

## CHAPTER 14: DISSOCIATIVE EXPERIENCES

### KEY TERMS

#### **Abreaction**

The intense re-experiencing of traumatic events.

#### **Age regression**

In hypnotherapy, the recreation of the physical and mental state that a client was in prior to experiencing any trauma in order to help the individual recall events during earlier stages of his or her life.

#### **Alter identities**

The identities that develop after the onset of dissociative identity disorder.

#### **Childhood abuse**

The physical or psychological maltreatment of a child.

#### **Complex PTSD**

Often associated with early age interpersonal trauma and with dissociative symptoms from that early age.

#### **Continuous amnesia**

A memory disturbance where there is an inability to recall events from a specific time up to and including the present.

#### **Depersonalization disorder**

Feelings of detachment or estrangement from the self (such as living in a dream or standing outside of oneself, watching oneself).

#### **Dissociative amnesia**

An inability to recall important personal information that is usually of a stressful or traumatic nature.

#### **Dissociative identity disorder (DID)**

A dissociative disorder characterised by the individual displaying two or more distinct identities or personality states that take turns to control behaviour (formerly known as multiple personality disorder).

#### **Epilepsy**

A disorder of the nervous system characterized either by mild, episodic loss of attention or sleepiness or by severe convulsions with loss of consciousness.

#### **False recovered memories of trauma**

The recovery of repressed childhood memories of trauma that did not actually occur.

#### **Generalised amnesia**

A failure of recall that encompasses the person's entire life, and such individuals may suddenly report to police stations or to hospitals as a result of this disorientation.

#### **Host identity**

The identity that existed before the onset of dissociative identity disorder.

#### **Hypnotherapy**

A form of therapy undertaken while the client is hypnotised.

**Localised amnesia**

When an individual is unable to recall events that occurred during a specific time period (e.g. memory loss for a period of 2 days following a serious car accident).

**Psychoanalysis**

An influential psychological model of psychopathology based on the theoretical works of Sigmund Freud.

**Psychodynamic theories**

See psychodynamic approaches

**Psychodynamic therapy**

Therapeutic approach which focuses on procedures designed to bring repressed thoughts and memories into consciousness where they can be effectively dealt with.

**Reality monitoring**

A form of source monitoring required to distinguish mental contents arising from experience from those arising from imagination.

**Reconstructive memory**

A concept of a cognitive theory of dissociative symptoms which argues that an individual autobiographical memory is stored as a series of discrete elements associated with that experience (e.g. context, emotional state, sensory and perceptual features).

**Repression**

A basic psychodynamic defence mechanism that helps to suppress painful memories and prevent stressful thoughts.

**Selective amnesia**

A memory disturbance where an individual can recall some, but not all, of the events during a specific time period (e.g. a combat veteran may be able to recall some events during a violent military encounter, but not others).

**Sodium amobarbital**

A drug which can be used concurrently with hypnotherapy to help clients recall past events.

**Sodium pentobarbital**

A drug which can be used concurrently with hypnotherapy to help clients recall past events.

**Source-monitoring ability**

The ability to recall the relevant elements of an autobiographical experience from memory.

**State-dependent memory**

A well-established cognitive phenomenon in which the individual is more likely to remember an event if he or she is in the same physiological state as when the event occurred.

**Systematic amnesia**

A memory disturbance where there is a loss of memory that relates to specific categories of information, such as family history.

**Therapeutic constructions**

The view that the multiple personalities found in dissociative identity disorders are merely constructions of the therapeutic process.