



January 2005

RAINBOW'S END

Volume 6

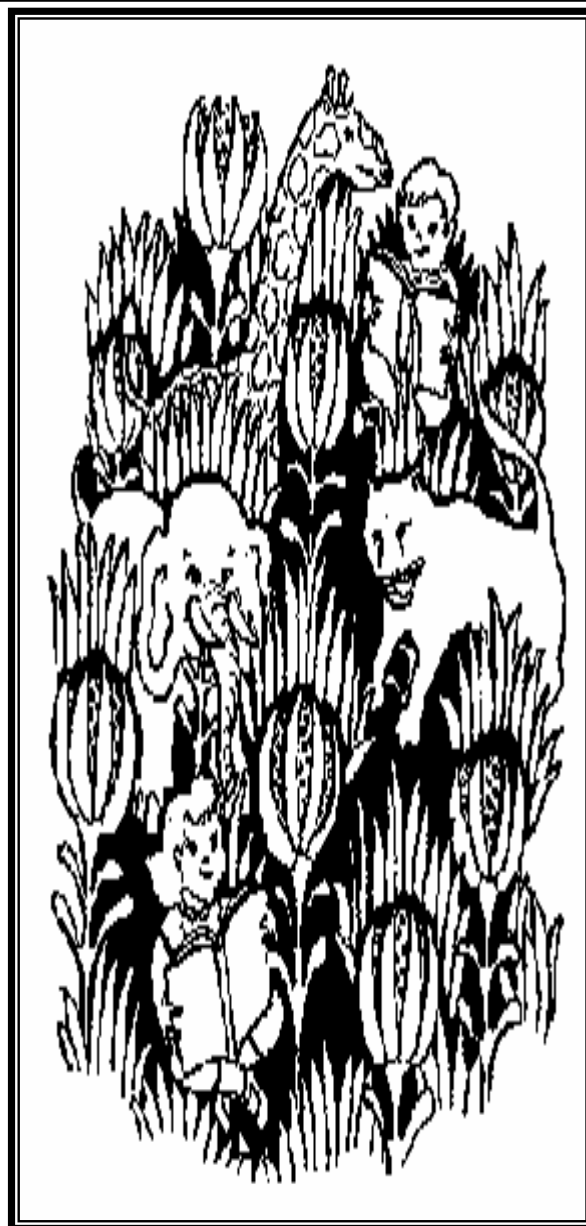
Issue 1

Support & Information Newsletter of FIRST PERSON PLURAL
the survivor-led association for survivors of trauma and abuse who experience
dissociative distress, and for their family, friends and professional allies

CONTENTS

Editorial Statement	2
Poetry to raise awareness.....	2
Drawing by Sheelah.....	3
Joys of daily living with DID	4
A different perspective - - how blessed are you?	4
Survivors Picnic in the Park	5
Reflecting on the adult-child relationship – Part 1.....	6
Early Notice Members Open Day.....	8
Review of Love Yourself affirmations	8
Conference Notices	9
‘Access to Learning’ funds therapy	9
Play Centre	10
Is multiplicity a disability?	12
Drawing by Marilyn	12
Trapped.....	13
Celebrating Conference Success.....	14
We did good.....	14
Thank you to the W.S.A.F.....	14
Big Thank Yous to Melanie & Kathryn	15
A selection of comments.....	15
Where were the carers?.....	16
A kinda-sorta personal response	17
Poems & Rhymes.....	17

BUMPER ISSUE - 20 PAGES



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Editorial Statement

While every effort will be made to keep contributions complete and unedited we reserve the right to make amendments when necessary. Decisions about the inclusion and amendment of contributions are made by the editor and are final. Contributions do not necessarily reflect the views and opinions of First Person Plural, members of the executive committee or the editor. 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

articles; stories; resources; book reviews; tips; poetry; artwork; personal experiences

To be considered for the next issue we need to receive them

by 22nd April, 2005

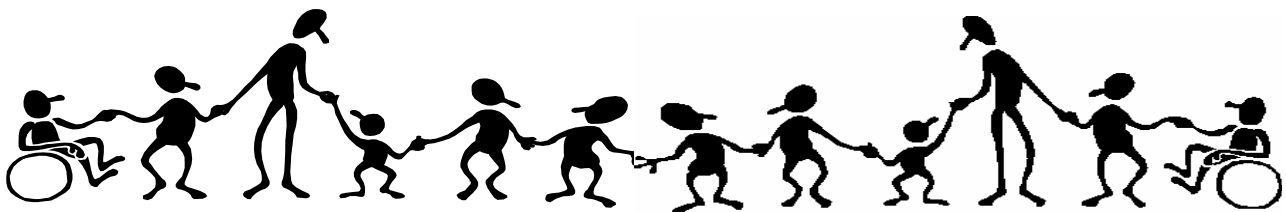
Originals will only be returned if a suitable stamped addressed envelope is enclosed

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



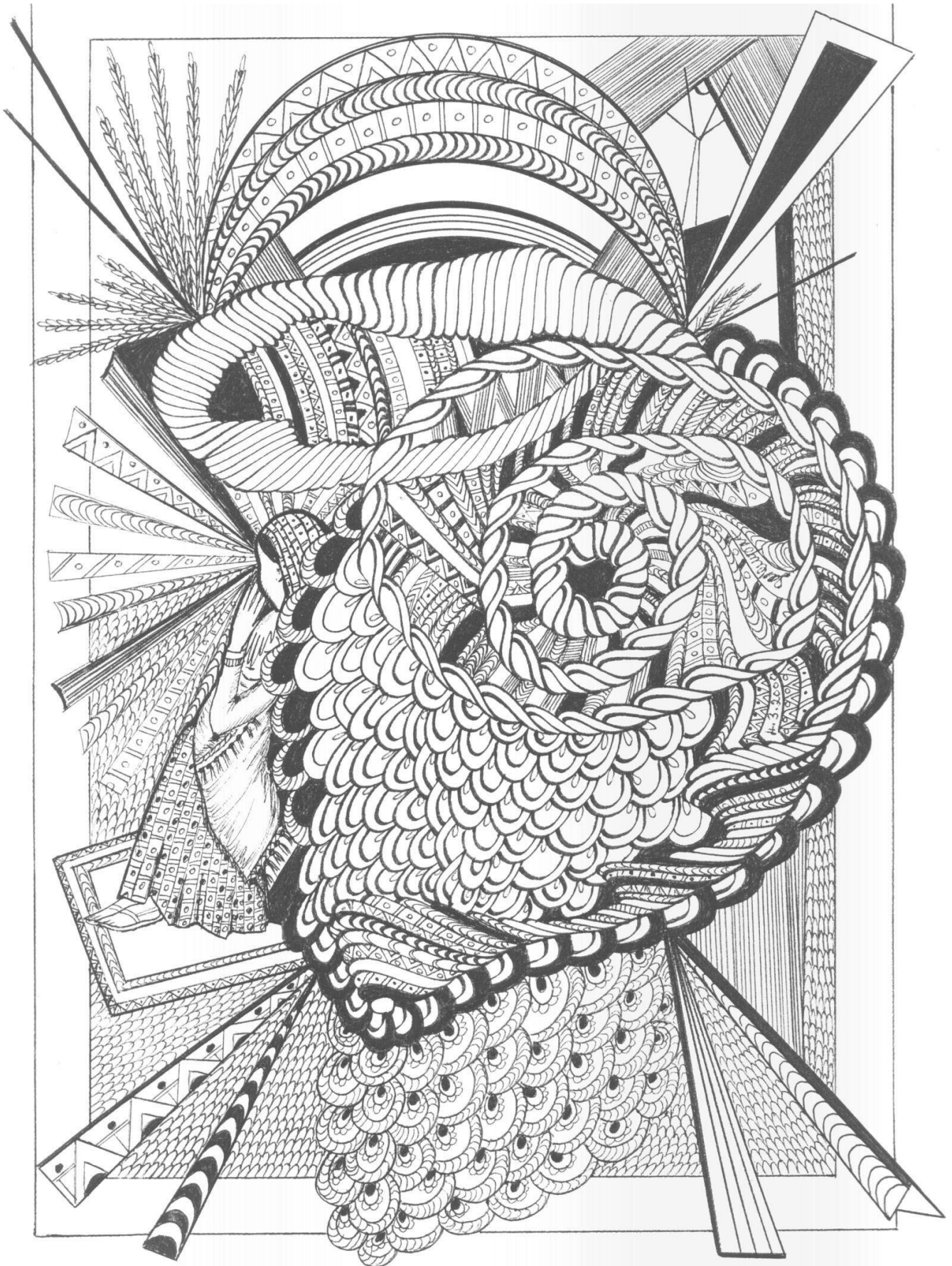
P o e t r y t o r a i s e a w a r e n e s s

Rebecca King

“Reflections of a Multiple” is the title of a small book of poetry that I am publishing myself. The purpose of the publication, aside from trying to raise money for my therapy, will be to raise public awareness of dissociation and the distinct lack of provision of support, both in terms of therapy and within community mental health teams. Sales of the book will also raise funds for First Person Plural as I intend to donate 10% of the proceeds.

To purchase a copy of the book send a £5.00 cheque or postal order payable to ‘Rebecca King’ to *Reflections of a Multiple, c/o PO Box 2537, Wolverhampton, WV4 4ZL*. Remember to include a delivery address.

Drawing by Sheelah



Joys of daily living with DID

by Melanie

Chip and Pin? I think this was invented for people who are dissociative. Gone are the days when the cashier looks at my card, back to my signature and then back to me, a respectable, middle age woman who doesn't look bright enough to be committing fraud.

This can go on for several seconds before I put them out of their misery and offer to produce my driving licence. Inevitably by then I am shaking and feeling guilty so producing the licence becomes quite a problem as I drop things, can never remember where it is in my bag and seem to toss out at least a couple of soft toys before the licence slips into my hand. All street cred gone!

Depending on who leaves the checkout we either slink away knowing everyone has been watching or if the protector has felt the need to intervene she does a throw away comment about being multiple and this is always happening. We never get challenged any further, a general relief all round that we are leaving.

The other thing that really bugs us is being followed regularly by the store detective. Again depending on who is handling it we leave the shop or hide up ready to pounce out on him and ask if he has a problem. Unfortunately we obviously hide too well as he disappears and we have never achieved the pounce. Still we have had fun leading him a merry dance before disappearing.

Having missed a dentist's appointment and nearly three weeks later when I was allowed to remember we needed to go and apologise at a time of day when this was possible, deciding to explain the problems we have with appointments and why. It was really funny to see the two dental nurses move back closer and closer to the wall pretending they quite understood while looking terrified.

An anxious lady approached me at work and said she had just been diagnosed as multiple and could I order her in some books. I heard a little voice saying, "So are we". I had an awful job trying to find her books on the subject after that, the brain was in paralysis but much to my relief she returned to collect them so we didn't frighten her away forever.

A different perspective - how blessed are you?

by Anon

Following the tsunami natural disaster in Asia I recalled being sent the following by a friend once. I'm not saying that remembering others are worse off than you is any kind of panacea for ones own pain. However, the different perspective of these words certainly got me thinking about the blessings in my life and that was a blessing in itself. For remembering the positives provides some counterbalance to the pain, trials and tribulations which too often pre-occupy me.

If we could shrink the earth's population to a village of precisely 100 people, with all the existing human ratios remaining the same - 6 people would possess 59% of the entire world's wealth; 80 would live in substandard housing; 70 would be unable to read; 50 would suffer from malnutrition; 1 would be near death; 1 would be near birth; 1 would have a university level education; 1 would own a computer

When I consider our world from such a compressed perspective my personal emotional pain and turmoil, the difficulties of my own life don't lessen but my life's blessings do come more into focus.

Survivors' Picnic in the Park

This was a really lovely day and I'd like to thank the people who did the hard work in putting the day together. I have help run enough village fetes to know how much organisation this takes and how much more so when trying to co-ordinate it on a national level. Unfortunately it was not that well attended partly because it was held in a park that was difficult to get to unless you had your own transport. The weather was amazingly kind although the ground was rather damp when we first arrived.

First Person Plural set up its information stand and organised a face-painting stall run by Elaine assisted by Emma and one or two other occasional helpers. I was so impressed with the results and I don't think there was a child without a mask by the end of the day as well as several people in adult size bodies. Kathryn's 3 year old niece, Megan was the first very willing customer and made a splendid ladybird. I think Elaine worked solidly all day but she seemed to enjoy herself as much as the children. We also had an art table with paints, brushes and paper and this was well used, again by all ages. I think for next year I will need to invest in a bigger table.

There was opportunity to play African drums which I really enjoyed - maybe I have found my hidden creativity! The teacher was excellent and very positive in her approach so that even the most hesitant pupil was soon giving it their best shot and unconscious of everything around them.

Michelle, the belly dancer was beautiful and for me was an inspiration as she had so obviously worked on learning to enjoy her body for herself and in a sense what better personal statement can you make then perform two dances in public that are quite beautiful to watch. The balloon release was the first either my husband or I had been to and we both found it very powerful and moving.

I find going to different events run by survivors for survivors there is always a very special feel. People seem more real; they are genuinely supportive of each other and encourage friends and colleagues to have a go at things. There is a sense of respect for each other and this party was very much a day for just being with no expectations from anybody. The children seemed the same and spent the day happily without an ice-cream van or expensive rides to go on. It was lovely as a few people wandering through the park came to see what was going on and their children were soon joining in the painting and couldn't believe it was all free and would be their next Saturday. I hope the Survivors Trust have the time and the energy to repeat it next year and fully recommend you trying to get to it and bringing friends and family. It is very much a day about sharing.



Reflecting on the adult – child relationship (Part 1)

by Kate Evans

“Get the adult to reassure the children inside”. This is common advice given to multiples but I, as a multiple, have had serious problems doing this. I have done some thinking about this from which comes the following exploration of experience and speculation.

A first understanding of this advice is that the host personality, the ‘name’ is the adult. However, I’m seriously starting to wonder whether the host personality is not just a space occupied by different insiders by turn. For myself, a lot of past therapy on the singleton model seems possibly to have ensured firstly that all the insiders who occupy consciousness act in a fairly similar way (with one major exception) and secondly that none of us expect “Kate” to have much of a memory, so no time seems to be lost. At any rate, it is hard to pinpoint “Kate” as the main adult in the system.

Adults & children in the inner family

As far as adults go experience is showing me that most or all past ‘daytime’ adults need rescuing, just as ‘forgotten’ or sealed-off children, teenagers and young adults do. Now we have started rescuing adults, the system/inner family has dramatically stabilised and we are able to handle far more without trauma. The rescue of an adult abused in her thirties only a mile and a half from where we lived, abruptly stopped early morning panics as our therapist’s summer break approached.

There were, to my knowledge, no adults in my system prior to this rescue work. The Inner Self helper and Gate-keeper, together with the teens, have kept things going and cared for the little ones. In fact, the inner family hate adults. Adults were either abusers or abused, and to trust them could be lethal.

The word ‘adult’ also means pornographic, in relation to the filming and live performances that went on. Quite likely insiders knew this meaning of the word and it became a trigger, possibly deliberately used by abusers. Certainly the strength of our reaction to the word ‘adult’ seems out of proportion.

While the therapeutic focus seems to be all on the ‘forgotten’ abused children, teens and young adults, ‘daytime’ adults also had their considerable suffering. For myself, from leaving a girls boarding school, I could barely cope with the demands of student, then adult life. Almost at once I began to fail at everything, encountered continual rejection and growing isolation.

The bedrock of life, of consciousness, seems to me to be to belong; to have a place. Cells can die of isolation, I believe, and solitary confinement is the worst punishment given people. As a young, unstable woman, rejection by men is a constant, as they are first attracted by what seems a warm, open character and then repelled by the instability. Failure in exams, results in rejection by the work world, and inability to relate, results in rejection by peers. The utter isolation this brings is traumatic. All this is apart from the experience of dependency on government handouts and a terror I will one day lack food and shelter.

In the rescuing of the adults, what they wanted to hear, above all, was that they belonged and had a place and were loved. Their terror of ‘lostness’ was a factor that made therapists holidays a nightmare, as those adults experience was basically always of rejection, never of return.

The insecurity and lostness of my adults also meant that my children would reassure them, in an exact opposite of the present assumption. For the confident children – certainly the ISH and Gate-keeper, had had years of proving their ability to survive and be accepted as children, however awful the circumstances. Their wisdom and gentle support has been a great comfort to the scared adult consciousness. And it seems to me possible that in yet unrecovered inner family consciousnesses, that some children and teens push the adults around, much as I did my mother in much daytime life.

My therapist began to take the adults seriously when I showed her a colouring of one animal clearly jealous of another. It seems to me that this understandable jealousy, together with the self-hatred of the adult consciousnesses, can contribute to sabotage. In fact, one of my jealous adults damaged the body in a self-caused minor accident, and it seems likely that at previous breaks they had joined the saboteurs to damage the inner family and body.

Towards alternative models of inner structure

The possibility of an untypical adult/child relationship seems to me to hold when one looks at certain areas of difference between ordinary and seriously abused childhoods. Growing up in paedophile abuse, I did not have a model of adults basically looking after and loving children. Rather, the powerful adults abused children, and the powerless ones only gave what they could. Love and dependency could lead to danger for the child. So we could lack the basic model that parents nurture children, and it is possibly something that needs to be learned; that older carers for younger.

Similarly our model was that adults abandoned children in need. Our model was of fracture, dissociation and flight, and this is precisely how our inner worlds developed, with the sequential abandonment of overwhelmed consciousnesses. It is hence possible that our inner world and multiplicity was not so much a magnificent child's refuge and survival skill, but a painstaking imitation of what we saw around us. And what we need to learn is that the answer to problems is not flight, denial and splitting, but inclusiveness, integration, acceptance and love.

Another difference is that severely abused children did not have an accepted 'childhood'. Rather, like the street children of Latin America, it seems to me we were prematurely adults, learning from toddler hood how to survive rape, murder and atrocity. It is possible we need to learn childhood – and that is where the delight of colouring and sheer childish indulgence is so much part of our care.

In sum, the model we made inside was not of stable, loving and nurturing relationships, but one of constant emergency geared to physical and mental survival, in which self-dependence had to develop from the earliest age. The security, sense of fun, loving and ordinary relaxation and close relationships that are not harmful – all have to be learned.

Part 2 of this article will appear in In the next issue of the newsletter when Kate gives us insight into how she has used the healing powers of her imagination.



EARLY NOTICE

Saturday, April 16th

is the provisional date for the next

MEMBERS OPEN MEETING

The meeting is open to all current members (Full & Associate) of First Person Plural, and will be held in **Coventry** (to be confirmed).

An arts and crafts theme is planned.

Members Open Meetings are relaxed get togethers with a mix of formal and informal activities. They give members a chance to enjoy the company of accepting, understanding others, to share hopes, strengths and talents and to learn from each other.

Put the date in your diary and watch out for further announcements



Review by Rebecca King

Love Yourself

Joy-filled affirmations and cards to encourage, comfort, & inspire
created by Cheryl Rainfield – a dissociative survivor of ritual abuse
available to purchase at <http://www.cherylrainfield.com/>



Once I had read the reviews and background of the creator Cheryl I was intrigued by comments like 'an invaluable interventional tool'. Having used affirmations a great deal myself, I am aware of the enormous benefit, but also the pain they can provoke in a dissociative user. I was interested to see how a survivor had approached this subject.

Although I took on board the comments around me, that the people depicted may not be as beautiful as they could be, I was aware that they were intentionally ordinary images to identify with. Not only this, but Cheryl has managed to include a wide range of different groups of people without it being an obvious message in her art. It was also clear that she has taken into account the vulnerability of survivors and given no pressure or risk of ideation with an, impossible to achieve, image of the self.

The fact that the cards are double sided, takes the user through the whole process of change that this positive thinking can achieve, which is important for people who have suffered damage to be able to understand.

The artwork is inspired and completely captures the aim of each affirmation, giving a feeling of peace, love and hope to each one. The depictions are solely based on the self concept, therefore giving no possibility of triggering material, about any of the wider issues of life and relationships. The images of adults indulging in play, art and everyday tasks that involves childlike pursuits as well as 'grown up' ones, would definitely be an invaluable tool for people coming to terms with multiplicity, and learning to give inner parts a way of expressing themselves. I was particularly touched by the card that showed a person holding every part of themselves in their hand on one side and then on the reverse giving them the freedom to express themselves.

My opinion of this product is that an enormous amount of thought, skill, love and a deep understanding of the processes necessary for a survivor of abuse to move through have been put into them. I would highly recommend them to anyone.

BPDWORLD CONFERENCE

BPDWORLD are proud to announce a **Two-Day Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) Conference** on **24-25 February 2005** at the Days Hotel, **Wakefield/Leeds**, West Yorkshire. The Conference will host presentations by three respected speakers on topics related to the causes, effects, and treatments of Borderline Personality Disorder.

THE SPEAKERS:

Dr. Claudia Herbert will be **speaking on "Trauma and Dissociation"**. Dr. Herbert is a Chartered Clinical Psychologist and an Associate Fellow of the British Psychological Society.

Satwant Singh will be speaking on **"Self-harm and Relationships"**. Mr. Singh is a nurse consultant in CBT. He is a fully qualified and accredited CBT therapist.

Dr. Fiona Kennedy will be speaking on **"PTSD; Dissociation and How it Relates to BPD; and an Introduction to Dialectical Behaviour Therapy"**. Dr Kennedy is an associate fellow of the British Psychological Society and a Chartered Clinical Psychologist.

THE PRICE: £150.00 includes

the event, hotel room, evening meal, refreshments during the days events & full English breakfast.
for conference only £100.00

CONTACT DETAILS:: Joshua Cole (Chairman), Email: Josh@bpdworld.org
or write BPDWORLD, PO BOX 1364, HUDDERSFIELD, HD1 9ZG

For reservations please complete the application form to be found at
<http://www.bpdworld.org/booking.doc>

We are expecting a further two guest speakers for this conference.

Derbyshire Rape Crisis – One Day Conference

"ABUSE & THERAPY"

Monday, 14 March 2005 at Midland Hotel, Derby

£70 statutory agencies & individuals; £65 voluntary groups

Contact: Derbyshire Rape Crisis, PO Box 142, Derby, DE1 2HF

Email: info@drcg.freesevice.co.uk : Tel: 01332 342255

"Access to Learning" funds DID therapy for student

Students who have DID or other complex dissociative disorders and those who support them may be interested to know that one university student with DID has recently secured funding for three hours of therapy a week for the duration of her course.

She applied for the funding through the "Access to Learning" fund which each university and other higher education institution in the UK has at its disposal to support students experiencing hardship.

Val Wosket, a counsellor and member of UKSSD, reports that in support of her client's application she wrote a letter to the university explaining why she was unable to use the university's counselling service which provides only short term counselling. She did not mention DID in her letter but said her client had a complex dissociative condition and quoted from the ISSD Guidelines for the Treatment of DID in support of her request. The student received a cheque for the full amount within 2 weeks of applying.

**H e l l o , I a m n i n e y e a r s
o l d a n d I g e t t h e t i m e
t o r e a d a n d I t h o u g h t
y o u m i g h t l i k e t o**

PLAY

**k n o w w h a t w e h a v e b e e n e n j o y i n g .
W e h a v e r e a d a l l t h e A n n e o f
G r e e n G a b l e s b o o k s , L i t t l e
W o m e n a n d a l l t h e b o o k s a b o u t
H e i d i a s w e l l a s t h e H a r r y P o t t e r
b o o k s b u t o u r v e r y b e s t i s A n n e
o f G r e e n G a b l e s . W e w o u l d l i k e
s o m e s u g g e s t i o n s o f w h e r e w e
c a n g o n e x t . L o v e t o a l l w h o b e
n i n e**

L i z z i e

**A n y s u g g e s t i o n s f o r b o o k s f o r L i z z i e t o r e a d n e x t ?
S e n d y o u r i d e a s t o F i r s t P e r s o n P l u r a l a n d l o o k o u t t h e n e x t t i m e y o u
g e t t h e n e w s l e t t e r . Y o u r s u g g e s t i o n s w i l l a p p e a r o n t h e P l a y C e n t r e
p a g e s j u s t l i k e L i z z i e ' s l e t t e r d i d**

P I C T U R E S T O C O L O U R



CENTRE

Playtime Wordsearch

BEAR
BLOCKS
CARS
DOLL
DRESSINGUP
FOOTBALL
LEGO
MONOPOLY
PAINTS
PUPPET
RATTLE
TEDDY
TRAINSET
YOYO

**Find the words
from the list to
the left in the
letter grid on
the right.
Answer below**

O	B	M	V	O	R	C	Y	E	N	M	X	H	E	G
G	E	D	L	R	A	W	A	S	W	O	C	F	L	I
T	A	I	B	R	R	O	T	G	S	N	O	L	T	F
D	R	E	S	S	I	N	G	U	P	O	M	P	T	M
S	I	A	X	M	I	W	P	B	T	P	F	D	A	L
R	K	J	I	A	A	X	G	B	W	O	C	D	R	G
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O	Q	L	H	M	B	C	T	O	G	E	L	L	Y	F
W	Y	O	L	U	T	E	D	D	Y	N	U	M	G	U
J	A	O	Z	W	K	D	C	I	X	E	O	H	D	V
H	V	J	Y	M	L	N	N	X	Z	S	N	F	K	R
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X	S	Q	G	B	O	S	P	N	B	R	O	K	I	H

Jokes

What is black and white and pink all over?

An embarrasses zebra!

Why did the woman wear a helmet to eat?

She was on a crash diet!

A local monastery was going bankrupt. The abbot didn't know what to do. The brothers had a meeting, and decided to run a great Olde English Fish-N'-Chips shop from the monastery kitchen. One day, a man knocked on the door and asked for "A portion of fries please?" The brother answered, "Hold on a moment. I'm the fish friar. You want the chip monk."

O	B	M	V	O	R	C	Y	E	N	M	X	H	E	G
G	E	D	L	R	A	W	A	S	W	O	C	F	L	I
T	A	I	B	R	R	O	T	G	S	N	O	L	T	F
D	R	E	S	S	I	N	G	U	P	O	M	P	T	M
S	I	A	X	M	I	W	P	B	T	P	F	D	A	L
R	K	J	I	A	A	X	G	B	W	O	C	D	R	G
W	E	C	P	N	W	I	A	B	P	L	G	V	A	S
D	Z	M	O	A	S	L	D	O	M	Y	Z	O	Y	W
N	O	F	I	L	L	E	T	E	P	P	U	P	U	P
O	Q	L	H	M	B	C	T	O	G	E	L	L	Y	F
W	Y	O	L	U	T	E	D	D	Y	N	U	M	G	U
J	A	O	Z	W	K	D	C	I	X	E	O	H	D	V
H	V	J	Y	M	L	N	N	X	Z	S	N	F	K	R
D	E	D	T	O	L	F	F	F	Q	N	E	A	B	T
X	S	Q	G	B	O	S	P	N	B	R	O	K	I	H



Is multiplicity a disability? by 'All of Us'

One (or more) of us is a part-time cleaner at a local school. We have just been asked to fill in a form concerning ethnic groups in order to update our employers' records. One of the questions is "Do you consider that you have a disability?". We ticked the NO box and then read the definition of "disability" at the bottom of the form. It reads "A mental or physical impairment which has a substantial and long term adverse effect on his/her ability to carry out normal everyday activities". Then we realized that it is not a simple YES or NO answer. Having a dissociative disorder (in our case MPD) does have an adverse effect on our everyday life. I don't need to go into the details of the problems that having a dissociative disorder creates, but it is because of our "ability" to dissociate that makes it possible to go to work.

Many times we are not able to do simple day to day tasks without difficulty but we know how important it is for us to be able to go to work (mainly for financial reasons but also because it helps us to stay grounded) so we use our multiplicity in order to do that. So, we have an "ability" rather than a "disability".

If we stick to our original answer and say NO we are not strictly telling the truth (and, in effect still having to 'keep quiet') because MPD is disabling at times and I am not sure that if we did not have the "ability" to dissociate we would be able to cope with the sometimes overwhelming feelings of

depression, panic, fear etc and would not be able to go to work. It is by being able to switch into different people that makes going to work possible.

If we say YES to the question that doesn't feel strictly true either. We don't want to be considered as having a disability because, although day to day living is very hard work, somehow we keep fighting our way through. And yet..... one wrong word; one unexpected problem; one innocent gesture and our carefully, delicately held together structure is completely shattered, and once again we become a suicidal or panicking wreck. Does the fact that you have the "ability" to become another person in order to be able to function again after being destabilized cause you to be considered as having a 'disability'?

We don't have the answer to the question. One final thought..... I think the people with the "disability" are the ones who caused us to become a multiple in the first place



Picture
by
Marilyn

" T r a p p e d " by Anna

I'm a teenager in an adult body. It sucks! I want to do kick boxing but her body does couch potato! I want to ride a motorcycle but "it's too dangerous", "not practical" and I'm "not old enough". I want to have green hair but she is a school teacher and it wouldn't be "professional". When I smoke I get the health lecture and all the little ones cough and splutter and complain about the smell. I had to give it up unless I get really mad about something then no-one stops me. I'm still working on her about getting a tattoo — something small and tasteful maybe. We'll see. But the biggest thing I miss is not all of them things. it's the not having friends around my age to hang out with. We never had friends like that before and I will never have them and boy does that suck. No-one to moan about 'parents' to or talk music with or just, oh I don't know.... but I've seen others have it and I know that being stuck inside here in this body I never will. All her friends are older than her and married with kids. At least she's not married or anything like that. It's just us and the kitties and the gang inside but it sure does get lonely for real company, especially when you are a teenager trapped in an adult body.



Celebrating conference success

We did good by Kathryn

On 30th September, 2004 **First Person Plural** held it's first major one day conference. Organised in partnership with the **Wolverhampton Sexual Abuse Forum** and financially supported by **Awards for All**, **NIMHE West Midlands Development Centre** and **Wolverhampton City NHS PCT** the event, entitled "**Could it be dissociation**" was attended by over 200 delegates from a wide range of locations, professional and personal backgrounds, sectors and services. The conference was massively oversubscribed with more than 150 applicants being turned away. Four keynote speakers delivered three plenary presentations and there was a choice of two from five parallel sessions available to delegates. A plenary panel of six – a mix of professionals, survivor and family/friend - closed the event answering questions from the floor of the still almost full auditorium. A record 136 evaluation forms were returned and analysis of these shows that all sessions were well received with the majority averaging 4 plus from a maximum possible score of 5.

"Excellent" was a word that appeared on many of the evaluation forms. One delegate described the conference as "the best one day conference I have ever attended"

A conference report will be published in Spring 2005, a copy of which will be sent free to all FPP members and to all delegates who attended. Further copies will be available for sale.

Many people contributed to the success of the conference. There was a small army of helper volunteers on the day ensuring smooth running. A conference working group of representatives from both First Person Plural and the Wolverhampton Sexual Abuse Forum were responsible for the organisation and bookings administration. Fourteen speakers/facilitators/panel members gave of their knowledge, experience and skills on the day. All of these are to be thanked for their generous input of time and expertise.

Thank you to the Wolverhampton Sexual Abuse Forum *by Melanie*

We have many things to thank this very special group of people for, most importantly for being such special people. If Kathryn and Jackie Sharratt did not know and share such mutual respect for each other I doubt whether we would be congratulating ourselves on the success of our first conference in 2004. The working group met monthly for most of the year to plan the conference and these were all such special meetings for me. Working with a group of people whom I had never met before and who made me feel so welcome and included. They are professional while empathic to what is possible and their support through this time has been invaluable for both Kathryn and myself. On the day FPP members worked alongside volunteers from the forum and again this worked well, enabling both organisations to be actively involved on the day. We had a fun morning pre-conference assembling all the delegate packs and I cannot write this without mentioning Julia Smith who VOLUNTEERED to do all the administrative work and is she good at it? A good deal of the smoothness of the day is down to her expertise although I am not implying she didn't have her stressed out moments. The more I come into contact with people who are either working with abused adults or are abuse survivors I never cease to appreciate how we work together, how aware we are to try and help make people comfortable while respecting their space, so many skills that have been sadly lacking in other areas where I am involved with committees at present. So a big thank you to all the people involved from the Wolverhampton Forum for helping us to take another, very important step along the road of getting DID the recognition it needs and deserves.

Big Thank Yous to Melanie & Kathryn by Snowyowl

We just wanted to say a very big THANK YOU for sharing your experiences with us at the conference on Thursday. It has made such a difference to our life and we feel very privileged to have been there. The conference was the first place we have felt like we belonged and no longer have to be or feel ashamed of being a survivor with DID. We thank you immensely for that. It was comforting to be around other survivors and people who are trying to understand. We felt openness and a feeling of safety throughout the conference. We have come away from there with the feeling of shame missing; we no longer have to carry that. THANK YOU.

Our therapist supported us for the day and she was very proud of us. Listening to you at the beginning of the conference was heartfelt and some parts of it were so near to our story it was heartbreaking to hear we are not alone. But you gave us the courage to say who we were. After hearing you both we were able to sit in the workshop and say that we were survivors with DID, with no shame attached. We know we couldn't have done that six months ago and we want to thank you for making our first experience of a conference on DID to be a positive one which has left us coming home with hope in our heart. It has taken nearly six years of therapy to reach out and be with people who are willing to understand the complexity of living with DID. You have given us the hope we were looking for and we wish you all a safe journey of healing and peace.

We would like you to publish this as we think people need to know how brilliant you both did at the conference. Thank you for keeping us all safe and thank you to everyone who attended the conference for being so accepting of us.

A selection of comments by various delegates

Very interesting, informative and powerful on an emotional level

(A volunteer on sexual abuse helpline)

An outstanding conference for both raising awareness and providing service user / survivor perspectives

(A social worker & counsellor)

Packed full of very informative material

(A voluntary sector counselor)

Comforting to network with interested people. Excellent

(A mental health nurse & therapist)

Very well organised and the content is a wake-up reminder to NHS

(A social worker & informal carer)

A positive information and understanding gained about D.I.D

(Therapist)

Excellent and thought provoking

(Nurse in schools)

Put into words what we're going through

(Dissociative survivor)

Excellent..... will be useful in my client work

(Ex-doctor; Rape crisis counsellor)

Where were the carers? By Sue Detheridge

I am sure that among the conference there were many carers, but why did we not see them or hear from them? This was a question I asked myself as I drove back from the conference in Wolverhampton.

The conference was good, well-planned. It ran like clockwork and it was obvious that a lot of hard work had gone into the organization. The atmosphere was friendly and it was good to put faces to names. The subjects were well represented by many well-known names from the various professions who gave some interesting presentations, so all in all, a good day. But among all the presentations, no-one from the carers' side was there to tell their tale.

The reason I am so concerned about this is that as well as being a professional, I do have experience of the caring side (my two hats) and just what that can mean. When will people involved in this area of work give the carers more of a voice? Why were there no workshops about carers, run by the very people who are a huge and important part of the survivors' recovery? Why was there not a speaker for the carer's side? The only carer was a representative on the Q & A panel (consisting of approximately 10 minutes of input). I don't think it is because carers are unaware. I think it is just that they are overwhelmed much of the time by the professionals and the survivors roles.

This has to change. Meetings and conferences should be a balance of the three - the survivor, the professional and the carer.

Carers have to have a voice, their story needs telling, their experiences listened to and they need to be up there with all the others to complete the picture.

They are just as important as the therapist in their way, in helping the survivor to complete their journey.

Yes, the survivor can "survive" without any of us, but do we want a life for them that means 'just surviving'? I don't think so. If we care for them we want more than just that but to enable this to happen we all have to work together on equal terms to achieve this.

As an ex-social worker, I would never have held a Case Conference without the carer being given a voice, so my hope for the future is to attend a conference that has that balance in equal measure. I intend to pursue this for as long as it takes, even if it means me running the workshop or me getting up on the platform to start the ball rolling! However it happens, the carers need to be able to tell how it is for them. We need professionals and survivors to attend workshops and discussions, to listen to what life is like for the carers and to see just what they have to deal with when "the shop is shut" and they are the only ones around. Their story has to be told, their experiences listened to, but most of all, they need to be given a voice. Carers out there, your views are important. Let's hear from you!

I had to put my feeling of concern down and ask the question "Where were the carers? I hope it generates some replies and feedback. I enjoyed the conference and this article is no reflection of this. I just feel very strongly about carers.

(Note- I use the term 'carer' to include, family, partners, friends, children, anyone who cares for a survivor)

Sue Detheridge, the writer of the above article will be presenting her views on
"Understanding Dissociative Identity Disorder as a professional and a carer"

at the meeting of the **Wolverhampton Sexual Abuse Forum**

to be held on **28th April 2005** from **2.30 to 4.30pm**

at Beckminster House, Social Services Training Section, Birches Barn Road, Wolverhampton.

These meetings are free. No booking is required.

For further details contact Jackie Sharratt on 01902 551712 or Jane Viner on 01902 715871

A 'kinda – sorta' personal response from Kathryn

I have attempted on a number of occasions to compose a considered response to Sue's article. It should be easy because in broad terms I share her sentiments and agree that the voice of the carer is important. And I certainly understand her passion. But writing my response is not proving to be easy. I can't get past feeling aggrieved and unfairly criticized. I assume this wasn't Sue's intent but it is how our emotions are reacting.

'Foot-stomping' retorts come quickly to the forefront of our consciousness. The coherent explanations of why there wasn't equal time given to carers at the FPP conference become garbled before they can be transferred to paper. So all I'm going to say is that while I agree that carers have a right to be heard I do not agree that all meetings and conferences must include the three voices – professional, survivor and carer. What I think is important is that meeting and conference organizers always honestly consider whether each/all of the three voices are needed to achieve the aims/purpose of the event. But even then, the balance of voices is only one of the considerations in the complex process of inter-acting decision making that goes into organizing an event such as "Could it be dissociation?" and I do not accept that it should be given precedence over all other considerations. Compromises will always have to be made.

POEMS AND RHYMES

I Want her NOW! by Writer for CORE & Little One

"I want her now, I want her NOW"; "No, you'll see her later on"
 "I want her NOW. I want her NOW"; NO - we'll get back 'bowt one"
 What's later on? What's back 'bowt one? I want her NOW with ME.
 You say these things without a thought - forgetting I'm just 3.

Little ones can't understand the statements that we make
 To get some peace, to shut them up we say them for our sake.
 It's different when you're big outside but INSIDE still that child.
 I want HER NOW! I want HER NOW! screams plague you like you're wild.

They only see the grown up you - and adult thinking with it.
 Don't want to know the panic felt when TIME still gets a limit.
 We try so hard to grasp the concept of - "I'll see you then, TAKE CARE!"
 But everyone inside just screams "We need her NOW, PLEASE take us there."

It's all made so much worse because we're adult to the eye.
 We know what folk expect of us - and so we live a LIE.
 Completing all that's asked of us - DEAD - but getting on
 Until that thing called TIME is reached - "NO you'll see HER later on"

How can one help a baby understand 'bout time - enable her to see?
 I wish with all my heart there were some way, because that baby's - ME

Volume 6, Issue 1

Creating Between The Worlds written by Sandra Sunfire

September 2004, in preparation for the "Could It Be Dissociation?" conference

To be with you today
I have travelled through many landscapes,
Some blessed, some cursed,
Some alone, some with others.
My life experience has coursed through my body,
Unbidden but opened to.
Like the depths of a canyon I am cut and shaped.
Now the razor edge of past trauma is over
I can explore the scarring, the markings it has left on me.
I can choose to scale the heights, the canyon cliffs,
To climb with my fear, not frozen in terror,
To see what I can see from new perspectives,
To admire the view that I have heard called,
Special, majestic, inspirational.
To let these views ring out across the canyon,
To hear what comes back to me.
To taste the breath from on high,
Above what is below,
Taking in the whole.
Seeing the beauty in what has been cut away,
What has been left?
"therefore benefit comes from what is there;
Usefulness from what is not there"
I hear the echo across the ages
From lands far away.
From close to, I recognise the intimacy and wisdom of the open heart.
A heart with wings that can soar and fly
Into the heart of what has been cursed and find blessings there.



I am grateful to you, wherever you are right now,
For this chance to share, to create life anew together.

Quote is from a translation from the Tao Te Chin

The Tide Does Turn

Written by Sandra Sunfire in preparation
for the "Could It be Dissociation?" conference

We watched the tide turn
And heard our own thoughts and theories
Echoed in those of another.
Coming to similar conclusions
Through research and study,
The treating of patients,
Through blood, sweat and defecation,
Frozen terror unfreezing,
Leaving tears on her face,
Salt from within mingling with salt from without.
Scientific validation of what she knows to be true.
It rings clear as a bell,
Reaching every cell, present and past.
Another part of the jigsaw,
Another step towards healing.
Step by step,
The whole heals,
The hole is gently touched and soothed.



Heartfelt by 63

From this pen my heart doth flow,
Through there words be thou to know,
What hidden thoughts, my heart shall not forego,
To see the sky, through painless light,
To hear only silence through the night,
To taste pleasure, be it simple corn,
Not to pour scorn, upon a baker's dawn,
To see the sun rise, to see the sun set, without regret,
Educated mankind has forgot, this time, be his lot,
Even the simplest of man, knows his way home,
This home be thee, eye, of all Christian light
If thy spirit, hath bathed within light,
Fear not dark night
Thy first step was given, Thy be his to take
Amen

Volume 6, Issue 1

Living in a garage and other stories

– a prose poem by Paula Puddephatt

I'm gonna live here in the garage don't need no more shit a miscarriage of justice has led me to re-locate and now i live here behind this car and old mattress in my mate's parents' garage except that she tells me that i have to move out now her mum's on to us so i go first to temporary accommodation that my mate has kindly found for me in her old camp in the local woods then on to some stinky disused store room-cum-rubbish-dump to which at the end of the evening when threatened by my mother and hers to reveal my location either to them or the cops my mate duly leads the way game over for her just another night's entertainment she's gained from my turmoil and naivety and home difficulties to me it's my life that she is messing with later when we are eighteen she encourages me to take an od and to slit my wrists when depressed but that is another whole story of which there are many believe me about my dear best friend and me who needs enemies.

**DISSOCIATION SUCKS ROCKS
DISSOCIATION JUST ROCKS**

Stress

by Jackie Jones

"Guess what?
It's caused by stress"
My doctor says
yet again.

Another outbreak
of self hate.
The body
making itself ill.

I've got bottles
and big tubes,
all to keep
Stress at bay.

They say it kills.
You can't see it,
not even, magnified
by electron microscope.

So how the heck,
do I kill it,
before
it kills me?

The Powerful Powerless Whale by 63

Precious pearls, within liquid dwelling, be thee,
Intelligence, within own kingdom, unfellowed.
Enormous fragile gentle beauty,
Abounds within thy expanse,
Graceful displays you display,
Each moment of every day, heady.
Harmless within awesome power,
Dormant within thee, unstirred,
Within thy domain, all be free,
Careless as thee,
Within they silent liquid space.
None can dislodge thy crown,
Thy voice heard, calling within depths immersed, chilling.
Two thirds of earth, be thy realm,
No boundaries for thee be,
Necessity decrees, air, gentle giant,
Forever beware, abiding within air,
One species, shall never care,
Profit, profit, be his only fare.

