

Container exercise

Clients + Clinicians | Stabilization and Resourcing | Phase 2

Awaiting qualified clinical review. Not a stand-alone protocol, clinical training, supervision, or individualized treatment.

An optional imagery or symbolic exercise for setting material aside temporarily, with an explicit plan to return to it in therapy.

BOUNDARY

Chosen symbol

TEMPORARY

Set aside with permission

RETURN

Plan the next discussion

Purpose and context

It can support boundaries around session endings when postponing attention is tolerable.

Client-facing explanation

You might picture a box, folder, or other way of setting something aside until we have time together. You choose whether it helps and what it means.

Clinician reference

Explain that this is temporary organization, not erasure or suppression. Invite an adaptable container concept and check whether imagining it increases distress or separation from the present.

General sequence / checklist

1. Explain the temporary purpose and ask permission.
2. Invite a container with boundaries the client chooses, or use a non-imagery alternative.
3. Without reviewing traumatic detail, explore setting aside only what the client wishes to postpone.
4. Return attention to the room and check comfort and orientation.
5. Agree when the material will be revisited and what to do if it returns sooner.

Example / documentation consideration

Fictional example: a folder labelled “for next appointment” represents unfinished topics; no trauma details are entered into this website.

Scope and cautions

Not a substitute for safety assessment, closure, or crisis support. Do not promise containment will prevent intrusive memories or use it to dismiss material requiring attention.

Selected references (framework; not validation of every exercise)

EMDRIA: Experiencing EMDR Therapy

EMDRIA: The Eight Phases of EMDR Therapy

No qualified review date recorded. Accessible written counterpart: emdrdot.com/resources/preparation/container