



March 2013

RAINBOW'S END

Volume 13 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



CONTENTS

Editorial statement.....	2
Making Contact	2
Chair's letter.....	3
A Day With DID.....	4
Dear Rainbow's End Readers.....	6
An Interview with a Therapist.....	6
Play Centre.....	8
Using Music.....	10
Support FPP	11
Window of Tolerance or Opportunity?.....	12
Dare to Cry(poem).....	14
Time(Poem).....	15
Helpful Resources.....	16

AGM Notice

*This year's AGM will take
place on 11th May 2013 in
Derby*

*We hope as many of you
as possible can join us for
this and for a harp
workshop in the afternoon.*

*Please see enclosed
information for more
details and information
on the venue, voting and
committee nominations.*

***It's membership renewal
time again!!****

***The membership renewal
form is enclosed with this
mailing- please return it
to FPP as soon as possible***

Thank you!

****if you joined on or after 01/01/13
no renewal is necessary***

Editorial Statement:-

Thank you so much for all the contributions we have received! It is great to hear from so many people, and we would love to hear from more.

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 2013**; any contributions for consideration for inclusion in that issue must be with us by **24th May 2013**

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

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Dear All

It has been a very complicated start to the year for several other members of the committee so all the plans are moving a little more slowly than any of us had expected but never the less things are continuing to progress.

We intended to have our online survey relating to diagnosis up and running by now. The preparation work is well under way but realistically it will be a few more weeks before it has come together and we've had an opportunity to run it by some of the ESTD- UK (European Society for Trauma and Dissociation -UK) research team. We went to ensure that what we are asking will be useful information and support other data that is being collected.

I feel that the need for support that we can all use has never been greater. We hear more and more that there really is no mental health service available through the NHS; although we are also beginning to hear about very small pockets of good practice being driven by GPs using their budget to buy in specialist therapy. Please do let us know if you have any good or bad recent experiences that we can then share with other members. If anyone has found a way through the system please share it if you are able so others maybe see a path they could follow.

Looking at the bigger picture FPP is developing its training programme to include helplines. I think a general understanding of DID and DDNOS, how to validate our reality, help us to contain and be grounded is probably more important than a specialised helpline. I already feel different and that my problems are much too complicated for other people to understand unless they are experts on this subject. Yet again this is very isolating and confirms our feeling of hopelessness. Over the years I have appreciated that the help I need at these times is not specialised, my history and trauma work is for the therapy room. What I do want is knowing the person on the other end of the line has heard of dissociation, has a basic understanding and knows how to broaden their listening and supporting skills to embrace my reality. I have been amazed how family, friends and colleagues are very able at supporting us all in times of chaos and terror. This helps me to feel part of the human race and that my problems are not insurmountable.

FPP is continuing to develop their training with the Samaritans and aiming to work with some Carers' Helplines. It is hard for those who are dissociative but the isolation for supporters and carers is equally as profound if not more so. There is also some information about NAPAC later in this newsletter. FPP has worked closely with them to write guidelines and Oriel and I spent a morning with their volunteers which we hope to repeat later this year. As with all support some people will be a lot more comfortable with this subject than others, we will relate to some and not others. That is life and does not necessarily reflect an organisations willingness to take this subject on board and include it in their training. I think we also need to develop what we are asking for when we seek support, sort of guidelines for us to try and internalise to help us get what we want and need. This would I feel be empowering, we are saying, yes it is incredibly tough but we are going to survive and take control over our own lives. I look forward to meeting some of you at our AGM and Open Meeting in May.

Warmest wishes Melanie

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A Day with D.I.D

by Mercy Erin Carpenter

You wake up, it seems light so there is a 50 or so percent chance it's the morning but you check the time and date anyway. Good, it's the day after yesterday. You also check the year just to be sure.

You wonder what happened to the PJs you wore last night because now they are nowhere to be seen but dismiss it as one of those things and crawl over to your wardrobe to pick out the days dress. The arguments start. Boys win out over the socks. (Blue stripes with robots on them) ladies win the rest of the undergarments, the little girls get the cute panda T-shirt and you? You pull on overalls because you know by the end of the day you will be covered in paint, juice, mud and stains. You find your PJs in the bathtub, blocking the plug hole, and both taps are running. Leaning over to retrieve them the shakes in your lungs start as flashbacks stab in your mind of water all around you, hands holding you down... You pull away quick thankful you didn't switch. Ring out the sopping rags and throw them in to the washing basket. It's going to be one of those days.

Your housemate passes you on the stairs, acting as normal as usual. You scrutinise her body language and cautiously greet her good morning. Pass. She obviously overheard no unusual activity coming from your bedroom last night.

As the kettle boils for tea you reach in to the fridge for the milk. Your fingers brush against an unexpected leaf of paper. Whats this? A post it note. 'Cheese. [your less than affectionate nick name] penny says soz. I moped. U owe me 1. Xx-Candy'

The carton is empty.

You substitute your morning drink with black coffee. The children groan about the bitterness and choke on the toast, klonopin, abilify, citalopram, mysoline and everybody's favourite ;

lithium. You guess today's plans will have to include grocery shopping.

A check of your Emails includes logging out of Jessica's account and having a quick scan over your contacts past messages for conversations you don't remember. It looks like Ross and Roxy got along last night but you won't be reading the details. Something's you're better off not knowing.

Reaching in to your bag, you dispel a half eaten lolly (wrapped rather inefficiently in its cellophane and leaving sticky residue on all other items it touches.) A dozen or so attractive but heavy pebbles that you place with the rest of Ed's collection and a packet of king sized Rizlas. There. You found it. Your purse. You count five pound and a post it note.

'IOU £10 – Candy'

You grab a pen from the desk tidy and scribble in different hand writing 'this does not make us even' Sticking it with much encouragement to the mirror on your way out.

You unlock your bike and wheel it across the street to the cycle lane, lecturing Billy on safety as you go. You know you sound like a nagging mother but it warms your heart slightly having someone to fuss over. As you mount the saddle you take a step back, pull the curtain around you and fall to sleep...

... exhausted, over heated yet energised, you emerge again at your destination. Therapy. A little early. Right on Billy, you get to keep this privilege.

The receptionist greets you by name but is apprehensive. You are sure someone must have 'corrected' her at least once. You are especially thankful and pleasant to make up for it.

You dig out your journal and go over the weeks entries, taking mental notes. Dawn still needs

more time out. Becky is continuing progress, Little Mercy has been easily triggered. Riley is digressing further. Roxy is worrying you. You cant read this had writing... is it a newbie? You hope that brown stain isn't blood. You hope that dark scribble isn't hiding the words KILL KILL KILL. You hope you get a chance to open up about your own feelings for once. Your therapist calls you in. You apologise for missing the last weeks session and start to explain but only one word is needed. Alters. Still you can't trust that she fully believes you... and then you check out.

You wake up to a crash at the supermarket but don't know what supermarket it is. Then suddenly realise the noise was the basket you must have been carrying, now laying upside down at your feet, jars cracked and tins rolling away from you. The migraine kicks in. You want to curl up in the corner and cry but people have all turned to see the mess. They don't offer to help. You get busy piling the groceries back in to the basket and retrace your amnesic steps to put the contraband items back on the shelf. Nice try guys but bacon, shoes and kinder surprises aren't within our budget. Milk. Asprin. Exit.

It's dark out. Whoever left therapy didn't come straight to the store. You begin looking for the cycle rack that you hope stores your bicycle. At least it is easier to find than a car. There it is. Unlocked but unstolen. You ask aloud who neglected to chain it up but no one comes forward. You have no lights, being caught out in the dark unexpectedly so have to take it slow on the pavement. No more fun for Billy today.

Exhausted and shaking you make it to your front door but can not find your key for the fourth time this month. You are well prepared for it by now and head round the back, retrieving the spare from the tire of the trailer and let yourself in.

First of all the kettle is put on. You have been waiting for this cup of tea for 20 hours. In goes the bag, the water and the milk. At last. You

carry it to your desk and collapse in the chair. It's even later than you thought. The computer comes on for you to read the online newspapers and check the weather for work in the morning, reaching over for your cooled tea. It's gone. With a sigh, you begrudgingly drag yourself out of the chair to make another. In the kitchen all the knives have been taken from their draws and arranged on the surface with their blades overhanging. You gather them up and dump them back in their tray. Slam the kettle back on, lean back against the oven and almost catch your hair on fire. The front gas ring is lit on full.

Switch it off and check the rest. There's something in the oven... a dish. Curiously, you grab the gloves, open the door and pull it out to peer inside. Shepherds pie. The aroma of tomatoes and walnuts makes your stomach growl. It is walnuts and not lamb right?

Your flatmate pears around the door. 'hey Betty Crocker, is that for sharing?'

You smile. 'You bet. Ready in five minuets'

Back in the oven. Thank you Grace.

The first sip of tea is the elixir of life. The phone rings. Who the hell is Jacob? He's not one of your contacts. You stuff it under a cushion until the noise stops.

After dinner, you pull out the journal. Did anyone make progress in therapy today?

There are drawings in black marker pen of hooded figures with sticks. Do they feel so familiar because your hand drew them or have you seen what or who they represent?

You try to sooth the child that starts crying, Grab a teddy, hug your knees and rock. This may be how you end up spending the rest of the evening. You make sure your alarm is set for tomorrow morning, you scribble a note about remembering to call your social worker tomorrow, you are halfway to the bedroom....

... you check out.

Dear Rainbows End Readers

By Kate

I would like to ask if any of you have a struggle picking colour schemes, just out of interest. I wear a blue based range of colours for daytime. At night, my clothes have to be pink or creams. Hence a blue robe remains untouched in 3 years. I get the decorator to pick decor colours matching with cream! It is all about internal agreement. I usually try to see the funny side of things but occasionally a really bad switch happens, if I'm very stressed... So complicated to deal with.

AN INTERVIEW WITH A THERAPIST

Lesley is a Humanistically Trained Therapist who worked with Peter, a client with DID, for three years prior to diagnosis, through the process of being formally diagnosed, and then referred him on to a DID specialist. Names have been changed for confidentiality reasons.

Did you know the client had DID when you began work? No

What did you know about their trauma history? I was aware of incest and sexual abuse in the mid to late teens. But certainly I was not aware of the extent of the abuse from early childhood.

How did it become obvious that he had DID? During one session I said 'Peter' and an alter shouted back at me 'I am not Peter'.

Had you ever heard of DID before? Not really, I had vaguely heard of multiple Personality Disorder but not DID and it had not occurred to me it might present in my own therapy room or how it might present if it did.

How did you realise that this is what was happening? As I was taken aback and unsure of what was happening, after the session where another alter spoke to me, I sort consultation and was referred to the Clinic for Dissociative studies for advice.

How did it affect how you worked with him and what you felt was needed? It catapulted the work into issues of survival and betrayal I had not previously encountered and lot came out about abuse which had not been in the room before.

How did it feel different in the room to working with non-dissociative clients? I do not normally work with very traumatised clients, and working with Peter felt completely different to my other work. The sessions were intense and sometimes traumatic and the trauma being presented was outside of my experience.

Were there any ways of working that you found particularly helpful or not helpful? I pulled on my parenting skills a lot and realised that I needed to relate to each personality in an age appropriate

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fashion, and also that because of the level of trauma experienced in childhood, some basic life skills had not be learnt. I found my parenting skills very helpful with this, and I helped each alter to stabilise in the outside world and learn new skills.

How did your relationship with the alters develop? With each alter, when they first made contact with me , what they brought into the room was raw trauma, often in flashback form. I gradually helped each of them to begin to use words and contain their anger or distress in a more symbolic form- ie words or drawings, and this helped to reduce the fear levels in the room. I had to witness what each alter was communicating, but also help them to know that it was in the past. Once the trauma was more processed I found it was important to help each alter develop an interest in the present world-so I found out what sort of things they each liked or might like and worked to facilitate this. With each alter it felt like a mixture of therapy and parenting skills.

Were there any specific things which helped facilitate relationship with the alters? I found it was particularly helpful to find out what kind of person they were and locate something they liked or could be interested in, so that we could engage with that together.

What did you feel the main difficulties were? I felt that as the other personalities began to speak to me, the trauma they reported and fear levels sometimes resulted in dangerous levels of instability and the process was intense at times and hard to contain.

How did you resolve these? I felt that I couldn't resolve these on my own and my experience was not adequate, so I did my best to stabilise him while I sort a referral to a specialist therapist.

Did you seek out specialist help? Yes, got consultation and supervision from the clinic for dissociative studies and then supported Peter to try and get referred there for therapy.

Was this helpful? Yes, it helped to feel there were people who were experienced in working with these issues.

How did your therapeutic relationship progress? Unfortunately I felt that I did not have the skills to continue with the therapy and that it was best if they were referred to a DID specialist. Although this was hard for both of us, as we had a special relationship. However we managed the transition well and I continued to see them for some time after they moved to their new therapist.

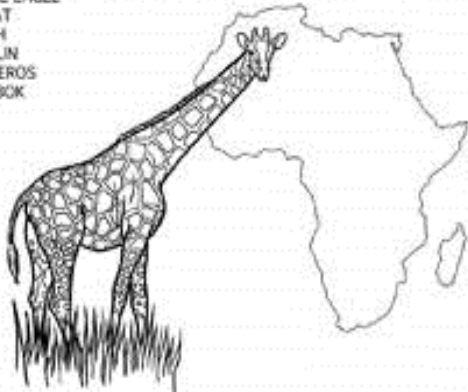
What were the hardest bits? When there was trauma being re-enacted and I could not find a way to help it move into words. And feeling that what they were living with fell outside of my training and experience.

What were the best bits? Lots of laughter and sense of fun and excitement despite all the trauma.

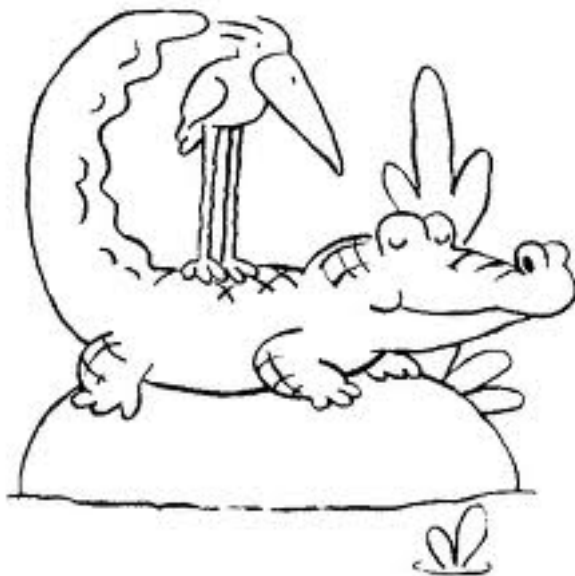
*There are many ways of getting strong, but sometimes
talking is the best way*
Andre Agassi

ANIMALS OF AFRICA

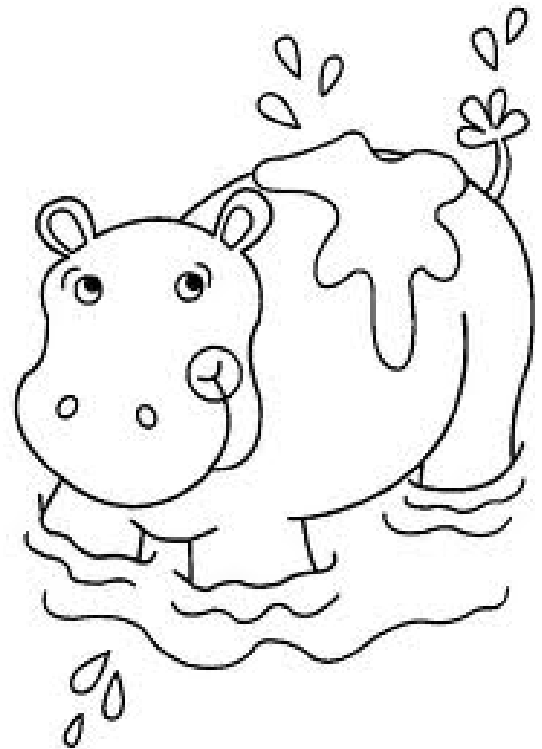
BABOON	D K O B G N I R P S H R R C H
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CHIMPANZEE	T E L G A E L A I T R A M B S
COBRA	O N I N N Z U I Z G T L H R T
CROCODILE	M O D I G N U D F E E L V A R
ELEPHANT	L O O M O A C K U V B I K E I
FLAMINGO	E B C A L P Z H O K E R D F C
GAZELLE	O A O L I M L E E B E O A F H
GEMSBOK	P B R F N I V S L E S G J A Y
GIRAFFE	A I C W O H L Q M L T M M R E
GNU	R H I N O C E R O S E A E I N
GORILLA	D S U M A T O P O P P I H G A
HARTEBEEST	
HIPPOPOTAMUS	
HYENA	
KUDU	
LEOPARD	
LION	
MARTIAL EAGLE	
MEDOKAT	
OSTRICH	
PANGOLIN	
RHINOCEROS	
SPRINGBOK	
ZEBRA	



Pictures for your to colour



Play



African Animal Jokes:

What do you call a hippo in a phone box?

Stuck

How does a lion greet people?

Pleased to eat you

Why are elephants wrinkled?

Have you ever tried to iron one?

How do you open a banana?

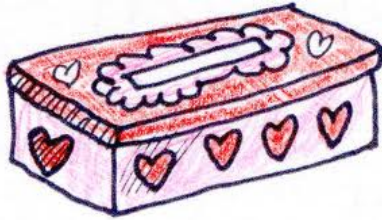
With a mon-key

What do you get if you cross a leopard with a

Doberman?

A terrified postman

Centre



Making a Special Box

Sometimes it can be hard to share a body with lots of people and hard to have to share everything, so this is an idea about making a special box that is just for YOU! (unless you want to share it with someone inside of course)

You will need a box (a shoe box or a small cardboard box or even a lunch box) and scissors and glue and things to decorate it with like wrapping paper, pretty paper, pictures, glitter, stickers etc.

Decorate the box any way you want by sticking the paper, pictures, glitter and stickers on it. You could put your name on it if you like or just know privately that it is your special box.

When it is dry, put things inside that are special to you like pictures that mean something to you, or small toys or things you have found, or things that mean something about who you are.

Then put it somewhere safe and you can keep adding special thing to it whenever you want to. HAVE FUN!!!



Trapped in a Grown Up Body

By no-name

Trapped in a body that isn't my own;
It's far too big to ever call home.

I long to run; to jump and play.
But I have jobs to do that take all day.

Why are the clothes I like, all too small?
I know the REAL me isn't that tall.

I gaze in wonder at toys in the shop.
Wishing I had a key to undo the lock.

I hear children playing and long to join in,
But they can't see me, the light's too dim

The sun goes to bed and I'm all alone.
I long for a cuddle and somewhere to call home.

But I have to live in this grown up world.
Pretending to be big when I'm not that old.





Using Music

By Oriel

Since I was a teenager music has been a part of my therapy process, both in sessions with my therapist and on my own, alongside the process. Songs have often been a way into things that are hard to put into words. Using music in this way has also helped me feel less alone, as it helped to feel that there are other people out there who are struggling with similar things and I have found both solace but also a lot of energy and passion. And there is something about the combination of music and lyrics which, for me, is much more powerful than either on their own. Individual alters often have a song which resonates specifically with them and are able to share that with our therapist, sometimes even before they are able to speak much. And hearing someone else's words can enable us to think about things in a way we hadn't been able to before. I realised recently that I had stopped working with music in this way, and what a loss that was, and have started to reclaim it. If I get stuck in flashbacks, certain songs can help bring me back to the present, and when life gets exhausting and overwhelming there are certain songs which really help shift something inside. And when it is hard to know how to explain something to our therapist, certain lyrics allow a way in which we can then talk about. I would like to share some of the songs which have been important for our journey. Please remember, though, that music can be very powerful, and bring up strong emotions, and some of these songs may be triggering. And, of course, everyone will resonate with different things:

Some songs which have helped about facing abuse and talking about it:

Silent Legacy by Melissa Etheridge

Ruins by Melissa Etheridge

Silent All These Years by Tori Amos

Little Earthquakes by Tori Amos

One Safe Place by Marc Cohn

Some songs which have helped with coming to terms with DID:

Contessa by Thea Gilmore

This Girl is Taking Bets by Thea Gilmore

My Secret Life by Leonard Cohen

Round Here by Counting Crows

Songs which have helped with feeling less alone in the journey

Holding Your Hand by Thea Gilmore

Sit Down by James

Talking to My Angel by Melissa Etheridge

Songs which have helped when it feels a bit overwhelming

One More Mile by Tom McRae

Singing You Through by Heather Nova

Keep Breathing by Ingrid Michaelson

Songs which have helped with current relationships

The Mercy of the Fallen by Dar Williams

Language of Fools by Tom McRae

I Found a Way by First Aid Kit

The Story by Brandi Carlile

Heart and Shoulder by Heather Nova

Songs for when I need to be reminded of passion and fight

Your Fire Your Soul by Dar Williams

When I'm gone by Thea Gilmore

Turn Your Online Shopping into Donations for First Person Plural

Do you shop online? Did you know that every time you buy something you could be raising money for **First Person Plural**?



That's right - over 2400 well known retailers including Amazon, M&S, Boden, Waitrose, House of Fraser, Vodafone, Virgin Atlantic and many more, will donate a percentage of what you spend to **First Person Plural** when you shop with them, via fundraising website

easyfundraising
.org.uk

How does it work?

It's like nectar but instead of earning points, each purchase generates a donation. So instead of going directly to a retailer's website, go to easyfundraising first and choose the retailer you want to shop with – then everything you spend with that retailer earns a free donation **for First Person Plural**. It's completely free to use and your shopping won't cost you a penny more.

On average, each retailer will donate 5% of the cost of your shopping - and those donations soon mount up. So whatever you need to buy, from your weekly grocery shop or fashion must-have, to booking travel, office supplies or mobile phone, buy it via **easyfundraising** and raise money for **First Person Plural** at no extra cost to you!

Please register for supporting us when you shop online -

<http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/firstpersonplural>

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Every time you search the web using **<http://firstpersonplural.easysearch.org.uk>** instead of Google or any other search engine, half a penny is raised for First Person Plural. Search just 15 times a day and you can raise around £25 a year.

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"What a fantastic idea! I was using Google anyway but this way I get to raise money for my good cause every time I search...brilliant! I've made easysearch my homepage!"

So the next time you need to find something online, please use

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The Window of Tolerance or Opportunity?

By Melanie

I have been to many talks where the 'window of tolerance' is an important element and it makes perfect sense until I start trying to apply it to myself and others who have dissociative identity disorder. I don't think it is any coincidence that I find myself calling it the 'window of opportunity'.

Any mention of a model has always filled us with a sense of horror, parts see it as the answer to all their problems while others see it as a re-programming; anything that has a form about it is potentially impossible for them. I think this is an example of the paralysed states, neither having any comprehension of the other that is so often a feature of DID until therapy has progressed quite a long way. I see this as a barrier to working within the window of tolerance in its most pure form. Until a degree of co-operation and a level of co-consciousness has been firmly established a sense of working together is not possible.

In the early days when my dissociation was profound and the still essential, impenetrable barriers rigidly in place we would not have made any progress if we had tried to work from a single window of tolerance. If we didn't work with what was presenting in the therapy room it would cause a switch back to the outside part who might appear to be complying with the objective but the information and the necessary acceptance so vital for the distressed part would have been lost. She would wonder what she had done wrong at best and feel total rejection at worst. For me the outside part it was very hard as it re-enforced my superficiality and shallowness that completely undermined the pseudo self-confidence I had established to help me keep the 'show on the road'. The very tenuous start of a developing attachment to the therapist would be severely

affected and a lot of work lost and for me, the outside part would yet again be managing very serious suicidal thoughts.

Through careful negotiation and re-visiting the subject on many occasions with my therapist, it was agreed to welcome the distressed part, however difficult it seemed for them and help them to do whatever they felt was necessary. I as the outside part was regularly reassured by my therapist that he would make sure we stayed safe within the therapeutic boundaries as a whole at these times. Although there was very little shared consciousness at this stage there was a developing sense of self-regulation for each part that was gradually helping to stabilise the whole.

On reflection I think that a new part rarely surfaced until the time was right for them, their window of opportunity was being naturally experienced, validated and worked with. My experience throughout therapy has been that nobody has introduced themselves until the whole was going to be able to just about tolerate them and what they would be sharing. As the abuse had started at a very early age most memories were stored in what we feel was an unadulterated form by the body. The body needed to explicitly share this information which was very frightening and difficult to stay with in the early days of therapy.

So much of the healing process has demonstrated a natural self-regulation. Often when we were all in there experiencing what felt like chaos it was very hard to hang onto this. Where this ability comes from initially I don't know, a sub-consciousness that keeps you safe, an inner wisdom; I suspect those who live with DID have their own picture of how it is for them. I came to see it as an inner wisdom that felt totally outside my control or ability but gradually one I learnt to trust and respect and at times enhance. All this is probably a long way from the traditional

perception of the window of tolerance. This is why I see it as an opportunity. Each part had been inside for so many years and only slowly over a long period of time felt able to take over the body and begin to share that they were under the threat of death if they ever disclosed.

I feel strongly that if we had not been able to work in this way in the early days of therapy we would not have made any progress. The times that we were left in the most dangerous places after a session was usually when the part who needed to be there had felt unable to be. This may have been for real reasons in the early days and perceived reasons later on. When as a whole we felt accepted, whatever we needed to, in our case 'show' was non judgementally witnessed and we were encouraged and metaphorically held where we needed to be for as long as we needed to, we could cope. It might cause chaos inside, leave me the outside part often with feelings of extreme shock for hours and days after a new bit our past had been revealed but we learnt how to manage this. It was an integrated experience even though it was shared by many internally and externally in different ways; we could manage the various reactions as long as our truth and reality were being shared with another person who didn't try and make it any different as to how it was. Using our window of opportunity may leave us quite poorly for a while but I still think there was no way round it. We also found it empowering to learn how to manage the fallout. So for the first time in our lives we were telling an adult about what we had experienced and they were allowing us to do this and then we were being allowed to experience the consequences again without receiving mixed messages or total lies.

We did have long periods of time when the parts who came to deal with the whole if we ever told lived in absolute terror, often felt by many others.

(The downside of therapy!) I think we needed to learn to sit with this. It would have helped if we could have gone somewhere safe at these times but by experiencing nothing bad was actually happening to them when others had told allowed them to reframe their way of being, very slowly. Their window of opportunity was being allowed to happen; they consciously felt and expressed their roles allowing for real, lasting change to happen.

Once the window of opportunity had been visited at whatever level it needed to be, for however long was necessary we found that the different parts gradually engaged in the therapeutic progress. This is from a place of choice with enough consciousness now available to allow them to want to lower the stress levels, engage with finding what will work for them and wanting actively to be helped to enable them to do the work without re-visiting the past in such a raw way. Of course none of this is linear, may take several years for some parts to achieve while experiencing many hiccups along the way.

I see this stage as each part now beginning to work within their own individual window of tolerance. For some parts this maybe very limiting as a consequence of their individual potential being limited. Each part has needed to learn their limitations while they work as an individual within the whole. This can be hard but has felt important for them eventually allowing each to consider becoming a part of the bigger picture. I think we have moved from the window of opportunity to tolerance when each part has done enough of their individual trauma work so they can look back, reflect on what happened to them knowing it was many years ago. Unless they have been able to do what they needed telling them it is now 2012 makes no impact at all. It remains completely outside their realm of comprehension or experience.

Recently we have reached a more integrated way of thinking, remembering and behaviour we are actively practicing working from a single window of tolerance. This is so hard to do and we can only sustain it for a very short while. We consciously make sure we are all present within this space so we work from one point of reference trying to share the feelings and ways of perceiving allowing for some continuity of perception of the consequences of what happened to us all as a child. By sharing this understanding we are more able to try and work on those mysteries like intimacy and relationships. Individually we each had done some work throughout our therapeutic journey on the more challenging areas but until we can all be in the same place sharing we each end up doing our 'own thing'.

A shared clarity for someone with DID is an absolute gift, each of us has tremendous clarity individually but the very fact that there is no continuity within each individual clarity has led to so much of our confusion and feeling of emptiness and hopelessness. However hard we work until there is a holding, a gluing together of

thoughts, feelings perceptions and a cohesive chronological line of history and development we remain fire fighting our way through life.

So we see this window of tolerance as the meeting place that is enabling real change shared by all. We each had our own likes and dislikes, now we are finding out what we as a whole would like to do, what interests we may share. I think it is what should probably happen when you are growing up and to some extent throughout your life. We find the default position at this stage often is a place of not knowing. Polarised states are very hard to change especially when they happened rather than being a developmental process. It is a learning to tolerate not knowing but be proactive about exploring without switching. All very new, exciting, exhausting and not a little frightening.

This is totally my own idea on this subject and will relate very much to how my own system has worked and developed overtime.

Dare to Cry

by Liz

<i>If I stopped</i>	<i>And if I dared to stare</i>
<i>And looked</i>	<i>Into her eyes</i>
<i>And considered</i>	<i>That child of five</i>
<i>All that has been</i>	<i>I know I would cry</i>
<i>If I placed the facts</i>	<i>If I cried</i>
<i>Face up</i>	<i>Dared to 'let go'</i>
<i>On the table</i>	<i>I don't know</i>
<i>To be plainly seen</i>	<i>If it would end</i>

TIME

By The Poet and her Host

It comes and goes,
it ebbs and flows.
The tide is high
and then it's low.

Some days too long,
others too short.
Tick, tick, tock
goes the clock.
Tock, tock, tick
time's passed too quick.

Five pm, six, seven,
then next thing it's eleven?
It's like waking
from a dream.
What was said?
what was seen?

Who took over,
where have we been?
Things start to come back
but it's hard keeping track.
Who was out?
Quite a few of my crew...

*

*A young one cuddling
her dog that's blue,
unsure where she was
or what to do.*

Then time skipped on,
some memories gone.

*

The computer's left out,
so that's a clue.

**I think Flower ate dinner,
and a magnum too...
surfing for 'Hello Kitty'
she found a game that's new!**

*Kitty came out -
they're great friends those two!*

*

Next it's dark and I'm in bed.
No noise, nothing said...
...a sudden, intense fear
when no danger's near.

**~~Someone to bang my arm
to raise the alarm,
to get me back,
restore the calm.~~**

*

*Then someone hyper,
playing at being a fighter.*

He's just so daft,
I can't help but laugh!
*He's teaching the badger to be
just like Bruce Lee.*

*

*But it's the end of the day
not time for play.*

*Nearly midnight
but he's high as a kite.*

*

Although it feels mean,
it's time for routine -
we read before sleep
every night of the week.
Tonight the Poet's out too
calming us all, me and you.

*

**WE'LL BE SAFE TONIGHT
WE HAVE SOMEONE WHO WORKS ALL
NIGHT TO BE ON LOOKOUT ☺**

Helpful Resources

NAPAC HELPLINE

NAPAC (National Association for people abused in childhood) have a free support line **0800 085 3330** which is operational
10am to 9pm Monday—Thursday
10am to 6pm Friday

There is also help out-side of these hours, via the NSPCC's helpline as NAPAC have trained all the NSPCC helpline staff so that they can support adult survivors

Although it is not specifically for DID many people at NAPAC do have a good understanding of dissociation and FPP have facilitated a training day for some of their helpline staff in the past.

Resources for Guidance when Claiming Welfare Benefits

First Person Plural is an organisational member of Benefits and Work at
<http://www.benefitsandwork.co.uk>

This campaigning site is jam packed full of accurate helpful tips, guides and advice on disability and other benefits – with specific guides on claiming for mental health reasons. It advises what to expect when claiming or having your benefits reviewed; how to complete the forms and much more. There are sections on Employment and Support Allowance, Disability Living Allowance and the new Personal Independence Payment which is gradually replacing DLA. Much of the site is open access but as an FPP member if you wish to access resources in the members only parts of the site, you can do so using FPP's log-in details. E-mail fpp@firstpersonplural.org to request these.

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