

## Switching in DID

People with dissociative identity disorder (DID) have at least two distinctly different identities, but as many as over a 100 can emerge. Switching refers to one alter taking control of the body, being given control by another alter, or gaining prominence over another alter. This can take place within a few seconds or over a number of minutes. It may also be a gradual change over a few days. The switching is often brought about by stress or through psychological conflict such as brief memories of the trauma. Switching can also occur when different alters disagree about the way relationships are managed or who they should trust about things such as treatment and the administration of medication.

Survivors of complex mind control may be conditioned to switch seamlessly and to sound like adults at all times, except when a programmer/handler accesses child parts for torture, training, or reporting. Other alters are programmed to look “crazy” through constant switching.

Increasing awareness of your switching can help you become and have more control over switching. Having more control over switching can help life run more smoothly and efficiently. Parts with the role of gatekeeper could also block a switch from occurring. Negotiating with them, establishing system responsibility and gaining trust are the keywords to prevent (or fix) such a situation.

Switches can be; slow, quick, planned, forced, rapid, or triggered. Switching between alternate identities is one strategy DID patients may use to block out ongoing awareness of unwanted information, and dissociative responses in general may help regulate responses to potentially frightening information.

Slow switches are usually consensual switches in which two or more alters are co-conscious to varying degrees and slowly blending and retreating to allow one alter to gain prominence. Slow switches can also indicate that the system is heavily dissociated and depersonalised and that alters are struggling to connect with the mind and body.

Quick switches can happen within just a few seconds or minutes. Slower switches can take minutes to hours. Quick switches are the desired switches for trauma programming.

Planned switching can also be called consensual switching. This is when two or more parts mostly agree before a switch occurs. A consensual switch might be planned ahead of time. For example, an alter who attends work, school, or church might plan to front during that scheduled event.

Forced switches may be a stronger alter pushing out in front of a weaker alter in a particular situation. If an alter is fronting and suddenly leaves the front due to stress or a trigger. Another part must front to prevent injury or embarrassment to the body. Having too many triggers can result in rapidly switching between alters. Not only can this be highly disorienting for all parts but it also disrupts memory formation, short term memory and concentration.

Rapid switching, sometimes called rapid cycling, rollexing (dated), cascade switching, or carousel-switching, is when several parts front in quick succession. This can involve several alters fronting over the course of an hour or even within a few minutes. It can be highly disorienting for those involved and can interfere with memory formation, concentration, and remaining hidden. Rapid switching seems to be triggered when there is information/event that can impact the entire system. Members of the system don't know how to respond or several try to respond at once.

Triggered switches occur as a response to a strong emotional reaction. Triggered switches are not planned or wanted by the system outside of TBMC. This is the most common type of switching used in programming for TBMC.

The size of a system also influences the ability someone will have to be able to track their switching. For those with a smaller or straightforward system, it may be easier to identify who is switching. For those who are \*poly-fragmented or with a more complex system, it may be impossible as some parts are fragments, some have no names, some are layered across others, etc.

Switching occurs to keep the system functioning and safe. Everything in the system happens for a reason, even if we do not know what it is. It is usually a defensive response to anything the system deems threatening.

Switching can be tiring and can take a lot of energy depending on the amount of switching and who is switching in and out. When a part is switching, the body can develop a headache.

### **Sleep-Hidden Switching**

Sometimes individual's will believe they are sleeping hours daily or taking frequent naps. When in reality the host is sleeping. Other parts of the system will front and go about their own day. When the parts are finished with their tasks, they lay down, go back to sleep. A few minutes (or hours) later, the host wakes up, with no awareness that other parts were out and active during the time they were sleeping.

*Some indicators of sleep switching are:*

- The host can feel like they were dreaming.
- They may wonder why they aren't feeling rested.
- Parts aren't aware of the loss of time from the other parts of the system.
- Or the parts "thought" they were resting, and would say, yes, they were doing that, but when they actually think about it, they don't remember actually doing it.

Getting to know parts on the other side of the sleep barrier is important.

*Questions to ask for sleep switching:*

- Are these parts hiding?
- What are they doing when they are out?
- Are they going anywhere?
- What are the reasons they feel they need to make you “sleepy”?
- What are they doing that they think you need to be asleep for?
- Do they have their own lives completely outside of your awareness?
- What do they know that you don’t know?
- Is a trauma reenactment that is occurring?

## **Switching And Passive Influence**

Passive influence is more common than switching, and it is more covert and difficult to notice. Switching is rarely as blatant or extreme as the media often portrays.

Passive influence can be described as intrusions from alters that are not currently prominent in the mind or using the body. It is not always necessary for the individual to undergo a full switch in terms of the part fronting entirely. Instead, an alter is able to exert a passive influence on the alter who is currently at the front or in control. These passive actions are often expressed through emotions, opinions, feelings and actions which often vary in their influence and strength. Thus, another alter is able to influence the part in control to make certain decisions or voice certain opinions that the individual is unable to account for or explain.

Memories that are transmitted through passive influence may not remain once the influence is over, leaving the fronting alter unable to recall what they may have previously been able to. On the other hand, passive influence may also lead to certain memories, emotions, sensations, or views becoming inaccessible to the fronting alter until the influence ends.

### **What Triggers a Switch**

The causes of switching vary but typically they will fall into one of four categories and overlap.

**Stress:** When someone is under duress, one of his/her alters often emerges to help, to ease tension or pain, to solve a problem, or give the primary personality a break.

**Memories:** For all of us, memories can evoke strong feelings, and for people living with DID, they can trigger switches.

**Strong emotions:** A sudden onset of emotion, either positive or negative, can cause alters to take the dominant spot in the personality system.

**Sensory input:** Sights, sounds, smells, textures, and tastes can lead to switches between parts.

All of the senses and categories are used in programming to the programmers benefit.

## **Forcing and Triggering an Alter to Switch**

*\*Forcing a switch is a violation of a system's safety and protection.*

Forcing a switch teaches a system that they have no control over what is occurring. Feeling out of control can lead parts to feel helplessness and powerlessness, feelings they have already experienced from trauma. Attempting a system to force a switch can be irresponsible, inconsiderate, rude, and lead to members of the system not feeling safe around you. Alters are not created for the entertainment of others. They were created for survival.

### *Negative Trigger Example:*

If a system is confronted with the possibility of abuse or violence, a protector part could be triggered to protect or absorb the abuse.

### *Positive Trigger Example:*

If a system is at a shopping centre and a little sees a favourite toy in a store.

### **Some examples of forced switches are:**

- Asking for or trying to force a different alter to front.
- Attempting to trigger your favourite alter to come forward.
- Asking the name of the alter who is currently fronting. **\*\***(They may want to stay hidden)
- Purposely bring up topics to intentionally get a part to front.
- Intentionally startling the part that is fronting.
- Intentionally stating trigger phrases.

### **Observable Signs of Switching**

- Staring blankly.
- Clearing one's throat before speaking.
- Heavy blinking
- Handwriting changes.
- Change in vocabulary.
- Change in the pitch of their voice.
- Change in temperament.
- Change in preference.
- Change in opinion.
- Different functional abilities or skills.
- Change in syntax.
- Lack of eye contact.
- Deep breath/sighing.
- Look around the room as if unaware of their surroundings. (visible confusion)
- Clock watching to maintain time orientation.
- Mild twitching or jerks.
- Not remembering anything that just happened.
- Complaining of a mild or moderate headache.
- Adjusting clothing or posture.

### Switching Characteristics (Internal)

- Headache.
- Pressure inside the head.
- Stiff neck - (usually not as intense as with memory retrieval).
- Pressure at the base of the head - (less intense than with memory retrieval).
- Pupil dilation.
- Pressure behind the eyes.
- Auditory or visual disturbances
- Blurry vision - (clears, then becomes blurry).
- Eyes become - (watery or glassy, glazed in appearance), (eyes can also appear reddened without memory retrieval. Reddened eyes without memory symptoms means that a part is functioning that has repressed materials attached to it.)
- Eyes more sensitive to light.
- Lightheadedness or dizziness.
- Chills.
- Ears ring.
- Emotionally feeling more child-like.
- Mood swing - a change in mood.
- Thought patterns change - thoughts change about the same subject and your response changes with it.
- Feelings and emotions change about the same situation.
- Objects and people look different - dimensions are off, colours can look brighter or dimmer.
- Body looks and feels detached.
- Time begins to skip. (indicating minor episodes of time loss).
- Face looks and feels detached.
- Face looks different in the mirror.
- Laughter changes - different laughs, subtle differences to flagrant.
- Light in a room changes to suddenly brighter or dimmer.
- Fainting feelings - physically like you might lose consciousness.
- Inability to concentrate and think clearly.
- Urgency to "do something".
- Thoughts become louder.
- Orchestra of thoughts or "conversations," all with opposing views.
- Difficulty concentrating, processing information, or thinking clearly.
- Shivers.
- Triggered Response

## **Internal Programmes In TbmC That Lead To Switching**

*This list does not note every internal program that exists, not all these programs will be in a system.*

During programming the child is conditioned by the use of drugs, torture, and cues/triggers to switch smoothly when they are prompted. The switches must be immediate and undetectable to outsiders who are unaware of the system.

**Blend Programming**-Switching will occur to match the outside incident to keep programming hidden. These switches are intended to be smooth. (Base Program)

**Carousel Programming**-A circular sequence designed to confuse alters and fragments inside. This program is linked to spin and confusion programming internally.

This may also be used to punish internal parts by spinning them on a carousel if they disclose information. Carousel Programming is used within Spirit Man Programming to facilitate a switch between “spirit parts” of the individual. (Spiritual programming/Carousel system)

**Heartless Programming**-The alter believes their heart has been removed. The alters who are programmed not to have hearts may believe they are dead, and are not human. Parts are programmed to dissociate, rapidly switch if someone attempts to prove to them that they have a heart. Other body programs may run as well.(Wizard of Oz programming, Tin Man alter, Spiritual programming)

**Janus 2 (Two) Programming**-Is used in alters for facial memory and recognition. This program assists with smoother transitions if there is a switch, the alter who is in control may not know the individual they are speaking with but with Janus 2 they will have a sense of recognition. (Government programming)

**Protection By Trance Programming**-The host, and any alter that switches to the front will dissociate if there is an unauthorised attempted access to the system. (Government programming)

**Rapid Switching Programs**-This program is a system defence, once enacted; an alter may not be able to finish a sentence without switching three to four times. This creates for the alter an inability to function. Dizziness, fainting, aggression, and in extreme cases death may occur. The system must be ‘reset’ or heavy sedation administered. (Base program)

**Scramble Programming**-These programs are intended to confuse, disorganise and block the system, emerging memories, thought processes, and/or incoming information. Often, there are specific alters designated by the programmer to perform this function. This programming reduces the system ability to switch, speak, write, draw, read, or remember previous therapy sessions and work. These programs target therapeutic language, and spiritual language. For example, the incoming words or visual images of the speaker may be scrambled or garbled. The effect will be the alter experiences the individual as looking and sounding threatening, abandoning, or incompetent. (Base program)

**Time Clock Programming**-Programming that covers the time alters were on a mission. When the individual switches nothing is remembered of the time lost.

### **Alters in TBMC That Assist with Switching**

*This list does not note every part/alter that exists, not all these parts will be in a system.*

**Commander Alters**-Alters that keep the switching smooth, and to keep things orderly. They also will lead the groups of alters that defend the system.

**Front Alters**-Alters placed on the top level. These alters interact with the ‘world’, and are often unaware of the rest of the system. These front alters switch regularly with the different alters in normal daily situations. These ‘front alters’ they “live” in the front where they can, at any given moment, “take the body” Some alters won’t know their age and sometimes have no name. Some front alters are trained to watch and guard against other alters attempting to break programming.

**Type 4: Gatekeeper Alters**-An alter who controls switching or access to front, access to inside or certain areas inside, or access to certain alters or memories for a specific group of alters, (littles, eating disordered alters, sexually abused alters). They can help to prevent traumatic memories from being known.

**Shell Alters**-Hide alters from being discovered by outside individuals who are not allowed to be aware of that alter of the system. Shell alters prevent therapists from talking to other alters about what has occurred. A shell alter may assist with fluid switching, this assists with the DID remaining undetected.

\*A polyfragmented system is a term used to describe a person with Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) or Other Specified Dissociative Disorder (OSDD) who has a large number of alters, or parts.

\*\*Each system, and part, should determine whether they are comfortable with giving someone on the outside their. A name identifies who we are, it has meaning and value, and some alters in a system might not be ready to be revealed. This also includes mentioning the name of an alter to bring him or her forward.