



March 2012

R A I N B O W ' S E N D

Volume 12 Issue 4

Support & Information Newsletter of First Person Plural
the national survivor-led association for dissociative identity disorder
and similar complex dissociative conditions

Registered Charity No: 1109464

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This is the last issue of Rainbow's End for this membership year, 2011/12

RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP*

if you wish to continue to receive the newsletter
and other membership benefits.

Renewal form enclosed.



Notice of AGM

This year's AGM will be held in
**Birmingham on Saturday 19th May
2012** starting at 11.15am.

It will be followed by the **Spring
Open Meeting**, at which we plan
to show "Forgetting Dad" - a
documentary DVD from the US
about a man who develops total
dissociative amnesia following a
road accident. The film was made
by his son as he investigated the
circumstances of his father's
amnesia. It documents the effect
on the family.

Venue:- The Church Hall,
St. Germaine's C of E Church,
City Rd, Edgbaston,
Birmingham, B16 9TD

Watch out for further details over
the next few weeks, including
committee nominations / election
information, which will be on the
website / sent by email or posted –
only if we don't have your email address

* no renewal needed if you newly joined FPP
on or after January 1st, 2012

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Editorial Statement:-

Thank you so much for all the contributions we have received! It is great to hear from so many people, and we have tried to include as many as possible

While every effort will be made to keep contributions complete and unedited we reserve the right to make amendments. Decisions about the inclusion and amendment of contributions are made by the editors and are final. Contributions do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of First Person Plural, members of the executive committee or the editors. Inclusion of any reference to an individual or organisational resource is not a recommendation. The contents of this newsletter are for information and support purposes only.

The newsletter is not a substitute for individual therapy or professional supervision. It is an addition to, not a replacement for, other networks of support.

Contributions can be sent in **at anytime** stories; resources; book reviews; tips; Personal experiences; articles and poems; brief snippets and black & white artwork are desperately needed It would really help if you can send your contribution as an email attachment. This saves times and resources. Please send to our editorial email address **newsletter@firstpersonplural.org.uk**. If you can't send by email, handwritten and typed material sent by post will continue to be accepted.

The next issue of the newsletter is due in **June 2012**; any contributions for consideration for inclusion in that issue must be with us by **14th May 2012**
Originals returned only if a suitable stamped addressed envelope is enclosed
IMPORTANT:- When sending material for publication please clearly mark "FOR PUBLICATION" and say what name or pseudonym you wish to use.

ATTENTION : -Material in this newsletter may trigger painful memories and feelings. Read with caution and appropriate support if necessary

**MAKING CONTACT WITH EACH OTHER? - - - -
REMEMBER SAFETY FIRST**

One reason people join First Person Plural is in the hope of connecting with other members. The newsletter and occasional members open meetings provide opportunities to do so but we suggest you use caution. Do not lose sight of the fact that, initially at least; other members of FPP may be strangers to you, as you are to them. FPP does not check applicants for membership. Anyone can become a member by completing a form and making payment. We have no reason to believe that any of our members are unsafe persons but conversely we can offer no assurances that someone is trustworthy just because they are an FPP member. Also non-members may have access to the newsletter.

Clearly we are not saying never make contact but we do advise that you use common sense precautions as you would when meeting or contacting any stranger. Develop your friendship slowly before exchanging personal details such as telephone, mobile or postal address. Set clear boundaries for yourself about what kind and how much contact you wish to have with each other. Listen to & respect each other's need to set and change boundaries. Do not let desperation for understanding, support and friendship cloud your judgement or lead you to try to get more from each other than each wish to give.

Letter from Melanie, Chair of FPP

Dear Members,

For many years we have written into FPP's business plan, 'move to office space'. Very easy to write but until now, for many reasons, the time has just not been right. We have been offered a space at The Survivors Trust offices in Rugby at an affordable cost and for a flexible period of time so we'll be able to see how having office premises works for us without tying ourselves into a costly contract. The executive committee have agreed to give this a trial period of six months from April so Kathryn and I are moving much of what we have accumulated in our homes over the years to Rugby. It will be challenging but it opens up many possibilities that we will be freer to explore. We hope to recruit volunteers (not necessarily survivors or FPP members) who are able to attend the new offices on a regular basis to help with the routine administrative tasks that have become increasingly more difficult to keep on top of alongside the other developments within FPP. Initially, the office will only be staffed part time and irregularly but hopefully by the next newsletter we will be beginning to get a feel of how it is going.

My husband and I spent many hours posting out the first 387 free copies of the DVD to community mental health teams in Wales and approximately two thirds of England. It has to be acknowledged with much gratitude that Michelle from the Pottergate Centre had spent many more hours compiling the mailing database for us. The addresses for the rest of the teams in England are being collected at the moment and we will then move onto Scotland and Northern Ireland. It took a lot longer to pack this number than I ever imagined. Included with the DVD are a letter written by clinical psychologist, Mike Lloyd explaining how he is using it in his NHS Trust, the Mind booklet, information about training possibilities and a questionnaire we have asked to be returned to us when they have watched the DVD. We intend to follow this up if we don't hear back. I felt very proud doing this, the DVD feels and I think looks really good and to have this amount of information to include was extremely satisfying.

Two DVD screening and awareness raising evenings are planned in Manchester on Thursday 26th April and Birmingham on Thursday 28th June. If you would like to come along please let us know and if you have anyone/organisations you would like us to e-mail the invitation to please let us have their details. Again we want to reach as wide an audience as possible whose work involves vulnerable people, both children and adults.

We have received quite a lot of pieces for the newsletter, do please keep them coming.

Finally with us asking you to renew your membership I would like to say why I find belonging to FPP important. Initially it helped me to not feel so alone and by paying a membership fee it felt very tangible. As an individual I enjoy encouraging small changes to happen, speaking to people about the work we do and why and on a larger scale it has felt very powerful to be part of an organisation that is really making change happen, nationally and internationally. I appreciate that the direct work at this time falls to a few of us who are fortunate enough to be able to do this BUT without an organisation that has a membership, one that supports us in whatever way each of you are able to is absolutely vital to what we do and will continue to do. Also the membership fees help us to run free Open Meetings and along with other money we receive we are being able to send out complimentary DVDs to selected organisations that need to have an understanding.

This comes with kind thoughts to you all and hoping to meet more of you during 2012

Melanie

A CHANGE FOR THE BETTER by Amy and Her Team

Shame used to grip at the insides – at the very core of my being – twisting of my gut – hanging of head – hiding away in corners – ashamed of being different – of being we – us!

Moulding – shaping – dictatorial of who I was – chiselling out my being – shaping and forming – not now – not since the PODS day – until then I could never quite meet people gaze – eyes averted – downcast. Shame zapping away at any sense of achievement then. Draining my life force – going round and round like some stuck record – keeping me locked in – coming at me from every angle.

Shame saying it was all my fault – but it wasn't my fault was it? I did no know that until now.

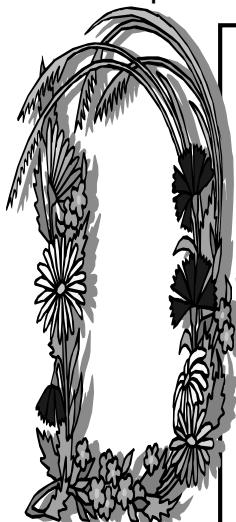
I am not ashamed – I am not constricted and pushed down by shame now! It is so very liberating – exhilarating even.

Now my heart cries out for those survivors whom shame is keeping captive. It takes its prisoners and engulfs them. I cry for them – my heart aches and breaks for them – I long for them to know it was NOT their fault- NONE of it! I hope beyond hope that they will one day let go of shame's hand – that they could know deep, deep down that it is NOT them at fault – that there would be a he paradigm shift of blame! That it would be apportioned to where it so rightly belongs on the abusers – NOT on the abused.

They (and I guess I too) are NOT at fault.

I feel anger rise in my for what was done to them – Survivors – and I feel anger towards and society that dissociates itself from extreme sexual abuse. Societal denial is still rife.

I will let my anger drive me to reach out – to push forward. Driving me to they in some small was to make a difference. I can not longer sit passively whilst society turns its face away – says it can not happen. We feel more strongly now than ever before. But what can be do? How can we help to open up society's eyes? To make them sit up – wake up – and accept the truth? What can I do? Time for action now – time to stop sitting back passively – doing nothing. Time to Change.



I've got the D's by Jill

**Desperate, Dissociated, Dependent, Devastated, Discombobulated,
Damaged, Daunted, Debilitated, Destabilized, Deceived, Delicate,
Distraught, Defeated, Deficient, Denying, Disrupted, Doldrums,
Degraded, Deluded, Demeaned, Disillusioned, Doubtful, Demobilized,
Derailed, Detesting, Deteriorated, Detached, Devastated,
Disappointed, Disconnected, Discontent
Diazepam**

Questions about DID: Part III

By Oriel

A few years ago I was having a very hard time with a friend who was finding it difficult to accept my diagnosis of DID and every time we tried to talk about it, the conversations were very heated and not very helpful, so I started trying to answer some questions in writing. It would be great to read other people's responses to the same questions. Please remember that this is just based on my experience, and your answers and experience and opinions about what is helpful may be very very different. So do send your own experience into the newsletter if you would like to...

Why do you need therapy so much, and why does your therapist seem so much more important to you than me?

Therapy is the place where everyone inside can be present and talk about what they need to talk about without having to worry about other people and the 'normal' world.

Many of my alters have an understanding of the world which is very coloured by their past and their damaged attachments, and for this reason they can display some very difficult behaviour sometimes. It is best if these alters stay out of the way as much as possible when we are engaging with the outside world, but they need time and attention and help, not only so that they are not sidelined constantly, but also so they can begin to think about their behaviour and begin to shift it. This happens in therapy. And it is the only place it can safely happen. This is one of the reasons that therapy is so important. It is also the only place that these alters have contact with anyone else- just as everyone needs contact with other human beings, so do they!

Another reason that it is so important is that a lot of the things which I can seemingly manage well, will often trigger something inside which I can contain for a while, but if it is not addressed will build up inside rather like a pressure cooker. I make sure that we attend therapy regularly so that the things we struggle with are contained there as much as possible. When we are dealing with the outside world, my insiders (and me!) need to know that they can direct things that upset them to the therapy session. This helps me to regulate when things are difficult, and hopefully stops everything becoming too chaotic. And for this reason I try and make sure that my sessions are regular and that I honour my alters by making sure we attend them whenever possible. I sometimes think of it a bit like dialysis of the kidneys- it is vital and can be life saving, but is not necessary all the time; by attending regularly the rest of the time can be easier. Obviously in our case this does not always work! But that is the aim.

In terms of why my therapist seems more important than you- I know this must be hard. She is not more important, but our relationship is different. Because of how important therapy is to us, it may seem sometimes like she is more important, but maybe it would help you to think that *therapy* is really important, not so much my therapist per se. Maybe that will make it seem less personal? However, she is also very important. For many of my alters she is the only person they ever see or talk to, and so for them she is very important. The way in which therapy works means that very intense feelings or 'transference' are activated- but again this is not really about her per se but about the way in which the treatment works. Lots of the feelings that a child has to work through in the process of growing up, several of my insiders have to go through now in therapy, and that can make our relationship with our therapist very intense and scary. I know this is hard to understand-often it is very hard for me to understand. But that is part of the treatment. And by having those feelings (hopefully) contained in my relationship with my therapist, it can mean that *our* relationship can be less charged, and my past maybe doesn't get in the way so much. All of us have many relationships alongside our friendships- colleagues, husband, children etc- which have different roles in our lives and different needs.

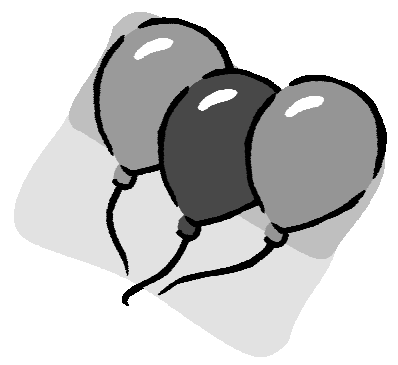
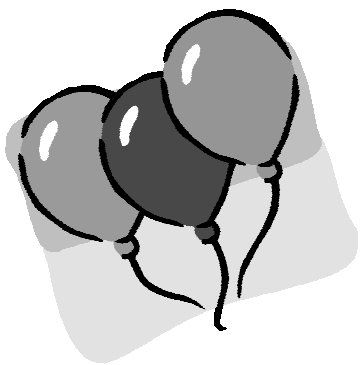
Each of those relationships can sometimes affect the others. In my case that includes an important relationship with my therapist. I have to make sure I look after what I need, and my relationship with my therapist is a big part of that. And sometimes it will get in the way, I realise that. But our relationship *can* exist alongside it. Our relationship is different, and special in its own way. My therapist is not more important than you; she just fills a very different role.

Why do things change so quickly? I saw you the other day and you seemed fine. Why are you in hospital?

Because DID involves several personalities sharing one body, it is possible for several experiences to be happening at once. So someone inside can be having a very hard time about something, but 'I' am not, so I seem ok. Then balance just shifts slightly and that personality who is having a hard time takes over the body and their experiences become more present. Sometimes, depending on my relationship with the insider, and depending on exactly what is happening, I can help them to stay out of the body even when they are upset, and at other times I can't. Often things are containable as long as everything goes according to plan, because then whoever is distressed knows where it can be dealt with, but if something unexpected happens, such as a cancelled therapy session, then the

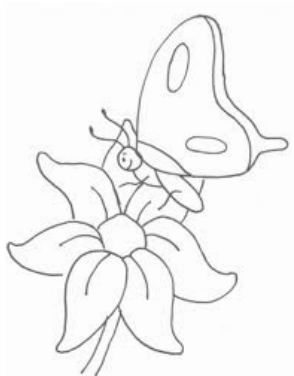
distress can quickly become uncontrollable. At other times, things do change very quickly; everyone inside has specific things which trigger them, and this can happen at any time. Depending on the exact trigger and how far they are on in their own journey, this will affect the whole system to varying degrees. For example, we once had to unexpectedly travel through a train station which one of our insiders finds traumatic because of things in her past, and the next couple of days were very difficult while we dealt with the fallout from that. At other times certain dates mean that certain insiders come into the body and may be very distressed. Sometimes this will be so extreme that I will have to ask for extra help and may occasionally need to be in hospital. Often this will be something to do with an insider, who I do not know very well, and so it may be hard for me to explain to you- or I may not know the full

reasons. Sometimes something seemingly minor, such as our therapist being on holiday, can trigger very extreme memories of early abandonment and may mean that that period is very difficult, and this may be hard for me to explain to you as I am ashamed of the strength of our reaction. Many times there will not be a single but things will add up. Just as anyone can have difficult periods in their life, or something unexpected can happen, the same is true for me, with the added complications that there are many people inside. Because of the things which happened in our past, we have some places of fragility which means I get to a point where I realise that we need to cancel things, or ask for help, or very occasionally be admitted to hospital. This is part of what I live with, and unfortunately it can lead to unpredictability and it must sometimes be confusing how quickly things can change.



1997 to 2012
Its 15 years since FPP began
Congratulations to us all

Spring Pictures For You To Colour



How to Grow Cress in an Egg



Next time you have a boiled egg, carefully take the top off and leave the shell as whole as possible. Then give the inside of the shell a rinse, and put some cotton wool at the bottom of the egg.

Soak the cotton wool with water and sprinkle cress seeds into it.

Finally, draw or paint a face onto the egg, put it in an egg-cup or an egg box on the window sill and watch as your egg person grows hair. Remember to keep it watered!

When the hair has grown, you can cut it and use it in a healthy snack



WORD SCRAMBLE

Can you unscramble these words?

- a) LWFREO
- b) BBTRIA
- c) NSUHEINS
- d) RSDBI
- e) MLBAS
- f) VLAEEES



What Am I?

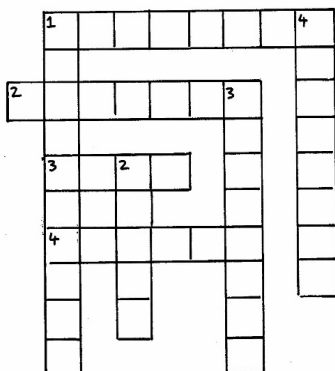
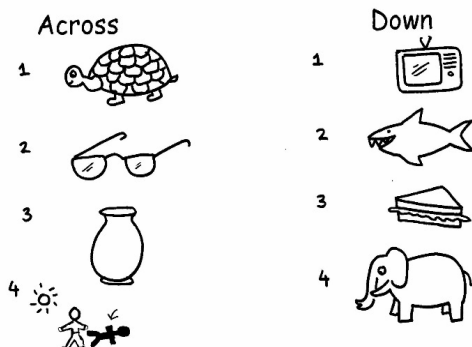
In Spring I look gay, decked in
comely array,
In Summer more clothing I
wear
When colder it grows, I fling
off my clothes,
And in Winter quite naked
appear.

CENTRE

netmums.com

Picture crossword

Fill in the crossword puzzle using the pictures for your clues.



SPRING JOKES

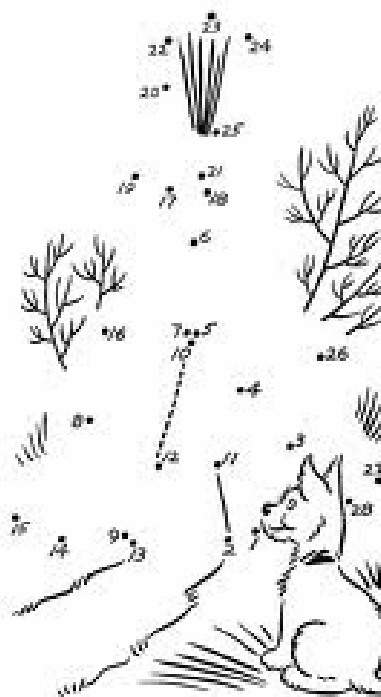
What season is it when you are on a trampoline?
Spring Time

Why is the letter A like a flower?
Because a bee comes after it.

Why shouldn't you tell jokes to an egg?
It might crack up.



DOT-TO-DOT



Answers to scramble: flower, rabbit, sunshine, birds, lambs, leaves.

Answer to riddle = tree

A RESPONSE TO ORIEL'S "QUESTIONS ABOUT DID - Part II"

By All of US

Years ago, when we first began to realise that the body was inhabited by more than one person, we couldn't understand why family and friends had such difficulty believing and accepting what we were telling them. When we began to try and explain to them that this was something that we had grown up with for most of our life and not something that happens overnight, they challenged that information and said that they had never noticed any 'change' in us – 'us' being the person who was created to be their friend, which we know now changes depending on which of our friends or family we are with at the time. (It isn't until you write this stuff down that you realise how confusing and complicated it all is). I hope this makes sense, although I have a good idea that it will.

Anyway, through trial and error, we began to learn that, just because someone is your friend, it doesn't necessarily mean that they can or will accept and understand us for who we are. We can cope with friends who say "I don't understand what you are saying". That's fair enough; they are being honest and we know where we stand with them, so we don't try and explain any further. The friends we have problems with are the ones who say "You can talk to me about it" and then go on and being the ones who are doing all the talking by telling us things like "Get your act together", "Surely you'll be able to go away from home just for a couple of days", or "Maybe you need to do so-and-so and then you'll be able to move on". These are some of the things that have been said to us and are continuing to be said to us, and this makes it very difficult to know what friends we **can** tell. Maybe they are right, but we have got to this point in time believing that other people are **always** right and we are **always** wrong if they have a different opinion to ours. But no, they are not always right. They have no idea what it's like being us, just as we don't know what it's like being them. There – that's progress.

Another thing we have learnt is that it is virtually impossible to mix ordinary relationships with DID. We still have to keep the two separate, firstly because our inside people want to 'come out' and talk to anybody who will listen, and so the original friend (one of us) gets pushed to one side and gets lost in the crowd due to the scramble for others of us who want to come out and be that person's friend too. Because of this we have had to have 'special friends' who are there just for the DID parts (although they have had to go away over the years due to their personal problems) and 'ordinary friends' who know we have a 'problem' but don't really ask any more about our 'problem'. Secondly, if one of our friend's happens to say "How have you been?" we find ourselves shutting down and switching off if we try and talk about it. I know that's all about protection but it is very frustrating because if we shut down there's nothing at all to explain, as the inside disappears and we can't actually remember how we have been. If we do manage to blurt out some of 'how we have been' we feel guilty for having had the courage to tell them! We struggle with relationships and friendships and we are still trying to understand how to cope with them.

To sum up, it is very difficult for us to have a friend and have DID at the same time. Because of this, even if our grown-up person is in the company of a friend, as we are so disconnected from her and, therefore, each other, we all feel very lonely and isolated as we are not all joined together enjoying the company of another person.

***"Who are you to judge the life I live?
I know I'm not perfect
-and I don't live to be-
but before you start pointing fingers...
make sure your hands are clean!"***

Bob Marley

Understanding Misunderstandings by Melanie

FPP's second day's training is aimed at people who work in crisis situations like help lines, short term support at Rape Crisis Centres and other organisations who offer this level of help. Other examples we have worked with are a group of NHS art therapists and mental health staff and a Christian group including clergy who are aware they are supporting people living with complex dissociation.

During the first part of this day we cover situations that dissociative people might present with and the confusion and feelings this may evoke from both the client and helper. I knew with hindsight how little I was able to offer those I was begging for help from in the early days before I had any idea that I was DID. I was driven to ringing the local rape crisis line, Samaritans even the NSPCC but had no idea why apart from I was desperate, but desperate about what?

This was only my limited experience but it did give me a starting place. I worked closely with a friend who is DID and has been a rape crisis volunteer for many years. I learnt from her that an indication a caller may be dissociative is when they share only disjointed fragments of their story, often from a place of terror. So conversely I thought there must be some people ring who know most if not all of their story and this was a total revelation to me. Over the next few newsletters I would like to share with you some of the areas we talk about and I hope, like with Oriel's articles this will encourage feedback.

I have split it into six sections: - Early Contact, Trust Issues, Attachment Issues, Triggers, Use of language and How talking to this person makes you (the volunteer) feel. None are a definitive answer; all are a tip of the iceberg. I tried to get a broad base selection of issues that reflect many others.

DID Clients in Crisis : Often the person will ring or drop-in and be desperate to talk but have no content or context to help define their desperation. Their body language and voice will support their desperation.

For me it was so important that the listener didn't try and second guess what was happening, they were totally respectful of my behaviour and needs and I felt I could always call again which seemed vital at this stage of the collapse of my structural dissociation. My world of machine-like functioning was shifting quickly, violently and dramatically and was driving me to the brink 24 hours a day.

Many people may talk about highly emotive subjects in a detached manner, expressing extreme hopelessness, pointlessness and feelings of suicide, having no awareness of the depth of what they are verbally expressing. It can sound like a throw away comment while at the same time feel totally genuine to the listener, both can be correct but very confusing. At this stage of the journey these may be intrusive thoughts that get spoken with no feelings attached and no situation to put them into.

The person saying this might be co-conscious or not. I have always been co-conscious, I would hear the words coming from my mouth, suicidal thoughts had been with me most of my life and I couldn't understand why this was a problem for others. I now feel distressed how as bits of memory, that I now appreciate would sound horrifying, were coming back into my consciousness I would share them with others like it was absolutely nothing to do with me, in a detached, conversational way. I had no awareness of the impact of what I was sharing was having on people. How we had always managed as a covert system was if it was in my consciousness I could talk about it, so the old pattern continued to prevail.

Again I found acceptance of what was happening the most useful attitude. I was a long way off having enough continuity of thought to have any comprehension as to how I was presenting.

A lack of continuity of thought must be so hard for the listener. We cannot hear that we are leaping all over the place in thinking, speaking and actions, often not finishing sentences, missing out many words when writing, starting many jobs. It would have been totally unhelpful for anyone to point this out to me, the fragmentation of the brain would have not allowed for me to change this and it would have undermined an already tenuous sense of self-confidence. Although co-conscious I did not have the ability to retain the thinking and speaking of the others. So the lack of continuity may often lead to a lot of repetition, again we stress the need to stay with what is happening for that person. It is helping them to stay in the moment.

I think for many during the early days' anger with nothing to attach it to is an incredibly big issue. So often the listener will witness this anger, stay with it. I would like to say acknowledge it but this maybe too much during the early days. This person may have always presented as an angry person and to have your way of being challenged too early can be devastating, change will happen when the time is right. We do stress that it is fine to sit with someone's anger but they must never attack the listener in any way. This is unacceptable. That person has called, reached out so they have already instigated a change.

A SENSE OF SELF by AMY AND HER TEAM

I have never had a sense of self;
the world around me feels unreal, pretty
much of the time. I cannot seem to
locate this me, or I, that people talk
about. How do we go about locating the
self? When self got lost years ago!
How do we function in this world of
singletons? How do we fit in? We strive
to fit in at times but at what cost to us?
You see we are like so many shards of
broken glass shattered on the ground!
A broken mirror, reflecting pain and
traumas that you, our singleton friends,
must never see, for to tell you and face
your disgust or unbelief would be to us
like death itself. Yet it is real more real
to us than life! Yet it also is dreamlike.

How can we tell you of our fractural
lives that do not even make any sense
to us? Of visions- fear inducing visions-
film like, disjointed, separated from the
person who you will say is me. How
can we even begin to tell you of what
we see, the sick visions that feel so
depraved. How can we even let you
into our world?

We see things in grey monochrome at
times- a dull murky grey. When the
mist ascends.

Black and white thinking with nothing
in-between, at times, you love us or you
hate us. But there has to be more than
this surely? Slowly we learn that there
are greys in between.

But who are we? Fragmentations of a
whole- disjointed jigsaw pieces! With
pieces missing, **STOLEN** by you; lost,
but not for ever, surely not forever!
But how can we reclaim the stolen
pieces that got left behind? We work
through a minefield of emotion, versus
non emotion. Sometimes we do not
even know how we are feeling-nor how
we should feel, How do you want us to
feel? "Hum! How are we feeling?" and
"what are we feeling?"

The body is numb a lot of the time, the
mind also!

Ground the self, stay rooted to earth," be real" my therapist says "look at reality" but what is this reality she speaks of? The world around us feels very un real at times. And objects distort, all is seen through a haze, through another's eyes! I feel far away, not held down to earth. I float off and another takes over!

Now I am working on piecing our lives back together, but it takes time, too much time sometimes, for I am an impatient soul sometimes. But someday we will be whole, we will be healed, we will be on the final leg of our journey one day, just not yet! But soon: Just need to remember that" Rome was not built in a day!" and "an elephant can only be eaten in bite sized chunks"

RELATIONSHIP – WHAT'S A RELATIONSHIP? From All of Us

We wonder how many other people ask this question. We finished therapy 4 years ago and remember our therapist saying that having a Dissociative Disorder can affect our relationships in the past and those in the present.

We know we asked her on more than one occasion "How do you be a wife *and* have MPD?". We know we created someone to be a wife and then a mother but had no idea what being a wife actually meant. We figured being a mother was easy because when you have had a bad childhood, for whatever reason, if you have your own children you have two choices – bring them up feeling as you felt as a child, or make sure they never have to feel what you felt. Our 'mother part' (An) chose the second option and made sure (hopefully) they felt safe and loved. She has two grown-up sons now and they haven't disowned her so she must have done something right!

Knowing how to be a wife, however, is a minefield. When An was created to get married she thought a woman gives herself, literally, to a man. When 'Two become as one' she took that to mean that, somehow, she was now part of her husband; connected to him, moulded into him, and gave up any idea of becoming someone in her own right. That she was put on this earth to be always at his beck and call, she belonged to him and his wants, needs and feelings must always come first. In fact, he was the only one allowed to have wants, needs and feelings. As we had grown up having no wants, needs or feelings, marriage was just an extension of what we had always been – a zombie, so it wasn't at all difficult for An to carry on in the same way.

Then we learnt in therapy that she had got totally the wrong idea of what marriage meant and that she was 'allowed' to be herself and did have equal rights and wasn't some sort of possession made legal and above board by the fact that she had been given a wedding ring.

An can do the practical things like making him cups of coffee, cooking his meals etc. but we have *no* idea about dealing with the emotional side of marriage. We remember asking our therapist time and time again "But if An is allowed to have feelings of her own, which are more important, her husband's or her own?" or "Which is more important, her husband's job or the fact we are having a difficult time?". Loads more questions along these lines.

Our therapist helped us a lot about ourselves but she could never help us with the husband/ wife situation. We now understand that she wasn't a marriage counsellor and that everyone's relationship with other people will be different (whether multiple or not) but we still don't know what to do with out questions. "What do I do with him?", "What is a husband/wife relationship?", "How does it work?" and so on.

We coped with this problem for years, both before, during and after our therapy, by knowing that we at least had the weekdays to ourselves, to muddle alone in the best way we could, and manage to get through the weekend by knowing that Monday morning would come along and he would be back at work. However, he was made redundant 5 month ago and, as he is near retirement age, it is very difficult for him to find another job. We *have* to get this to work as he is home nearly all the time now, but we don't know where to start.

We watch the other couples we know and try and pick up on some things that they say and do but An (or any of us) has nothing inside to latch onto – there is nothing there and, anyway, the other couples do not have DID and so they are truly a ‘couple’ – just the two of them trying to get it right. It would really help us to know that we are not the only ones struggling with relationships. And friendships – what are they all about?!!!!

There Is A Way by a survivor and her Team

There is a path way through grief
` Though grief be born,
There is a way through pain
Though our pain cannot be felt.
There is a path way that
Leads only ever to you
There is a time and that
Is yours and yours alone
There is a mountain though its'
Heights seem unobtainable it is
Obtainable through effort and time.
There is a day when you`ll be strong.
There is time though time eludes,
When all fighting and fear concludes,
There is a strength born of
Pains intensity a surviving construes
And all but life will then remain
No heartaches and no wanton pain.
Ah! But does our erring heart now fill
with longings for a world of no ill.
We turn once more to face our shame
Knowing now where in lies the blame,
Our empty eyes face empty eyes
The ground dry and parched by lies
Their lies they gave us for our food
The empty space where once you stood.
It does no good to ever sit and brood
on things that cannot be understood.
We live not amongst the ashes now
where once your evil you did sew,
We had to turn, we had to go
Too many questions the answers we don` t
know.

**“Life isn't about finding
yourself. Life is about
creating yourself.”**
George Bernard Shaw

Dangerously Well by Jill

It's dangerous to be well
for all around to see
there is nothing wrong with me
to occupy themselves with other concerns
and deal with those 'in crisis'

My diary is full
Responsibilities, leisure, jobs, family
it all looks so healthy.....
from where you're standing
I even commend myself for making it through
a Christmas and New Year
without shedding a tear
and not hint of depression in sight

It is so true
that I don't depend on you
in the ways that I did before.....
but friends and therapist
I want you to know
there are things I don't show
inside

I need I need I need
they need they need they need
we need we need we need
something

Are you all out there?
somewhere?
I mean, If we needed you
If we got into trouble
cus we're not sure
anymore, not sure
not safe anymore, not safe
and

I'm just not better :(

So..... just because I'm smiling
just because 'i'm fine'
please, someone, read between the lines
cus this life sucks
and I don't give a f--k
anymore.....

SOME ALTERNATIVES TO SELF-INJURY

When a part who self-harms is ready to start thinking about alternatives, some of these may help as a transition. But before the part is ready, these may well feel trite and superficial to the part who expresses their pain and fury through self-injury. I thought it was worth writing these anyway, but do not expect miracles!!!

- **Try holding ice cubes in your hand until it hurts**
- **Try having an elastic band on your wrist or arm and pinging it against your skin**
- **Try using a permanent red marker to scribble on your skin where you would usually self injure, and treat the mark as you would a cut- such as bandage or clean it. Honour that the pain being expressed is just as big**
- **Bandage your hand without cutting it, to allow the communication and to allow self-care which often comes after self-injury**
- **Try doing something physical such as hoovering. I pay my violent part £1 every time she hoovers so she can save up for something she likes, which sometimes helps her look forward to something in the future and that helps**
- **With all of these remember to honour the pain and fear and communication and not to think that these are less 'real' ways of expressing pain!!!**

Feeling really isolated in the legacy of the past, don't really know if I'm relating in the present or from the position of my historical parts. My therapist has just returned from 5 weeks away and I was left with an overload of anger. Does anybody else suffer like this. My teenage self and my young self rage and feel cross, very, very cross with our abuser and with my mother for not protecting us, we're so angry with her. Does anybody else feel this way I ask again. And it spills over into the 'now'- we feel like grabbing at people in the street, pushing them out of the way and smashing shop front windows, then we feel like weeping and crying 'it wasn't our fault it wasn't our fault'. Again does anybody else feel this way? Help us in our isolation, we're also terrified that we might also be abusers too and that's why we keep away from people in a friendless limbo not really a part of life, too terrified to be part of the human race. I say again does anybody else hear?

This Recipe was recommended to me as being good for anxiety and depression- especially if you use whole-wheat pasta- and it's so easy!

Thyme Roasted Tomatoes, Garlic and chorizo with pasta

Ingredients serve 4

1 pack of pasta twists or spaghetti
1lb tomatoes(halved)
3 cloves of garlic (crushed)
1 bunch of fresh thyme
1 quarter pint olive oil
8oz chorizo (diced)
2oz parmesan cheese



Method

Cook pasta in plenty of lightly salted boiling water for approx 10 minutes. Lay tomatoes in roasting tin, rub with garlic and oil add a little thyme. Cook for 10 minutes in a preheated oven set at 180.

Dry fry chorizo in a heavy pan until it becomes crispy on surface.

Drain pasta, add chorizo and roasted tomatoes with the cooking juices.

Top with fresh thyme leaves and grated parmesan.



University of Essex

Living with a Controversial Disorder: a qualitative exploration of experiences in individuals who have a formal diagnosis of Dissociative Identity Disorder

Have you been formally diagnosed with Dissociative Identity Disorder by in the last two years?

What is it like to have your experiences described or explained in this way?

Would you be willing to talk about your experiences *in confidence*?

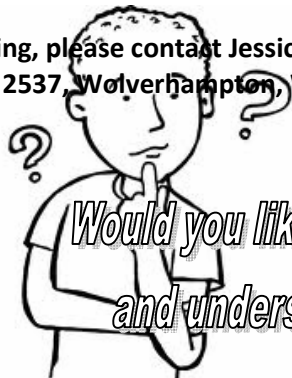
I am looking for people who have been given a formal diagnosis of Dissociative Identity Disorder by a multidisciplinary team of mental health professionals at the Clinic for Dissociative Studies or the Pottergate Centre within the last two years, to take part in one to one confidential interviews to talk about their experiences of living with DID before and after receiving their diagnosis.

If you are interested in participating, please contact Jessica Floris at jcflor@essex.ac.uk or c/o First Person Plural, PO Box 2537, Wolverhampton, WV4 4ZL

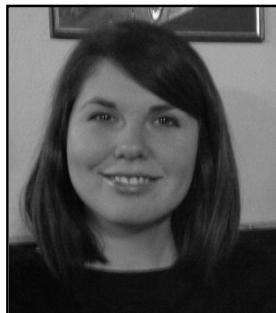
Thank you!



CITY UNIVERSITY
LONDON



Would you like to help increase awareness and understanding of a neglected area?



My name is Stephanie Fletcher and I am a counselling psychology student. I have been learning about Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) for over a year and have been surprised and concerned about how misunderstood and misdiagnosed the area appears to be. I have also been surprised at the lack of research and time that has been dedicated to understanding the experience of DID. I have recently been given the opportunity to complete research into an area of my choice and jumped at the chance to study DID and improve the knowledge available concerning this important area.

My research is concerned with exploring the experiences of relationships in individuals experiencing DID. This is a unique opportunity to increase knowledge of the condition and therefore improve health care opportunities for individuals experiencing DID in the future.

- Are you a member of First Person Plural?
- Do you experience Dissociative Identity Disorder?

If so I would invite you to take this opportunity to improve knowledge and awareness of DID and to tell me your story. This would involve an informal meeting to discuss your experiences of relationships.

Please email me at: Stephanie.Fletcher.1@city.ac.uk or call me on 07842692943.

This study is supervised by Dr Jacqui Farrants (J.Farrants@city.ac.uk) at City University.

Stephanie's research has obtained ethical clearance from City University London

READERS ARE ADVISED that First Person Plural includes the above two requests for research participants FOR INFORMATION ONLY. We believe the requests are genuine and that enquirers and participants will be treated with sensitivity and respect. However, inclusion here does not indicate FPP endorsement or recommendation.