**Dissociative disorders are a range of conditions that can cause physical and psychological problems.**

Some dissociative disorders are very short-lived, perhaps following a traumatic life event, and resolve on their own over a matter of weeks or months. Others can last much longer.

Someone with a dissociative disorder may have problems with:

Dissociation

Dissociation is a way the mind copes with too much stress. People who dissociate may feel disconnected from themselves and the world around them.

Periods of dissociation can last for a relatively short time (hours or days) or for much longer (weeks or months).

Many people with a dissociative disorder have had a traumatic event during childhood. They may dissociate and avoid dealing with it as a way of coping with it.

Dissociative disorders of movement and sensation

Dissociative disorders of movement or sensation include convulsions (seizures), [paralysis](http://www.nhs.uk/conditions/Paralysis/Pages/Introduction.aspx), and loss of sensation.

There doesn't appear to be a physical cause, but it seems to be the result of a communication problem within the brain.

The symptoms are sometimes confused with neurological disorders like epilepsy or stroke.

Dissociative amnesia

Someone with dissociative amnesia will have periods where they can't remember information about themselves or events in their past life. They may also forget a learnt talent or skill.

These gaps in memory are much more severe than normal forgetfulness and aren't the result of an underlying medical condition.

Some people with dissociative amnesia find themselves in a strange place without knowing how they got there. They may have travelled there on purpose, or wandered in a confused state.

These blank episodes may last minutes, hours or days. In rare cases, they can last months or years.

Dissociative identity disorder

Dissociative identity disorder, or multiple personality disorder, is an unusual disorder.

Someone diagnosed with dissociative identity disorder may feel uncertain about their identity and who they are.

They may feel the presence of other identities – each with their own names, voices, personal histories and mannerisms.

Typical symptoms include:

* feeling like a stranger to yourself
* feeling like there are different people within you
* referring to yourself as "we"
* behaving out of character
* writing in different handwriting