

## **Tips for speaking to the media**

First Person Plural has worked with many journalists, TV producers and produced two DVDs over the last few years. These guidelines are based on our own experience.

### **Check inside: -**

How comfortable are we all doing this, who will actually handle the interview, what do we feel able to share that will not lead to difficult consequences.

Who, externally might be listening, reading or watching and may have the potential to cause us a lot of problems, is this going to be detrimental to all of us in the longer term, making an already complex life harder.

Often in the early days a lack of internal communication and co-operation makes informed, healthy decisions for everyone very hard

*This is a very personal view point because my own dissociative barriers were so profound in the early days, Me, the main outside part was quite willing to share with what was happening to us with anyone who would listen as my consciousness became flooded with memories. The way my system worked, although I was quite oblivious to it in the early days of therapy, was if the information was in my consciousness it was safe to share. I have learnt slowly and painfully that this is often not appropriate and definitely not wise. Hind sight is a wonderful thing but a warning that if this is relatively new to you maybe now might not be the best time to be speaking out. I think you need a considerable amount of co-consciousness to allow the decision to be arrived at from an informed place. I was not privy to the threats to us and others being hurt if we ever told, this caused so much internal distress when we did say too much but had insufficient internal communication to understand why. Melanie*

### **Support and informed decision making**

Make sure you have good support in place before, during and after an interview

Do not be hassled into making any quick decisions, a journalist who is genuinely interested will respect this

Do not compromise yourself in any way. Journalists' of course are looking for a good story, preferably with an element of 'fascination' but remember you do not have to provide this at a cost to yourself. It is awareness raising rather than providing a sensational story

Check out the level of understanding the journalist has about DID. FPP is very happy to provide a complimentary copy of the DVD 'A Logical Way of Being', a MIND booklet and to talk it through with you. Often a journalist will come from a place of ignorance and naivety rather than insensitivity.

### **Check out their remit: -**

Is it about why you are dissociative, how you manage in the present, to talk about the different parts and demonstrate switching? There are ways of educating others with your answers that do not compromise yourselves or have you doing anything that feels uncomfortable or destabilises your system. FPP would discourage sharing any details about your past, acknowledging that you had trauma in your childhood and developed DID as a coping mechanism is sufficient

Talking about your reality in the present, how you manage this, how others respond to you can all be helpful to share at the level you feel comfortable with.

Ask to have a recording or transcript of your interview before it is finalised so you can edit out anything that causes you to feel uncomfortable. This should not be a problem and demonstrates an empathic understanding towards the subject and your reality.

Journalists can seem very powerful and may trigger you into a complying, disempowered place that was all too familiar in childhood. Be aware if this is happening. Working with the media if it is handled well may leave you anxious inside for a while but it can also help to break the secrecy of childhood and be empowering if the time is right for all of you. This will be achieved through having established a sense of trust based on an informed relationship.