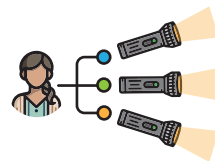


Types Of Dissociation

Our attention can be deliberate

Our conscious awareness (what we are paying attention to) is like a spotlight in the darkness. We are aware of what is under the light and not aware of what is outside the light's beam. When we decide to pay attention to something the light shines in that direction.



We can normally choose to pay attention to any of our senses:



Sight

Sound

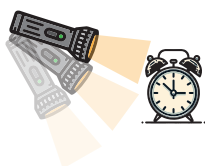
Touch

Smell

Taste

Emotion

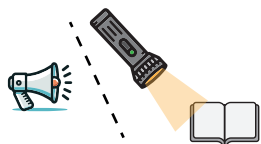
Our attention can be automatic



Our attention is often redirected automatically. This can happen when:

- you hear an unexpected noise.
- you bump a part of your body and become aware of it.
- a thought pops into your mind.

Everyday dissociation



Sometimes you can become so absorbed by what you are doing that you do not get distracted by things going on around you – we do not pay attention to the 'distractions' and they do not make it through to awareness. This is an example of **everyday dissociation**. (Good examples include getting absorbed in a book, daydreaming or 'driving on autopilot')

Dissociation during trauma

During certain types of traumatic event **your body and mind may decide for you that it would endanger you to move or feel** because it could cause further injury or antagonize a perpetrator. The result is dissociation. You might feel strangely separate from your body, or from the world.

Trauma properties that often cause dissociation:

- Where escape is not possible.
- Being in close contact to a dangerous perpetrator.
- Sexual assault or abuse.
- Contact with bodily fluids.



Common feelings experienced during dissociation:

- Feeling 'separate' from what is happening.
- Body frozen or immobile.
- Going 'off' somewhere in your mind.
- Feeling numb.
- Not feeling pain.
- Feeling hopeless / defeated.

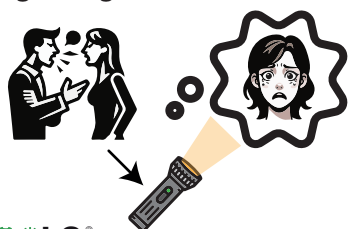


Dissociation after trauma

People who survive severe trauma, or trauma from which they cannot escape, often experience a range of problematic symptoms. Psychologists think that some of these symptoms are forms of dissociation.

You might 'tune in' to unwanted memories.

A trigger causes you to have a memory called a flashback. If the memory is really strong you might temporarily lose touch with what you are doing – it can feel as though the event from the past is happening again right now.



You might 'tune out' from the world

You might have periods where you feel separate or detached from your self (depersonalization) or separate and detached from the world (derealization). These episodes might be relatively brief but can become recurrent and chronic. You may or may not be aware of specific triggers for these experiences (people, places, situations, feelings).

