

Separation anxiety disorder

Discussing Fear Around Separation

Adults and teens 13+ | 10 to 15 minutes

Separation anxiety can occur at different ages, but needing closeness or practical care does not establish a disorder. A professional assessment considers developmental, cultural, health, and relationship context. This page helps explain what separation means for you and what participation you would like more choice about.

Choose a recent, manageable example. Write, draw, or discuss your answers. Skip anything that does not fit; this page is not a diagnostic assessment.

Describe the particular separation

Identify who or what place is involved, what you fear, and what you do before or during separation. Include actual caregiving, communication, or accessibility needs rather than assuming all contact is unnecessary.

Ask for a collaborative plan

Discuss a goal such as attending an appointment while retaining appropriate support. Ask how treatment would address fear without abruptly withdrawing connection or essential assistance. Any practice should be jointly planned and suited to the situation.

1. Which separation situation is difficult, and what outcome do you fear?**2. What contact or preparation do you seek, and how does it affect daily life?****3. What support is genuinely needed for care, access, or safety?****4. What participation goal and treatment question would you like to discuss?****Clinical use and adaptation**

Assess age, culture, attachment context, loss, trauma, actual threats, and disability-related needs. Do not prescribe abrupt separation or treat supportive relationships as pathology. For adolescents, clarify confidentiality and involve caregivers appropriately with attention to safety.