

Conference Agenda
February 4th-6th
Orlando, FL



Throughout the conference, you can visit our calming and grounding links if you need a break. During down times, you can hang out in the “lobby” with other attendees or visit the message board.

Saturday February 5th:

***Optional Pre-Conference Activities**

8:00-8:45 AM Gentle Yoga, Grounding, and Meditation Class by Cynthia Herzog LCSW

9:00-9:15 AM Welcome by An Infinite Mind Board Member Jaime Pollack

9:15-10:45AM

Key Note Presentation



**Creative Healing in the Face of Trauma, Grief, and Dissociation
By Larry Ruhl**

Attempting to comprehend and digest the complex trauma I endured as a child felt like an abyss with no hope for light. I resisted and resented therapy, eventually giving in as my hopelessness grew. Hearing my therapist’s words of “Slower is Faster” did not initially offer much optimism. Over the course of fifteen years, I worked to navigate the intricate roads of addiction, rage, suicidal ideation, gender and sexuality confusion, and learning to live with the intolerable. Through lived experience, I will share the unexpected pitfalls and the victories of recovery along with the creative process which sustains me today.

10:45-11:00 AM: Break

11:00-12:30 PM Breakout Sessions

∞ Dissociation: A developmental model by Doris D’Hooghe and Layla Brack

Trauma and dissociation are inevitable intertwined. Researchers have observed that trauma affects different aspects of the personality (e.g., neurobiology). A redefinition of dissociation presents itself: a “disruption” of development on different levels of the personality. The developmental stage in which trauma occurs determines which aspects of the personality are damaged and how these damaged aspects can be classified into corresponding dissociative continuums (e.g., the dissociative neurobiological continuum). These continuums also involve a development in which the client can move between freeze and hypo-freeze. Our therapeutic integration model includes a formal assessment that underlies a unique variable treatment.

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∞ **The Trauma Survivor's Toolbox: EFT, Mindfulness Practices, & Grounding by Lindsay Kincaide LMHC**

In this presentation, participants will receive an overview of theory and techniques that regulate the nervous system (fight/flight/freeze), reduce the impact of emotional/physical flashbacks, and restore a sense of well being to the mind and body. These include Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT), mindfulness based stress reduction, and grounding. All strategies are evidenced-based and rooted in mind-body theory. A basic overview of the brain and nervous system as they pertain to trauma will also be provided.

∞ **The Dissociation Made Simple Project: Smashing Stigma with Lived Experience by Jamie Marich, Ph.D., LPCC-S, LICDC-CS, REAT, RYT-500**

Advocate Dr. Jamie Marich shares preliminary research interview findings from her most recent book project, *Dissociation Made Simple*. A passionate advocate seeking to tear down the “us vs. them” wall that exists between clinical professionals and those with dissociative disorders, Marich used the research method in which she trained during her doctoral work (phenomenology) to investigate lived experience of people with dissociative experiences. Professionals, survivors, and some identifying as both, were asked to answer the same eight questions about dissociation. Receive a glimpse into what this project is revealing and what the implications are for advocacy and smashing stigma.

∞ **Getting to Know Your System Through the Mapping Process by Robin Lickel LPC and Gala Rose**

Becoming familiar with your system of self-states (or parts or alters) can lead the way to facilitating fluid internal communication and cultivating collaboration. A survivor and her therapist have gone through the mapping process and will discuss different options and resources available.

12:30-1:45 PM Lunch Break

12:30-1:45PM *Optional Chat and Chews*

Grab your lunch and come join one of our chat and chews. Meet with your fellow attendees to discuss what is on your mind. These are moderated by mental health professionals.

∞ Supporter

∞ Survivor

∞ Therapists *with* DID

∞ Therapists *who treat* DID

2:00-3:30 PM Breakout Sessions

∞ **Maladaptive Daydreaming and DID by Dr. Colin Ross M.D.**

Dr. Ross will describe maladaptive daydreaming (MD), including its clinical features, diagnostic criteria and research measures for it, all of which have been published. MD is different from normal daydreaming because it occupies many hours per day, causes distress and dysfunction and has a compulsive or addictive quality to it. People with MD have very structured and detailed inner worlds, with characters and plots and they are usually a character in the inner world. Some people with DID have both alter personalities and inner worlds that resemble MD. The overlap and differences between MD and DID will be discussed.

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∞A Life After Trauma: Raising Children While Healing with D.I.D. by Lizabeth, Brady, and Emily Casada

Raising children while you deal with the effects of the trauma AND D.I.D. is hard. My children were 10 and 6 when I was introduced to D.I.D. and my system. I couldn't explain to them what was happening, I worried daily and I didn't have any idea how it would shape their lives. My adult children, Emily (23) and Brady (19), have graciously agreed to join me as co-presenters. I will discuss what it was like to raise them while healing from the trauma and they will speak of their experiences growing up, and how my D.I.D. has affected them.

∞Yes! You can have OSDD/DID and Be a Therapist! By Melissa Parker LMHC, Peyton Cram M.S.Ed., LPCC, LCDC III, REAT, Colleen Walsh M.Ed., LPC, CPRP , and Phoenix Collective MSW
Amid a global pandemic, a group of therapists with OSDD/DID met virtually at the 2021 Healing Together conference. What has transpired since has been nothing short of amazing. Over the past year we have established a supportive online community of 'therapists with'. We share our struggles and successes, and are committed to co-creating a new kind of online community. Join us as we discuss the value of peer support, how we balance being both survivors and therapists, and how our experiences of being therapists living with dissociation can benefit our clients.

∞ Shame as a block to recovery: How to treat it and get past it by Lynn Harris LMHC-QS

Not addressing shame in trauma recovery can bog down one's progress. Yet, it is a tricky thing to work with without being triggered or triggering. This presentation will explain why treating shame is a crucial, but sometimes missing, element in trauma treatment. It will cover how shame functions as an emotion, how it is tied to unresolved trauma and shows up in the body and in cognitions, and what the implications are for treatment. Current best practices for effectively working with shame will be shared. This presentation is geared towards both individuals in recovery and treating professionals.

3:30-3:45 PM: Break

3:45-5:15 PM Breakout Sessions

∞ Navigating the F Word. Creative ways of reintroducing the concept of "Family" by Larry Ruhl
When survivors want to speak out, they are all too frequently asked to remain silent, not cause trouble, and keep secrets. More often than not, our families of origin betray us in ways which leave further damage and add to our sense of shame, feelings of rage, and loneliness. We can be left feeling like outcasts. In this session, we will explore ways of creating your own sense of family, finding safety in intimacy, and discuss techniques for healing old familial and societal wounds. Visual examples of creative methods will be shown..

∞ Innovative, evidence-driven holistic methods for trauma resolution: Ecotherapy & more! By Dr. Darlene Williams PhD and Chris Hrabovsky C.H

Research in recent years has consistently shown the effectiveness of including holistic treatments for trauma resolution, especially with respect to the physiological residue that makes sticking to traditional talk therapy so difficult. An additional issue is the sustainability of trauma counselors. Join us for a dynamic & experiential presentation of the hows, whys, and whats of holistic treatments for trauma residue, including ecotherapy, simple vagus nerve exercises & more! Participants will leave with exercises they can immediately utilize for calming/grounding, & learn about new technologies available. Exercises presented give individuals tools to manage symptomology.

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∞ **Attachment Trauma as a Root Cause of DID: One Woman’s Journey by Vivian Conan**

For decades, Vivian lived in a fantasy world more real to her than the “real” world. She called this world the Atmosphere. It was populated by kindly beings—separate from her DID parts—who watched over her and understood her. Letting go of the Atmosphere and learning to connect with “real” people was a necessary first step in Vivian’s healing from DID, but some of her DID parts clung fast to it. Vivian discusses the relationship between her attachment disorder (manifested by the Atmosphere) and her dissociation. She also discusses maladaptive daydreaming, relational trauma, and what healing looks like.

∞ **Supporters Aren't Just Scaffolding by Miriam Showalter, Chenille Cavazos, Brenda Jennings, and Jim Bunkelman**

Supporting a friend, family member, or significant other with DID includes an array of blessings and challenges. In addition to our personal needs and struggles, we may at times become overwhelmed with those of our loved ones. The last thing a supporter needs is to feel all alone in the universe, but (ironically?) it happens all too often. We four are here to share our journeys as supporters and to give some practical suggestions for developing a system of support for yourself, in your all-important role. You. Matter.

***Optional Post-Conference Activities**

These sessions are not CEU sessions.

∞ **The Healing Power of Call-and-Response: An Introduction to Chanting and Kirtan by Jamie Marich Ph.D., LPCC-S, LICDC-CS, REAT, RYT-500 and Heather Scarboro M.Ed., LCMHC, LCAS, NCC**

Many global traditions use the powerful musical form of call and response. In this presentation, two helping professionals with dissociative experiences of life will present an introduction to chanting and Kirtan (communal call-and-response) from the traditions of India. Both have studied formally in these systems, and have lived experience to share on how chanting helps them to heal. Participants will have the option to just listen or to engage in the experiential elements of call-and-response chanting and singing woven into the workshop. Implication for use in clinical and other healing settings, especially with dissociative minds, are reviewed.

∞ **Healing Dance Session by Amy Beckler LCSW, RYT-200**

Amy mindfully leads you through a healing movement journey that guides you from your mind and into your body. We'll start with a grounding meditation, set our intentions, and then move with the elements and the chakra (energy points) system to experience communication and healing beyond words. Amy creates a customized playlist to support our movement journey and invites you to bring a journal to write down any insights after our session. You will leave feeling grounded, connected, and renewed.

∞ **Creating with Words by Rev. Lyn Barrett, M.Div., M.Ed., Gabriell Sacks PhD, and Cathy Collyer**

This workshop will introduce participants to writing as a healing craft, with an introductory writing exercise and panelists who will share a piece of their writing and what writing has meant for them on their healing journeys. Dissociative Writers began meeting virtually in March 2021 in two separate writers’ workshops. Our vision is to provide safe groups to support one another in our writing as survivors and people with dissociative disorders, and to encourage the creativity that helped us survive to tell our stories.

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Sunday February 6th



*Optional Pre-Conference Activities

8:00-8:45 AM **Gentle Yoga, Grounding, and Meditation Class by Cynthia Herzog LCSW**

9:00-10:30AM Breakout Sessions

∞ **Is Forgiveness a Goal? By Rev. Lyn Barrett, M.Div., M.Ed.**

Some therapeutic models and religious traditions emphasize forgiveness as a pathway to healing. This workshop will examine some of those models, investigate whether forgiveness models are appropriate for chronic childhood trauma, and consider alternative models that do not place emphasis on forgiveness. Participants will be given the freedom to explore whether forgiving a perpetrator is a goal they wish to set or whether other therapeutic goals are more pressing and conducive to long-term recovery

∞ **Staying In The Room: Managing Medical And Dental Care When You Have DID by Cathy Collyer, OTR, LMT, CAPS**

Medical and dental treatment can be extremely difficult for adults with DID. They often avoid treatment, or suffer through it silently. This presentation offers a different approach to receiving the care they need and deserve. Participants will learn how to build a new kind of "toolkit", with useful stabilization techniques, healthy self-care skills, effective methods to communicate with providers, and ideas to adapt treatment procedures that decrease dissociation and discomfort. Treatments discussed will include ER visits, surgeries, and pelvic/prostate exams. Note: descriptions of specific procedures may be triggering; participants need to use wise self-care during the presentation.

∞ **Epigenetics: The science of how trauma changes the brain and how healing is possible by Dr. Anna Rosenhauer PhD**

Ever wonder how traumatic experiences alter the body and brain? Epigenetics is one way that external experiences are written into cells and can provide insight into the impact of trauma and mechanisms for healing. From the perspective of a neuroscientist and survivor, this session will explore mechanisms of epigenetics, discuss well-documented epigenetic markers of trauma, and explain how epigenetics both validates traumatic experiences and provides hope for healing. With this information, we can better understand why trauma is so impactful, how healing experiences change the brain in beneficial ways, and how a high adverse childhood experiences score can be overcome.

∞ **When Disaster Strikes: How Can We Help? By Kim Snow LMFT**

Drawing on her work with victims and their families at Pulse, Parkland, Surfside, hostage events, and many hurricane, tornado and fire incidents, the presenter will discuss the difference between single episode disasters and long term trauma. Interventions that can help reduce the possibility of long term dissociative and PTSD symptoms after a disaster will be discussed. Part presentation and part dialogue, participants can discuss their own experience witnessing these events via media. We will discuss ways to heal from this witnessing and reduce the numbing and callousness that can occur with the escalating numbers of violent disasters. Due to the nature of the disasters presented, injuries and deaths will inevitably be discussed (but not focused on).

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10:30-10:45 AM: Break

10:45-12:15 PM: Breakout Sessions

∞ **Psycho-structures and Healing: One Woman's Journey Using Art to Heal From DID By Gabriell Sacks, PhD**

As a survivor of trauma and C-PTSD, my healing journey has taken a circuitous path. Through writing, music, and art, I strive to create a coherent narrative of my life. Building "psycho-structures" enables me to create symbolic representations of the traumas I've experienced and to give voice to all parts of my self. My therapist expertly weaves these unique structures into our therapy, helping me to create safe places and to verbalize the unspeakable. During this presentation I will share my story and show how I use my "psycho-structures" to promote healing and reclaim my life.

∞ **Partners Healing Together: Tools for Survivor-Supporter Communication and Connection by Kim and Scott Kiesling**

The relationship between survivors and their supporters is crucial to a successful recovery. People bring preconceptions that can prevent them from working as a team for the survivor's continued recovery. Most importantly, the team needs to develop trust in both directions. This trust is especially important in very difficult or emergency circumstances such as an extreme dissociative event. This workshop provides strategies and effective communication to cultivate the trust needed to create your recovery team, successfully navigate emergencies, and develop actionable tools and strategies to have on hand. Ideally a workshop for survivors and supporters, either may attend singly.

∞ **Creative Resources for Working with Clients with DID by Marilyn Bennett LMHC, Wendy Whittington LMHC, Dale Eshelman LMFT, and Andrea Betting, LCSW**

In working with clients with DID, creative out-of-the-box resources often become necessary to help clients ground into the present, contain traumatic material, and learn to communicate effectively within their systems and with us, as therapists. We will share our favorite most creative tools and ideas.

∞ **Finding Safety In Sexuality: For Supporters and Survivors by Devora Goldman and Tasha Bianchi-Macaraig MSW**

Sexual functioning is often an area of extreme challenge for those with DID and their partners. Improved sexual functioning is important to increase a sense of bodily agency, to enhance psychological well-being, and to allow full participation in desired adult relationships. This presentation will educate participants on specific strategies to increase sexual functioning and safety for survivors and supporters. These strategies include advanced system mapping strategies for sexual functioning, internal system communication including integration of somatic and sensory awareness and processing, enhanced interpersonal communication strategies for consent in sexual practice, and discussion of partner's specific needs, concerns, and considerations.

****this session has the potential to be triggering for some survivors. You have the choice to leave this session at any time.***

12:15-1:30 PM: Lunch Break

12:30-1:45PM *Optional Chat and Chews*

Grab your lunch and come join one of our chat and chews. Meet with your fellow attendees to discuss what is on your mind. These are moderated by mental health professionals.

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1:45-3:15 PM: Breakout Sessions

∞ What I Learned From Naomi Osaka and Simone Biles by Bonnie Armstrong MA, ACC

Join us for a robust review and discussion of some of the events of the last year and how they can help us all grow, heal and learn. What do racism, misogyny, domestic violence, child abuse, sexual assault, harassment, climate change, DID, patriarchy, bullying and historical trauma have in common? What are the connections in addressing and healing all of them?

∞ Healing Relationships with the Self by Venn Khadyr

By learning to love each part of ourselves, we learn to fully love our whole self, and by extension are then able to love others outside ourselves more fully. This process of getting to know and love oneself plays out more theatrically within a system, and its impact on the mental health of the system is equally dramatic. Relationships within the system can take many forms, but each of them has an equal potential to heal. In this talk, we'll address the many shapes that in-system relationships can take, and our personal experience with healing through loving each other.

∞ Ask Your Body Not Your Brain by Theresa Haney MS LCAT BC-DMT

Dissociation is a brilliant and creative way to survive horrific pain. At age 58 this therapist woke to a dissociative disorder after 25 years in practice. It was after a session with a client that triggered her parts to come forward and seek help. The next 5 years was a journey of healing by learning to co-communicate, cooperate and eventually become co-conscious by mapping the system that protected her from birth. This workshop will focus on the power of embodiment to access parts frozen in time through breathwork and spiritual resourcing, and give a voice to the stories they hold. This workshop will be part didactic and part experiential.

∞ Myths & Malarkey! An Exploration of the D.I.D. Hogwash We've All Enjoyed by Madison Clell

This will be a comedic exploration of D.I.D. lies, myths, denial, and Terrible Ideas about this syndrome, either put out into the world at large or experienced internally. Audience members will be able to write down any whopping D.I.D. 'info' they've heard or experienced, and some of these will be shared. The goal is comradery and fun! Hoping for lots of laughter.

3:15-3:30 PM: Break

3:30- 4:00 PM: Closing by Jaime Pollack, Founder/Director of An Infinite Mind