



June/July 2014

RAINBOW'S

Volume 15 **E N D** Issue 1

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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For details and booking for any FPP
/ ESTD-UK training which is primarily for
those working with or otherwise supporting
dissociative survivors visit www.firstpersonplural.org.uk/training/current-trainings

First Person Plural, PO Box 2537, WOLVERHAMPTON, WV4 4ZL
<http://www.firstpersonplural.org.uk> - email: fpp@firstpersonplural.org.uk



Trauma – Attachment
COMPLEX DISSOCIATION
Training Courses & Resources
Practical CPD Training for People in Practice
from the UK's two most experienced specialist complex dissociation organisations



First Person Plural (F.P.P.)
Introductory training delivery by skilled
trainers with personal lived experience of
dissociative identity disorder

ESTD-UK in partnership with **F.P.P.**
Foundation level training delivered by Dr Renee
Marks, Remy Aquarone, Sue Richardson and
experts-by-experience from F.P.P.

**Understanding & Working with
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Foundation Course**

MANCHESTER 16 & 17 Oct and 20 & 21 Nov

DETAILS & BOOKING
FOR ANY ESTD-UK or F.P.P. training
<http://tinyurl.com/dissoc-courses>

**Understanding Dissociation and
Complex Dissociative Conditions**

LIVERPOOL, 25 September 2014

**Supporting Survivors who have
Dissociative Identity Disorder**

LIVERPOOL, 23 October 2014

LEARNING RESOURCE FILMS available on DVD or as MP4 downloads
"No Two Paths the Same—living and working therapeutically with dissociative identity disorder"
"A Logical Way of Being—the reality of D.I.D and other complex dissociative conditions"
<http://www.firstpersonplural.org.uk/sales>

Complex dissociative disorders (D.I.D. / D.D.N.O.S.)

and the Three Stages of Therapy

a seminar series for qualified and trainee counsellors,
psychotherapists, clinical psychologists, other mental health
and related professions

The Priory Street Centre, 15 Priory Street, York, YO1 6ET
<http://www.priorystreetcentre.org.uk>

Saturday 20th September 2014 – 10.00am to 12.00noon

Friday 10th October 2014 – 6.00 to 8.00pm

Saturday 11th October – 10.00am to 12.00noon

Also an optional pre-seminars' session for those booking to attend
the above seminar series but having little or no prior knowledge about
dissociation

"An Introduction to Dissociation"

Friday, 19th September 2014 – 6.00 to 8.00pm

Editorial Statement:- 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 help if you can send your contribution electronically as an email attachment. Please send to our editorial email address **newsletter@firstpersonplural.org.uk**. This saves times and resources but handwritten and typed material sent by post will continue to be accepted. The next issue of the newsletter is due in **September 2014**; any contributions for consideration for inclusion in that issue must be with us by **6th September**

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. We regret we are not able to forward personal replies to contributors. So any responses to articles etc should be marked FOR PUBLICATION if you wish the writer to see it.

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.

Chair's letter

Dear All

The new DVD is selling steadily with many people taking advantage of purchasing both of them at a very reasonable price. We continue to use a 'A Logical Way of Being' for the basic understanding dissociation training, it supports so well what we want people to know at this level and always generates a good discussion. We are running seminars in Norwich and York this Autumn using 'No Two Paths the Same'. Kathryn and Sue Richardson will be in York and Remy Aquarone and I will be in Norwich. We are offering a separate evening before the main seminars for those who would like a better basic understanding. The seminars will each be based on a stage, stabilisation, trauma work and conciliation using the relevant chapters. We are limiting it to a maximum of 20 people and making the evenings really interactive asking those working with DID to share examples pertinent to the topic. We are aiming the training at qualified and trainee therapists as it will be focusing at the foundation level so they will be helpful and interesting at all levels. Already there has been a considerable uptake of this and we are hoping to be able to repeat it again early in the 2015.

Recently we have been asked several times to do a compilation of our two main training days; using the "Supporter's Perspective" chapter is a lovely way to end the day. Paul's insightful sharing leaves people with a lot to think about but also feels such a positive closure to the day. Paul and Chris, two members of the FPP committee have organised a meet up in Birmingham for partners and supporters early this autumn, the details are in this newsletter.

We would welcome you telling us about how you have used the DVDs or any ideas how we can make sure we get them to as wide an audience as possible.

I am going to do an understanding session with Equal Lives, a user led organisation in Norfolk for people with any disability that affects their daily living and focuses on everyone having the right to living as good and independent a life as possible. Their services include help with financial issues, benefits and finding the right support to meet individual's needs. I am delighted that having already talked to some of their staff and volunteers they have invited me back as they realise that they need to have a better understanding of complex dissociation. I appreciate these are all small steps but the widening audience that is seeking to understand is reassuring. Recently there have been several people who are working in units for people with an eating disorder attending our training. They have realised that treating just the eating disorder for some people is not solving the problem long term and beginning to identify that some of those who become revolving door patients are having dissociative experiences. These tend to be the people who are offering the support at the units rather than the therapists, although recently we heard of one lady being funded to stay with her eating disorder therapist to do DID work. Times are changing, so slowly but as in most things in life that really makes a difference it is being generated by people from the bottom up. Where common sense and intuition is allowed to prevail people seem to have very little trouble accepting and understanding, where they have become institutionalised by their training it seems to be so much harder, but again we are hearing of pockets where this is being successfully addressed gently.

Warm wishes *Melanie*

"Calling all partners and supporters!!!!

Being a partner or supporter of someone with DID or DDNOS often comes with challenges and experiences that can sometimes leave you feeling ill-equipped and isolated and maybe drained, in need of support from some others just able to listen, to understand and to empathise, even though they may often not have answers. However those situations can also provide you with levels of learning and insight that others can benefit from - even though you might not know it or think it! Everyone's experiences as a partner or supporter will be different, dynamic and can often leave you looking for a brief moment of peace, a chance to unwind in a supportive, non-judgemental environment.

Paul and Chris, two FPP trustees, who both have personal experience of such situations are planning to hold an inaugural

Partners/Supporters Drop-In Event

on Saturday 20th September 2014, 11.00am to 3.00pm

**at St Luke's Church Centre, Great Colmore Street, Lee Bank,
Birmingham, B15 2AT**

This is simply a chance for partners and supporters to come together to relax, talk and share thoughts and ideas about future needs and hopes. This is not a therapy group, this is not counselling, this is not a formal fully structured meeting. You do not have to be an associate member of First Person Plural to attend, so full members please pass this information on to your partners / supporters; therapists/counsellors and other professionals let your DID/DDNOS clients know so they can pass it on to their partners / supporters. The event is for partners / supporters only

To give us an idea of numbers please send an email to fpp@firstpersonplural.org.uk to let us know if you are likely to drop in or if you are interested but cannot attend on that date. Also email if you have questions.

We plan to meet between 11am and 3pm to have a chance to relax and maybe talk about what might be helpful to any of us in the future, maybe over a coffee or a board game or a jigsaw or none of the former if they don't float your boat !

We also plan to show the "partner perspective" chapter of FPP's new DVD, " No two paths the same" and then see what discussions might ensue from that.

We will provide hot and cold drinks and biscuits - please bring yourself something to eat for lunch if you wish.

There is ample parking on site and the venue is within 10 minutes walking distance of Birmingham New Street Railway Station. For travel details and map see <http://www.st-lukes-church-centre.org.uk/7.html> We hope that you feel able to take an opportunity to join with us and explore if and how we might help support one another as life progresses.

With Best wishes, *Paul and Chris*

On the subject of Denial *by Carol*

As a person living with Dissociative Identity Disorder life is far from easy, there are challenges and issues that impact upon my daily life. I began writing a blog to explain my life with D.I.D partly because it helps me to write about things and partly to educate others.

I'm a mum of 3 grown up children, I live in a small rural village in Cheshire, I also live with the impact of being a victim of childhood trauma, trauma which resulted in my dissociation and in turn my diagnosis.

This is a shortened version of one of my posts on the subject of Denial, something I am sure many people with dissociative disorders will understand.

Now I am known to be good at tears, well a part of me is as she finds it hard not to cry and yet I find feelings weird and odd, so I tend to hide away my feelings and I certainly want to mask my tears and hurt if I can. Therefore finding myself crying out my frustration and hurt in therapy wasn't something I'd normally do and yet here I was sat in a room sobbing.



It was not and still is not fair that I need to take medication, it started when I was young when they were prescribed to help me cope. It is taking me time to come off these meds and despite my best efforts it has not been an easy journey. But that was not the only thing going through my mind, though I was not quite so open about my other feelings. Thankfully my psychologist seemed to understand what I was trying desperately to hide.

Therapy often surprises me, and this particular week was no exception to the rule, I realised so much about me and my thinking that I had not really considered. I was not just messing up I was frustrated and I was ignoring my alters and why, because I did not want to accept the past. I ended up saying 'it was not fair' as I talked and cried about my need for psychiatric medication both as a child and now. The words really resonated with me as soon as I said them, they were important.

My childhood was not fair, the fact things happened was not fair, the way I am still allowing the past control my behaviours is not fair. I eventually let out some of that pent up frustration in my tears and with the help of my psychologist rationalised things. I needed to rationalise things, to refocus my mind and get myself back on track. Many of the 'it was not fair' pointers relate to the past and that is my biggest issue the past and my desire at times to deny its existence.

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I am sure that I am not the only person with Dissociative Identity Disorder who wants to deny their past, it is easy to try and convince yourself that the alters were hurt not you. That if they did not exist it would all go away, not just the dissociation but the past that I so wish had never been.

There are times when I would rather be mad, than have D.I.D, times when I do not want to accept that people hurt me in my childhood, that is what I am finding hard to deal with.

Denial is the glue in dissociation, I dissociated to avoid the pain of incidents that as a child I could not cope with or face. The truth is that without dissociating I doubt I would be here, it would have been far too much for a child to cope with. But dissociating has led me to deny the reality of my existence and that is making it hard to take on board the pain and hurt of those times.

I realised after my session that I still blame me for my past which I know is ridiculous, I could not have stopped what happened and I could not have changed any of it. Yet I feel guilty, I want it to not have happened so much, maybe I'd quite like to override history and change it. If only it was that easy, we all know that it isn't but I'm sure many victims have tried.

The sad fact is the past controls me today, sadly my thinking patterns are skewed by the way I was raised and parented. I may not be able to change all of those thinking patterns, but I can learn ways to change how I respond to them. But like most things that is going to take time, and I guess I get exasperated at the years I have wasted already never mind how much longer will it all take.

I am having to learn to be patient, to understand therapy is hard, that healing hurts and accepting the past means grieving and significant amounts of pain. Last weekend I ignored my alters because I desperately wanted to deny my past, but that is so unfair on them.

You see I really care for my alters, they are a part of me and I really want to get to know them and understand them. Yet I so wish my past never happened and that I had not been hurt in the ways I was. But the other parts of me did not ask for any of this either, and me ignoring them is not going to help any of us.

That is why I am now trying to rebuild bridges and get back into the practise of giving my alters time and acknowledge them. I need to try and do this, at times difficult, juggling act, to ensure I meet the needs of all of me, my alters and myself.

There will be periods when I do not get it right and I know there will certainly be times when I struggle with this issue of denial.

Though what matters most I think is that I learn to understand me and my thinking traits and I learn to understand denial is just a part of this journey. None of what happened to me was right yet I cannot just erase it or change it, but I can change how I am today and in the future.

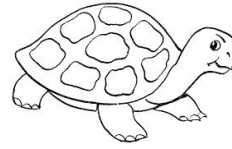
That is why I need to give time to the other parts of me, hence why I am on a journey of learning to juggle the demands of many. If that means methodically stopping every so often and thinking 'alters' need care and time then so be it, eventually it will become more natural and instinctive. Till then the alarm I have set will help nudge me into remembering and giving the other parts of me time.

The full article can be found at <http://diddispatches.wordpress.com> under the heading 'Tears of Denial'

"The conflict between the will to deny horrible events and
the will to proclaim them aloud
is the central dialectic of psychological trauma."

— *Judith Lewis Herman, Trauma and Recovery*





by Anna

My very own Ninja Turtle (well...Tortoise!)

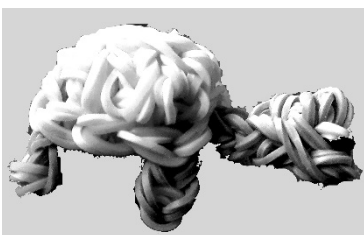
I was so pleased to see the picture of a tortoise in the colouring pages last magazine. When you know me, you'll know why. I've heard before that having a pet is beneficial to your health and recovery. This I practiced once before when I brought home a kitten one day, much to the dismay of my family! Now living away, I recently made a decision that has made a big difference in my life - and most likely, forever! I have adopted a tortoise! What is even cooler, is that I have called him Michelangelo!

Surprisingly, all of us are very happy about him and have actually agreed on something! Michelangelo has given me a purpose as well as a new interest. The younger ones find him fascinating, while the teenagers and older ones find him cool because he isn't cute and fluffy. Plus I loved the Ninja Turtles when I was younger.

Michelangelo has meant I have spent some time in the garden, and he makes me look after him even when I am feeling low. Believe it or not, Norfolk also has a Tortoise Club, so for the sake of Michelangelo I'm trying to get out and meet other people.

Michelangelo should live for most of my lifetime, so I can trust that he will see me through my recovery. I can also be certain we have many adventures ahead. So far following the house rabbit round the lounge, and climbing are firm favourites! Plus he always needs to be nosy and see what is going on! Since writing this, I now have 4 tortoises - the whole ninja group! Stay tuned for more adventures!

For those of you that have discovered loom bands, I have discovered you can make tortoises!



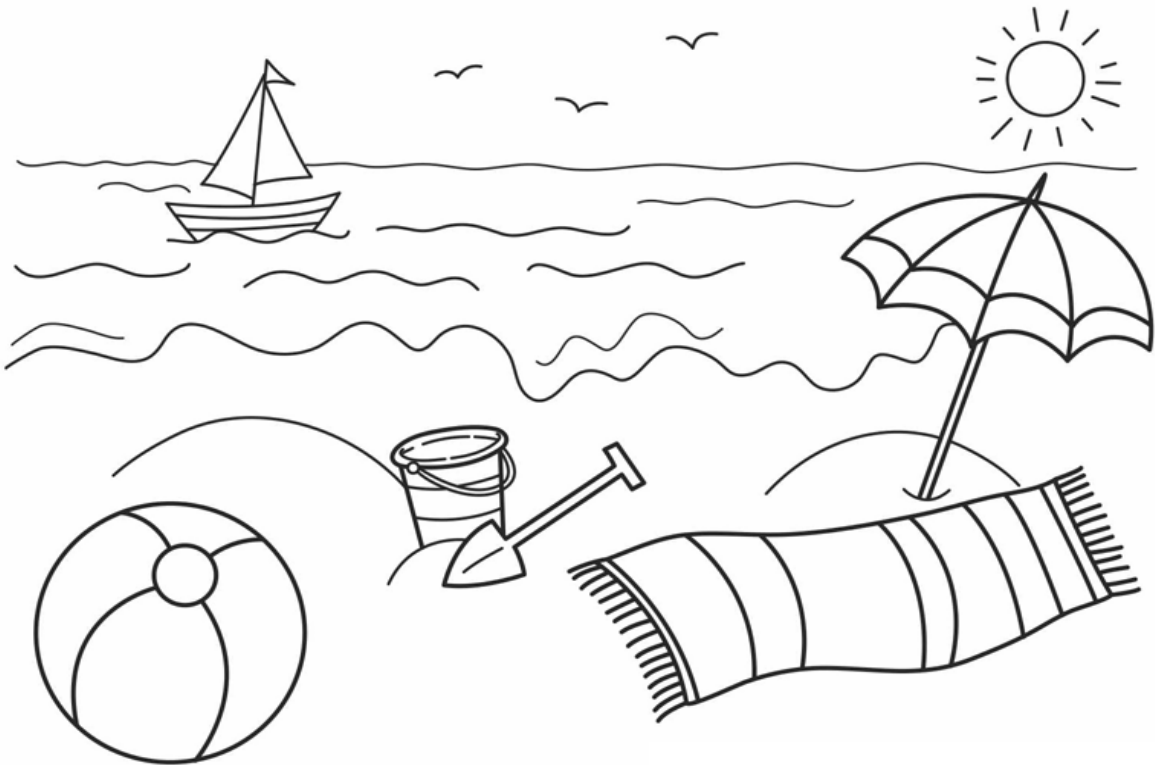
This is the one I made!

The Youtube link is

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=boh3S0ggXcM>

A Summer Picture
to Colour

PLAY



Word Wheel Challenge

Your aim is to create as many words of 2 letters or more using the letters in the word wheel only once in each word, and always including the letter in the centre of the wheel. No proper names are allowed.
Can you find a 9 letter word?

Dot to Dot



www.ActivityVillage.co.uk - Keeping Kids Busy

Good 16+
Excellent 20+
Outstanding 24+
My Total:

CENTRE

An African Folk Tale - The Happy Man

Many, many years ago in North Africa there lived a chief. He was very rich and had many wives and children. But he was not happy. He thought, "I have everything. But that does not make me happy. What must I do to be happy? I don't know."

Once he shouted angrily to his servants, "Why can't I be happy? What must I do to be happy?"

One of his servants said, "Oh, my Chief! Look at the sky! How beautiful the moon and the stars are! Look at them and you will see how good life is. That will make you happier."

"Oh, no, no, no!" the chief answered angrily. "When I look at the moon and the stars I become angry. Because I know I cannot get them."

Then another servant said, "Oh, my Chief! What about music?"

Music makes a man happy. We shall play to you from morning till night and music will make you happy."

The chief's face became red with anger. "Oh, no, no, no, no!" he cried. "What a silly idea. Music is fine. But to listen to music from morning till night, day after day? Never! No. Never!"

So the servants went away. And the chief sat angrily in his rich room. Then one of the servants came back into the room and made a bow, "Oh, my Chief," he said, "but I think I can tell you something that will make you very happy."

"What is it?" asked the chief.

"It is very easy to do," said the servant. "You must find a happy man, take off his shirt and put it on. Then his happiness will go into your body and you will be as happy as he!"

"I like your idea," said the chief. He sent his soldiers all over the country to look for a happy man. They went on and on. But it was not easy to find a happy man in the chief's country. But one day the soldiers found a man in a small village who said, "I am the happiest man in the world."

He was poor. But he always smiled and sang. The soldiers brought him to the chief. "At last I shall be a happy man!" said the chief and took off his shirt at once. "Bring the man in!" The door of the chief's room opened. A small, dark man with a happy smile walked in.

"Come here, my friend!" said the chief. "Please take off your shirt!" The happy man with a little smile came up to the chief. The chief looked at him and saw - what did he see?

The happy man, the happiest man in the world, had no shirt!

Jokes

First boy : My brother was named George because he was born on St George's Day

Second boy : My brother was named Andrew because he was born on St Andrew's Day

Third boy : That explains how my brother got his name then.

First boy : What's his name?

Third boy : Pancake

Why did the jelly baby go to school?

Because he really wanted to be a smartie.

Which is the best athlete to have on a cold day?

A long jumper



Developmental Dissociation *by Melanie*

As I begin to have more joined up thinking and a cohesive sense as to how the whole of us developed linked with a growing development of emotions that feel more appropriate in both size and content, I have become aware of how I perceive the different ways we dissociated that were a response to the importance of the abuser in our life as well as the abuse.

I am not going to talk about installed dissociation but inevitably there are many overlaps. I will offer my thoughts gained through my own journey **and would really welcome others feedback and opinions as this is a very personal reflection coming from our lived experience.**

I see the fragmentation of dissociation as having different qualities. The abuse inflicted by people who would otherwise not have been important in your life and development stages apart from a superficial level can cause a high level of fragmentation; it can feel in some ways not attached to you at all. Individuals or groups evolve internally to deal with these times of organised, ritualised, as well as less structured or opportunistic abuse.

For the parts who evolved for these times the disconnection feels enormous and in spite of a lot of work both in therapy and on our own this disconnection remains quite profound.

These parts generally did not experience the devastating effects of isolation and suicidal thoughts in a sustainable way. These feelings were contained within the individual or group, so depression could be a real issue but disappear as those parts went back inside or became less dominant. These parts were often very practical and had a realistic sense of their potential and limitations. They were able to slowly engage in trauma work but as a whole we had to appreciate that although many were well developed and able they did not need to do more than work through their trauma. For it to be effective they worked in many ways similar to the parts I will talk about in a moment. There was an understanding that a lot of their work had been done when they were able to reflect on their abuse from the current time rather than enter trauma land every time they took over the consciousness. This was felt throughout, was very clear and in many ways quite defined.

We have a clear picture of these parts and groups as being a part of the whole while staying separate inside. They help look after each other as well as the parts I will talk about later. They are very much a part of the whole but have not been involved in the missed developmental stages others have needed to go through on their journey. We see them as a dissociated part that was split off from the whole. They were and still are at times life savers, loved and respected by the whole. Their sense of being integrated is they are still separate but their beliefs and perceptions are current and relevant to our everyday living.

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When their individual or group work is completed they sort of wriggle down into a comfortable place and have watched without needing to do more than that. You could describe them as a benign presence but that does not feel fully adequate. So often, finding the language for something so incredible is very hard as there are, at times, no analogies or words that do justice to the beauty of how it is.

It has amazed me how much quicker the parts who dealt with the abuse and torture in impersonal settings were able to deal with it than perhaps abuse that might be perceived as being less violent but by an important person in our childhood. The pain and confusion surrounding those times was so much harder to bear and resolve, it felt, and overtime has been perceived as, much more damaging to every aspect of who we are. There was, after the initial approach to the impossibility of dealing with the abuse in impersonal relationships, a clarity, the possibility of dismantling it because the scar tissue did not run so deep.

An example is the parts who were abused within organised abuse might feel suicidal when working through their trauma but it was held only by these parts, was not a part of our circulation. It was a possible way out of what felt like an impossible situation. For others, suicide was always present, it was something we thought everyone battled with on a fulltime, daily basis. Through the work we have done this is not an issue at all now but took many years for it to change organically rather than being controlled.

The argument with this interpretation of my experience is was the relationship/attachment patterns for the different parts necessary to fulfil these abusers needs, cold and clinical, causing the sense of dissociated dissociation or was it that the abusers were not influential in our everyday living? The only relationship we had with them was primarily, although for some not totally exclusive, within the abusive situations. We did not have the confusion of holding them as an abuser while at the same time having to live and show respect for them in ordinary everyday living. There was no need for a pseudo- integration of those abusers into our lives in any way.

For simplicity I have divided this thinking into two groups but a bit like using the apparently normal part and the emotional parts definition there are many variations and overlaps. Nothing is linear at any point with being DID!

The other parts are those who evolved at the hands of someone who through close, everyday proximity and contributing to our developmental stages had in my opinion a much more devastating effect on every aspect of our life, developmentally, our ability to trust and relate and the organic distortion of our beliefs about ourselves. My image of the damage done from a very early age is it caused a complete fragmentation to our spinal column. To stay upright we drove a steel rod down our back as the damage done to the spine was enormous.

I describe it as organic because I believe if abuse starts from a very young age the integral effects are absolute, they are not having some impact they are the full impact with no room for ambivalence as no good enough template has begun to develop; no previous point of reference is available. Imagine the severing of the spine as a psychological and relational development severing, all the non-physical developmental milestones; no messages getting through relating to emotions, memory, sense of self, affect regulation and all the other ingredients that are so essential to a child's and later adult's mental health.

The journey for these parts has been so much harder because this is what I call developmental dissociation. To, in some cases start from the beginning, change and complete the mental, psychological and emotional developmental processes has required so much work and has only been possible through having a good therapist who has consistently demonstrated clear, transparent connections, boundaries and having the luxury of this for the length of time it has taken. In many ways the work has been the same, working through the traumas when the conditions were right, often a tiny piece at a time, over many years but the impact of this work is what has allowed us to begin to connect and eventually at a deeper level attach to our therapist. It has allowed the timeline to be started and develop in a chronological order. This work has been instrumental in the development of a foundation that has gone on growing slowly, a place to return to, a point of reference that has gradually become bedded into our whole way of being. It has allowed a developing sense of self, a knowing where we stop and others start. We have claimed our life and are learning how to live in it for the very first time. We begin to hold onto the sense of pleasure when the immediacy has passed. We celebrate everyday normality by naming and sharing it as a first wondrous experience. We are no longer driven by terror and are learning to measure and judge things appropriately. During a training session we were giving, a psychiatrist accused us of 'pathologising normality'. We told him in no uncertain terms we were identifying normality for the first time in so many ways and celebrating this achievement by talking about it.

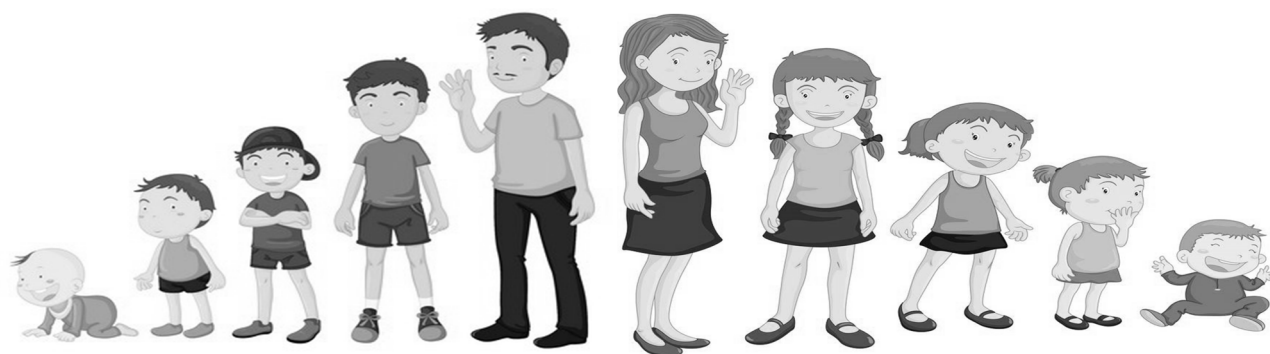
We feel we have taken up our place in the family as a mother, wife and Grannie in a three dimensional way rather than as a job description. The parts of the fragmented spinal column were the children at many ages who gradually have begun to join up not only because they have downloaded their traumas but because this has allowed the arrested development to start and grow and this has become the very backbone of who we are. We did a lot of work that was fragmented with these parts but overtime we realised we were slowly beginning to naturally work chronologically for the very first time. We were beginning to retain and hold our history and sort it for ourselves. All the parts in this spinal fragmentation shared a name and were known as the name and an age; all the others had totally independent names. Through working with the developmental dissociation at the level it required we have allowed the organic changes to slowly take place and become established so that they are now an integral part of everything we are.

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I have also had to learn that if we as a whole are under a lot of current stress our default position is to separate out. When this first happened I was dismayed as it felt like we had lost some of the connections we had worked so hard to achieve. It was so reassuring to find that when life settled down from the acute to the chronic stage we naturally became more connected again.

"Ogawa, Sroufe, Weinfield, Carlson, and Egeland (1997) carried out a prospective longitudinal study of 126 high-risk children, following this sample from birth to age 19, in an attempt to test Liotti's model. According to models of dissociation based in trauma theory, one might expect trauma to be the strongest independent predictor of adult dissociation. Ogawa's et al. (1997) multiple regression analyses indicated, however, that disorganized attachment and psychological unavailability of the caregiver during infancy were the strongest predictors of clinical levels of dissociation

http://www.sonomapti.com/sonomaptiblog_files/developmental_pathways_to_dissociation.htm



All at Sea

All at sea, drifting between time zones, unsure of how to connect with reality, not wanting to do so. Yet how to live a life in life but not in life – the problem of cross-over. That is my new found expression for how we experience existence, a constant jockeying for position by each of my girls, who gets to have their say, do as they wish, have their needs met. They cross-over into my present, my constant companions, whom only my therapist sees and hears. How I manage to walk a path through reality is by focus, focusing on each step I take, often counting said physical steps as we place one foot in front of another. I am a vessel for my various selves.

That's all I can say for now. I feel somebody inside closing down, shutting the opening. Its time to go – cross-over.

From me for we

A ragged patchwork of desire *by Sally Thompson*

The theatre waits
its stage entombed in darkness
its auditorium silent

No character will tread these boards
save those who find their life in my creation
yet I – the author –
have no enduring knowledge of their journey

I see only glimpses of the players
who stepping on and off the stage
and hiding meantime in the wings
confound me

Itinerants they may be
or residents of long distinction

I cannot tell

They play their roles masked
cloaked and costumed in disguises
answering to cues and speaking lines I would
not write

Emerging from the shadows
they interrupt the drama
skilfully subverting my intentions to their own

With a repertoire of trickery, confusion and
distraction
they infiltrate the dialogue and redirect the plot

They chill the air with menace
a restless whispering chorus
who conjure haunted landscapes from those I
thought I knew

As scenes are veiled in secrecy, or vanquished
into silence
they take the story leaping through the
boundaries of time

The thread which binds this narrative is broken

It is a fable torn to fragments
its setting a tormented world of passion and
despair

With a hidden script
which like a wild magician

Carries dark surprises in its pockets



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Tips for working with the media when you have DID/DDNOS *by Melanie*

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 very hard for everyone

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.

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/DDNOS. 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. FPP would discourage sharing any details about your past, acknowledging that you had trauma in your childhood and developed DID/DDNOS 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.

Journalist can feel 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.