

**Practical ways to help people
who live with complex dissociative conditions to feel safe.
Suggestions from those attending the FPP Members Open Meeting
held on 4th April 2009, in Brighton**

- √ Carers, supporters, friends, family, professionals to understand the huge importance of consistency, stability, structure, routine and predictability needed by us in our day to day living in order to feel safe. No surprises please.
- √ Carers, supporters, friends, family, professionals to relate with understanding to us as a human beings, to trust us and be non judgemental.
- √ For us to trust and have mutual respect for carers, supporters, friends, family, professionals.
- √ Supporters and professionals to be aware and to keep within appropriate boundaries (which those with dissociation find hard) and keep the correct balance between professionalism and friendliness.
- √ Carers, supporters, friends, family, professionals, after discussion and agreement with you, know what to do for your own safety.
- √ Carers, supporters, friends, family, professionals to be real as defensiveness back from others causes inner chaos and can bring on sense of being unreal. This can cause us to start on an invisible downward spiral.
- √ To keep safe stay in or only go to places that you know are safe.
- √ Carers, supporters, friends, family, professionals to hold your hope when you cannot.
- √ Having someone who is close and knows you well who can take over keeping you safe when your own sense of self is lost.
- √ It is vital that your therapist understands what your own reality is.
- √ Always keep with you special objects that you can hold to help soothing of self.
- √ Cater for all those insiders who need you to be there for each of them and need you to look after them.
- √ Relate to the part that is out.
- √ Trust in your carer's judgement.
- √ Putting in place, when you are able to, items to help you be organised, e.g. diary, notebook, and whiteboard.

√ To plan backup strategies to help with daily living when things are not too good.

√ Leave yourself permanent messages around your home, e.g. "You are safe here." √ Always carry money on you to get a taxi back home if necessary.

√ Give yourself plenty of notice of upcoming events whenever possible and on a good day put in place as much preparation as you can.

√ Keeping oneself safe can sometimes mean having choice to end it all if it feels impossible.

√ Having medical supplies available, e.g. clean blades

√ Being aware and having available objects that different parts might need at times of distress.

√ Entrusting yourself and others to keep your medication at your request. √ Using fantasy objects/characters to help you feel safe.

√ Being realistic and realising safety is not always possible.

√ When going out always going left so you always come back to where you started. √ Knowing your own patterns of behaviour and trusting yourself.

√ Checking out as much as possible details of places/events etc so can avoid known triggers.

√ Having a clear crisis plan written down and given and understood to all carers, supporters, friends, family, professionals who have a need to know.

√ Ensuring trusted others are sensitive to knowing if you are "losing it" and trusting that what they will do will be what you would want.