

Dissociation is an instinctive, natural and universal ability of the human mind to separate off and keep apart the different aspects (e.g. feelings, thoughts, sensations, perceptions, behaviours and memories) of an internal or external experience which are usually linked to each other. The mind does this automatically and rapidly when what is happening is felt to be too distressing, painful, traumatising, overstimulating or otherwise overwhelming.

Thus dissociation is one way in which we are equipped to cope with threat and survive potentially life endangering events. Using dissociation at such times, the mind helps us to do what needs to be done by giving us just enough information, a piece at a time, so we can live through the event and, if possible, get ourselves to safety. Everyone dissociates to some degree and even in ordinary situations the mind may use dissociation to keep from our immediate awareness information that is not essential to the task in hand e.g. when driving a familiar route it is common to arrive at your destination with no detailed memory of the journey.

Some people even train them-selves to use dissociation to relax or for spiritual or cultural reasons.

Dissociative distress can result if the mind has to use dissociation too often, particularly during early childhood (e.g. if the child experiences repeated abuse over an extended period). When dissociation is used repeatedly to survive such traumas the child's brain and thus emotional and personality development can be affected. Dissociation is such an effective survival mechanism that using it too often blocks the development of alternative coping strategies.

Unfortunately, an individual's sense of identity, reality and continuity depend on their feelings, thoughts, sensations, perceptions, behaviours and memories etc being mostly connected.

Using dissociation too often thus confuses and/or changes your sense of who you are, and / or leaves too many blanks in your memories and / or alters your sense of your body and / or your environment.

First Person Plural focuses on the most complex types of dissociative distress in which, two or more of the above dissociative effects are the dominant features of the difficulties a person has in living life effectively. In psychiatric terms such complex dissociative distress is known as "dissociative identity disorder", "multiple personality disorder", or "dissociative disorder not otherwise specified".



First Person Plural

national survivor-led association for dissociative identity disorder and similar complex dissociative conditions

About Us

- small UK-wide registered charity led by abuse survivors with first hand experience of complex dissociative distress, including dissociative identities / multiple personalities*
- membership association open to dissociative survivors, their friends, family & professional allies and anyone who wishes to support our work*
- run entirely by small group of committed volunteers*

First Person Plural
P. O. Box 2537, Wolverhampton, WV4 4ZL
fpp@firstpersonplural.org.uk
www.firstpersonplural.org.uk

Registered Charity No : 1109464

Our mission

For ALL who are adversely affected by complex dissociative conditions to have easy access to a range of relevant specialist assessment, treatment, care and support services which offer the hope of recovery and/or an improved quality of life and which are provided free at the point of delivery.

Our aims

- *to provide support and information to adult survivors of trauma and abuse who experience complex dissociative distress, and to their friends, family and carers (allies);*
- *to promote a better understanding of complex dissociative distress among health and social care professionals and to improve service provisions leading to better health outcomes; and*
- *to advance the education of the general public in order to promote a better understanding and acceptance of people who experience complex dissociative distress.*

Our vision

Our work is directed towards realising our vision of a society which:-

- *recognises that dissociative identity disorder and related complex dissociative conditions are long term adverse effects of abuse, trauma and/or disorganised attachment relationships with parent-figures during early childhood, and are not extremely rare, imagined or fictional problems*
- *provides local free access to specialist trauma & dissociation assessment and, sustained effective treatment and support for ALL those who may be at risk of, or are identified as having dissociative identities or other trauma/abuse-related complex dissociative conditions*
- *provides support services for family, friends and carers and carers of people who experience dissociative identities and other complex dissociation disorders;*
- *acts to prevent dissociative identity disorder and other complex dissociative conditions through encouraging and supporting the healthy psychological, emotional & sociological development of ALL children and young people, in particular, by protecting them from sexual, physical, psychological or emotional abuse and neglect*

Our activities

- *maintain a membership open to adult survivors of childhood trauma who experience complex dissociative distress, to their family friend and interested professionals, and any member of the general public with an interest in our work*
- *produce a quarterly support and information newsletter for our members*
- *organise two to three membership meetings a year*
- *maintain an information web-site*
- *provide bespoke training & awareness-raising days and organise our own training and conferences*
- *provide speakers and displays for other organisation's conferences and training events*
- *participate in consultations and provide 'expert by experience' input into relevant policy and strategy developments*
- *produce and disseminate information resources, including booklet "Understanding Dissociative Disorders", published by Mind; a training DVD and our own series of fact sheets (currently being developed) and a reading list*
- *link with other organisations that have similar aims and interests.*