

SIGNS OF A DISSOCIATIVE DISORDER

This list is not for diagnosis, but combines wisdom from multiple sources to help you more quickly identify someone who may have a dissociative disorder.

- Three or more prior diagnoses (esp. BPD, Bipolar, mood disorders)**
- Prior treatment failure**
- Concurrent psychiatric and somatic symptoms**
- A history of abuse as a child (esp. twisted, complex)**
- An inability to recall childhood events from the years 6 to 11**
- Severe headaches and other pain syndromes**
- Impaired affect regulation
- Chronic destructive behavior
- Easily learning coping skills in session, inability to use them outside
- Distorted relationships with others
- Loss of one's system of meaning.(i.e. losing one's core beliefs, values, religious faith, or hope in the world and other people - <https://www.verywellmind.com>)
- Neglect in infancy
- Physical unavailability of primary caregiver in the first 2 years of life
- Childhood caregivers who were frightened or frightening
- Fluctuating symptoms and levels of function
- Time distortion, time lapses, or frank amnesia
- Being told of disremembered behaviors
- Others noting observable changes
- The discovery of objects, productions, or handwriting in one's possession that one cannot account for or recognize
- Hearing voices (80% or more experienced as within the head) that are experienced as separate, often urging the patient toward some activity
- The patient's use of "we" in a collective sense and/or making self-referential statements in the third person
- The eliciting of other entities through hypnosis or a drug-facilitated interview
- Traumatic medical history or childhood hospitalizations/procedures
- Refugee population
- Ability to block out pain, high pain tolerance
- Indications of disorganized attachment
- Client with lots of symptoms and report a history of a great childhood
- Therapist feels "floaty", inexplicably tired or confused when the client is present

Items in bold are ones we can usually learn very early in treatment or during intake questions.

Compiled from Van der Kolk, 2001, Kluff, 1999, Twombly, 2013