Segmented – An insight into DID (Dissociative Identity Disorder)

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Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) is the newer and more appropriate name for the disorder formerly known as ‘Multiple Personality Disorder’. This disorder is characterised by the presence of two or more separate identities (also known as ‘alters’) co-existing in a single body. The disorder typically manifests in childhood due to severe or repeated childhood traumas; this results in a single cohesive identity failing to form. The alters exist as part of a ‘system’, many DID sufferers self-identify as ‘multiple’ rather than an individual for this reason.6

The alters may differ as much as any two individual people. That is to say, alters can vary in gender, age, appearance, interests etc. Indeed, they are not confined to being human, for example, some alters may be fay creatures such as elves, or non-sentient beings such as trees. On psychiatric evaluation, there appears to be specific roles an alter provides for a system, for example a common role is the role of ‘protector’. A ‘protector’ acts to shield less resilient alters from traumatic or stressful experiences.2,5

This disorder is associated with a variety of unique experiences and challenges. Some of these experiences such as ‘time loss’ are depicted in the comic. Time loss is where alter(s) experience lapses in memory due to information not being shared between the alters.4 DID features such as this can make it a difficult and scary disorder to live with, it can severely impact a system’s ability to form relationships, work, and perform activities of daily living.

This comic depicts aspects of the lived experience of DID. It aims to highlight and challenge common misconceptions of the disorder and break down stigmas which are prevalent among lay people and professionals.5 I am not a DID sufferer myself, as such this comic is an amalgamation of features and experiences from multiple sources in an attempt to find commonalities in this hugely variable disorder. My hope is that this comic can be read and enjoyed by people regardless of their academic ability or prior knowledge, whilst simultaneously allowing readers to learn about this largely misunderstood disorder.

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REFERENCES
2. The Entropy System [Internet]. YouTube. 2021 [cited 22 September 2021]. Available from: https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCXKrABjop-j4oa9Qbo5jBYr
Dear Diary,

Today was just FABULOUS! The interview went perfectly, which we celebrated by singing and dancing all the way home. Our friends loved us! On the way, we saw a beautiful squirrel, which I named Muffin. Anyway, I need to go. I can't wait to burst into tears of joy on seeing Teddy! 

See you soon,

[Name]

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We are presently with the difficult challenge of our relationship. We don't get on with each other's friends, and we don't get along. She never had any friends at school due to the same reason. This requires a lot of tolerance, patience, and understanding from both within our system and from loved ones.