changes over time, particularly in dissociative disorders and the dissociative subtype of PTSD. It does not replace a clinical interview or a differential diagnosis, but it provides a quick, structured measure that is useful for symptom monitoring.

Number of questions	6 questions
Estimated duration	10 minutes
Language	English
Original name	Depersonalization Severity Scale
Target audience	Adults
Authors	Daphne Simeon, Orna Guralnik, James Schmeidler (2001)
Category	PTSD

Preview of the 6 questions

Over the past 4 weeks:

Have you ever felt as if you were standing beside yourself or watching yourself, as if you were looking at another person or watching a movie of yourself?

Absent | Mild | Moderate | Severe

Over the past 4 weeks:

Have you ever felt as if your whole body or parts of your body were somehow detached from you or did not belong to you?

Absent | Mild | Moderate | Severe

Over the past 4 weeks:

Have you ever felt unreal, or felt strange to yourself?

Absent | Mild | Moderate | Severe

Over the past 4 weeks:

Have you ever looked in the mirror and felt detached from your own image?

Absent | Mild | Moderate | Severe

Over the past 4 weeks:

Have you ever felt as if you were in a dream, or had the impression of being completely detached from your movements?

Absent | Mild | Moderate | Severe

Scoring & interpretation

Each item is rated on an ordinal scale of frequency or severity, and the scores are then summed to obtain a total score. A higher score indicates more severe depersonalization. In the absence of a universally accepted diagnostic cutoff, interpretation should take into account the overall score, the content of the highest-rated items, and changes across several administrations.