

Brief information for supporters about survivors' needs

Partners, family, and friends of someone who has a complex dissociative disorder play a key role in supporting them to cope with everyday living and in their journey towards their own recovery. It may seem like an overwhelming or impossible task but there are many relatively simple things you can do.

For instance, understanding the huge importance of consistency, stability, structure, routine and predictability needed by your loved one in day to day living goes a long way towards helping them feel safe. It helps if you can remember to relate to your loved one, however they are presenting, with understanding, empathy, trust and to be non-judgemental.

Supporting someone who has a complex dissociative disorder is challenging and, at times, hard. The person's needs can be rapidly fluctuating and it is important that the level of support at any one time is enough, not too little and definitely not too much. The person is responsible for their own recovery and needs the time and space to resolve their own issues. There may be occasions when, in crisis, the person needs you to temporarily take control and make decisions on their behalf in order to ensure their safety. Your role however for the most part is to support, not to rescue.