



Two Case Studies

DEPERSONALIZATION

This first case study describes a 43-year-old woman who was living with her mother and worked at a clerical job. She reports a trauma history of her mother fondling her and frequently giving her enemas until the time she was 10 years old. From the earliest times, this person reports having depersonalization experiences. She explains them this way: “It is as if the real me is taken out and put on a shelf or stored somewhere inside of me. Whatever makes me me is not there. It is like an opaque curtain . . . like going through the motions and having to exert discipline to keep the unit together.” Each year, she experiences several such depersonalization episodes.

The second case study is that of a 37-year-old married professional man who had suffered from

depersonalization disorder. He describes his life as a child as one with little human contact. His parents gave him food and clothing but rarely touched or kissed him. His parents also rarely showed emotions. At the age of 10, he was playing football when he was tackled by another boy. As he was tackled, he felt his body disappear. Initially, similar experiences of depersonalization would happen from time to time. By age 14, he recounts a more continuous experience. He describes it as “not being in this world . . . I am disconnected from my body. It is as if my body is not there.”

Based on Daphne Simeon, Shira Gross, Orna Guralnik, Dan Stein, James Schmeidler, & Eric Hollander. (1997). *Feeling Unreal: 30 Cases of DSM-III-R Depersonalization Disorder. American Journal of Psychiatry, 154, 1107–1113.*