



DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS

**CC7: Psychopathology
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DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS

- **Dissociative disorders** - problems that involve impairments of memory and consciousness.
- “*Dissociation*”, detachment of cognition or experience
- Memory disruption is not b’coz of brain injury
- Unable to recall important personal events, temporarily forget their identity or assume a new identity, or may wander far from their usual surroundings.

KINDS OF DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS

- 1. Dissociative amnesia**
- 2. Dissociative fugue**
- 3. Dissociative identity disorder**
- 4. Depersonalization disorder**

DISSOCIATIVE AMNESIA

- Unable to recall important information, about their lives.
- The loss of memory is much more extensive than normal forgetting
- Episodic memory not Semantic memory gets affected
- Is not caused by brain injury, or disease.
- Related Problem ***Dementia*** - memory fails slowly over time, is not linked to stress, and is accompanied by other cognitive deficits, such as an inability to learn new information.
- The amnesia is typically-
 - *Retrograde* - unable to remember before the event
 - *Anterograde* – unable to remember after the event

DISSOCIATIVE AMNESIA

- Amnesia could be –
 1. **Localized amnesia** - is the most common type, in which a person loses all memory of events that took place within a limited period of time.
 2. **Selective amnesia** - second most common form, remember some, but not all, events that occurred during a period of time.
 3. **Generalized amnesia** – not remembering events of the past few days, but also events that occurred earlier in his life.
 4. **Continuous amnesia** – rare, forgetting continues into the present, in addition to past.

DISSOCIATIVE AMNESIA - DIAGNOSIS

1. One or more episodes of memory loss of important personal information, usually of a traumatic or stressful nature.
2. Too extensive to be ordinary forgetfulness.
3. Not explained by other dissociative disorders, PTSD, or somatization disorder, and any medical conditions

DISSOCIATIVE FUGUE

- Derived from the Latin word *fugere*, “to flee”
- In **dissociative fugue** the memory loss is more extensive than in dissociative amnesia
- ***Dissociative fugue*** – person not only forgets the past but also travels to a new location and may assume a new identity
- Fugue may be *brief*—a matter of hours or days—and end suddenly, may be of *long period*.

DIAGNOSIS_FUGE

1. Sudden, unexpected travel away from home or one's customary place of work,
2. Inability to recall one's past.
3. Confusion about personal identity, or the assumption of a new identity.
4. Symptoms are not explained by another medical or psychological disorder

DISSOCIATIVE IDENTITY DISORDER

- Also known as *multiple personality disorder*
- Development of two or more distinct personalities, (**sub-personalities** or **alternate personalities**), each with a unique set of memories, behaviors, thoughts, and emotions
- At any given time, one of the subpersonalities takes center stage and dominates the person's functioning
- Begins in childhood but diagnosed in adulthood
- Recovery rate is less
- More common in women than in men

DIAGNOSIS - DSM-IV-TR CRITERIA

1. Presence of two or more personalities
2. At least two of the alters recurrently take control of behavior
3. Inability of at least one of the alters to recall important personal information

DEPERSONALIZATION DISORDER

- A disorder marked by a persistent and recurrent feeling of being detached from one's own mental processes or body
- One's mental functioning or body feels unreal
- It involves no disturbance of memory, only perception of the self is severely altered
- Occasionally mind seems to be floating a few feet above them, the hands and feet smaller or bigger than usual, experience of distortions sense of touch or smell or their judgments of time or space etc.
- Depersonalization is often accompanied by an experience of *derealization*—the feeling that the external world is unreal.

DIAGNOSIS_ DSM-IV-TR CRITERIA

1. Persistent or recurrent experiences of detachment from one's mental processes or body,
2. Symptoms are not explained by another dissociative disorder, by any other psychological /medical condition.

EXPLANATION OF DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS

1. The Psychodynamic View

- *Repression* - people fight off anxiety by unconsciously preventing painful memories, thoughts, or impulses from reaching awareness
- memory of an extremely upsetting event is unconsciously blocked to avoid the pain of facing it
- E.g. **childhood abuse**, particularly **child sexual abuse**, can also sometimes trigger dissociative amnesia

EXPLANATION OF DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS

2. The Behavioral View

- *Operant conditioning* - dissociation is a response learned through operant conditioning *Temporary relief* is produced when dissociated
- This momentary forgetting, leading to a drop in anxiety, increases the likelihood of future forgetting.
- This reinforces for the act of forgetting and learn—without being aware that they are learning dissociative behaviour

EXPLANATION OF DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS

3. Self-Hypnosis

- In *hypnotized state*, can behave, perceive, and think in ways that would ordinarily seem impossible
- May temporarily forget facts, events, and even their personal identities—an effect called *hypnotic amnesia*
- People hypnotize themselves (self-hypnosis) to forget unpleasant events, horrifying experiences that have recently occurred in their lives
- If the self-induced amnesia covers all memories of a person's past and identity, that person may experience a dissociative fugue

TREATMENT - DISSOCIATIVE DISORDERS

1. **Psychodynamic therapy**

- Repressed material is uncovered and brought into consciousness
- The patients is encouraged to recover lost memories,

2. **Hypnotherapy**

- Therapist hypnotizes patients and then guide them to recall forgotten events (amnesia, fugue)

3. **Drug Therapy:**

- Sometimes intravenous injections of barbiturates such as *sodium amobarbital* (Amytal) or *sodium pentobarbital* (Pentothal) are used to help patients with dissociative amnesia and fugue regain lost memories.
- These drugs are often called “truth serums,”