

UNDERSTANDING Dissociative Disorders

Dissociative disorders involve disruptions in identity, memory, consciousness, and perception. They are often responses to overwhelming trauma and are *not* a choice.

You are
not broken.
Your mind
is protecting
you.

WHAT IS DISSOCIATION?

Dissociation is a natural response to stress or trauma. It is the mind's way of protecting you from experiences that feel too overwhelming to process.

We all dissociate sometimes, such as:



Daydreaming



Losing track of time



Driving on "autopilot"



Feeling detached or numb

WHEN DISSOCIATION BECOMES A DISORDER

When dissociation is frequent, intense, and interferes with daily life, it may be part of a dissociative disorder.

It can affect:

- ♥ Identity (sense of self)
- ♥ Memory
- ♥ Awareness of your surroundings
- ♥ Time perception
- ♥ Emotions and body connection

These symptoms are often linked to past trauma, especially chronic or repeated trauma in childhood.



TYPES OF DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS



Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)

Presence of two or more distinct identity states (alters) that take control of behavior, along with memory gaps.



Dissociative Amnesia

Inability to recall important personal information, usually related to trauma or stress.



Depersonalization/Derealization Disorder

Persistent or repeated feelings of detachment from oneself (depersonalization) or surroundings (derealization).



Other Specified Dissociative Disorder (OSDD)

Symptoms cause distress or impairment but do not meet full criteria for a specific dissociative disorder.



Unspecified Dissociative Disorder (UDD)

Symptoms cause distress or impairment but lack enough information for a specific diagnosis.

COMMON SIGNS & SYMPTOMS



- ♥ Memory gaps
- ♥ Feeling disconnected from self or body
- ♥ Feeling like an outside observer
- ♥ Identity confusion
- ♥ Emotional numbness
- ♥ Time loss
- ♥ Switching between different identity states
- ♥ Trouble with relationships
- ♥ Difficulty trusting others
- ♥ Feeling unreal or detached from reality

These symptoms are not signs of weakness. They are signs of survival. ♥

IMPORTANT TO REMEMBER

- ♥ Dissociative disorders are treatable.
- ♥ Recovery is possible with the right support.
- ♥ You are not your trauma.
- ♥ You are not alone.
- ♥ You are worthy of healing, safety, and the life you deserve.



Healing happens at your pace.
You are in control of your journey.



HOW YOU CAN HELP YOURSELF

- ♥ Work with a trauma-informed therapist
- ♥ Practice grounding and self-regulation skills
- ♥ Create a safe and supportive environment
- ♥ Build a support system you trust
- ♥ Be patient and compassionate with yourself
- ♥ Celebrate small steps forward



HOW OTHERS CAN SUPPORT YOU

- ♥ Believe and validate your experience
- ♥ Be patient and understanding
- ♥ Respect your boundaries
- ♥ Avoid forcing you to talk or "get over it"
- ♥ Encourage professional support
- ♥ Offer consistent, reliable presence



YOU MATTER

Your experiences are real. Your feelings are valid. You deserve healing and peace. With the right support, you can move from surviving to thriving.



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