

## **DID Myths**

### **Myth: DID Is Obvious**

Despite what the media may portray, it is not easy to tell when someone has DID. However, the experience of having a fragmented sense of self and “not me” thoughts, feelings, memories, and even body image, feels very real for people with DID.

Characters portrayed in the media as having DID are often shown wearing uncharacteristic clothes, displaying wildly changing mannerisms, or appearing to be a different person altogether. People with DID rarely express their identities in such obvious ways.

### **Myth: People With DID Experience Psychosis**

Many believe that those with DID have psychosis—a lost sense of reality. In fact, unless people with DID are in the throes of PTSD and are being highly triggered, they have an intact sense of reality.

### **Myth: People With DID Are Dangerous**

Many people with DID have been portrayed as dangerous individuals who perform violent acts under different “personalities.”

People with DID are no more violent or dangerous than the general population. Their symptoms and behaviors reflect that they are afraid of dangerous situations.

In fact, due to their histories of childhood trauma, many people with the condition feel frightened and do their best not to call attention to themselves.

### **Myth: DID Is a Rare Condition**

Because DID has been misunderstood and is hard to detect, it is often called a rare condition. In fact, DID occurs in approximately 1% of the general population. This is the same percentage of people who have schizophrenia.

### **Myth: DID Cannot Be Effectively Treated**

DID is a serious mental health condition. It's hard for many therapists who are untrained in dissociative disorders to recognize it. But with effective treatment from mental health providers who are trained in trauma and dissociation or able to receive consultation with someone trained, people with DID can and do recover. People with DID can live full and productive lives.

### **Myth: Health Care Providers Convince Patients of Past Trauma That Isn't True**

One of the controversies about DID is a theory that mental health professionals bring DID on by suggesting false accounts of past abuse to gullible patients. This suggests that therapists who obtained information from the media might somehow lead their patients into thinking they have histories of childhood abuse when abuse never happened.

However, a 2016 publication in the Harvard Review of Psychiatry states that no study has ever supported this “fantasy model.” Instead, several studies confirm that DID develops in individuals who have experienced severe trauma. DID is also repeatedly found in people who are unaware of the disorder and in cultures where the condition is unknown.