

Chapter 6b – Dissociative Disorders

An Overview of Dissociative Disorders

Dissociative Phenomena

Disruption in the usually integrated functions of consciousness, memory, identity, or perception of the environment.

Feeling detached from oneself or one's surroundings, almost as if one is dreaming or living in slow motion.

- Depersonalization
 - Sense of one's own reality is lost
- Derealization
 - Sense of reality of the external world is lost
- Common Experience
- Spectrum Disorder

- Depersonalization Disorder
- Dissociative Amnesia
- Dissociative Fugue
- Dissociative Trance Disorder
- Dissociative Identity Disorder

Depersonalization Disorder

Clinical Description

- Primary features
 - Recurrent or persistent depersonalization
 - Severe derealization
- Causes significant distress or impairs functioning
- Very rare
- Mean age of onset 16.1 years
- Runs a chronic course
- Over 50% have comorbid mood & anxiety disorders

The Nature of Dissociative Amnesia

Clinical Description

1 or more episodes of inability to recall important personal information, usually of a traumatic or stressful nature, that is too extensive to be explained by ordinary forgetfulness

Several Patterns

- Generalized Amnesia
- Localized or Selective Amnesia

The Nature of Dissociative Fugue

Clinical Description

Sudden, unexpected travel away from one's home or work with inability to recall one's past

Confusion about personal identity or assumption of a new identity

- Fugue = flight
- Go to another location
 - Unaware of how they arrived
- Usually they have left behind an intolerable situation
- Usually occur in adulthood
- Fugue states usually end abruptly

The Nature of Dissociative Trance Disorder

Clinical Description

Single or episodic disturbances in the state of consciousness, identity, or memory that are indigenous to particular locations & cultures.

- Dissociative trance
- Possession trance

The Nature of Dissociative Identity Disorder

Clinical Description

• Presence of 2 or more distinct identities or personality states (each with its own relatively enduring pattern of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment & self) (dissociated identity)

• At least 2 recurrently take control of the person's behavior

• Inability to recall important personal information that is too extensive to be explained by ordinary forgetfulness

- Central Features
 - Host Identity
 - Switch
- Biological Changes in DID
- Facts and Statistics
- Causes
- Other Related Features
 - Suggestibility

Treatment of Dissociative Disorders

Dissociative Amnesia & Fugue

- Prevention of future episodes
- Recalling what happened during amnesic or fugue states

Treatment of Dissociative Disorders

Dissociative Identity Disorder

- Reintegrating the identities
- Treatments are similar to PTSD
- Fundamental goal:
 - Identify cues or triggers that provoke memories of trauma or dissociation & neutralize them
- Confront & relive early trauma & gain control over the events
- Hypnosis
- Trust

Real vs. False Memories

- Studies of false memories
 - Elizabeth Loftus