



ONE WOMAN.  
NINE SPLIT IDENTITIES.

Many Sides of  
**JANE**

JAN 22



## **NAMI TV Show Discussion Guide**



**nami**

National Alliance on Mental Illness

## About the Show:

In the A&E series, “Many Sides of Jane,” (Premieres Tuesday, January 22, 2019 and airs each Tuesday for six weeks) a 28-year-old mother of two, Jane Hart, who was recently diagnosed with Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID), previously known as Multiple Personality Disorder, allows cameras into her life to follow her journey. Her more than nine identities, ranging in age from 6-28 years old, can appear at any time. Diagnosed only three years ago, she is on a journey to understand what caused her DID as well as figure out how she can best co-exist with her many “parts.” Throughout the series, Jane will be coming to terms with past abuses that occurred during her childhood and her relationship with her family under the watchful care of her clinical psychologist. This is a raw, unfiltered look at an extraordinary young woman who is learning how to live her life again with a rare, commonly misunderstood, disorder known as Dissociative Identity Disorder.

<https://www.aetv.com/shows/many-sides-of-jane>



\*\*\*Photo Credit: A&E Network

## About Jane:

Jane Hart is a 28-year-old loving mother of two, an author, a public speaker and mental health activist. Born and raised in Boise, ID; Jane currently resides there with her two beautiful sons. Three years ago, Jane was diagnosed with Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID), previously known as Multiple

Personality Disorder, which has impacted her life in ways she never could have imagined. One of the exclusive causes of DID is repeated childhood trauma to which Jane has unfortunately endured. Dubbing herself a “human information sponge,” Jane has spent countless hours researching the effects of trauma on the brain as well as learning as much as she can about DID in the hopes of helping others.

Receiving her mental health diagnosis was tough on Jane both mentally and physically, but sharing her condition with a close friend was a turning point for her. Despite their close relationship, her friend assumed Jane was dangerous; damaging their friendship and leaving a lasting impact on Jane. This pivotal point in her life has inspired Jane to shine a light on the cause to diminish the stigma of mental illness, especially those living with DID.

Jane has embraced the opportunity to chronicle her life living with DID on the new docu-series titled “Many Sides of Jane” airing on A&E. Under the guidance of her therapist, Jane has currently identified over nine distinct identities or “parts” (as Jane refers to them) and she’s working to unlock the mysteries surrounding her trauma and to find internal harmony between her many sides.

Upon agreeing to participate in this rare and raw series, Jane made a promise to herself to be 100% open, real and honest, letting the world see that those suffering from DID still have the same hopes and dreams as everyone else. Jane’s goal in opening her life to the cameras is not only to erase the misconceptions about this highly stigmatized disorder but to also normalize mental illness and to spread truth about the silent epidemic of child abuse and its lasting effects on the human brain. Jane feels there is power in sharing her story and it is her mission to help others realize mental health is just as important as physical health. Those struggling with DID are special, smart and unique; they deserve compassion, kindness and understanding.

# Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)

## What is DID and how common is it?

Dissociative identity disorder (DID), previously referred to as multiple personality disorder, is a dissociative disorder involving a disturbance of identity in which two or more separate and distinct personality states (or identities) control an individual's behavior at different times. When under the control of one identity, a person is usually unable to remember some of the events that occurred while other personalities were in control. The different identities, referred to as alters, may exhibit differences in speech, mannerisms, attitudes, thoughts and gender orientation. The alters may even present physical differences, such as allergies, right or-left handedness or the need for eyeglass prescriptions. These differences between alters are often quite striking.

A person living with DID may have as few as two alters or as many as 100. The average number is about 10. Often alters are stable over time, continuing to play specific roles in the person's life for years. Some alters may harbor aggressive tendencies, directed toward individuals in the person's environment or toward other alters within the person.

At the time a person living with DID first seeks professional help, he or she is usually not aware of their condition. A very common complaint in people affected by DID is episodes of amnesia, or time loss. These individuals may be unable to remember events

in all or part of a proceeding time period. They may repeatedly encounter unfamiliar people who claim to know them, find themselves somewhere without knowing how they got there or find items that they don't remember purchasing among their possessions.

**What causes DID?** Dissociative identity disorder is caused by extreme or chronic physical, sexual or emotional abuse, usually experienced during childhood. A majority of people who develop DID have histories of major, often life-threatening trauma during a key stage of childhood, usually before age 9. Like with other mental health conditions, they may also have a genetic, or biologic, predisposition for the condition. The person usually has a heightened ability to detach themselves from a situation.

**What are the symptoms of DID?** Often people living with DID are depressed or even suicidal and self-mutilation is common in this group. Approximately one-third of individuals affected complain of auditory or visual hallucinations. People with DID can have other co-occurring or co-existing mental health issues including depression, anxiety and PTSD, as well as self-harming behaviors such as risky sexual behaviors, cutting and other symptoms.

**More about DID:** While the causes are unknown, statistics show that DID occurs in 0.01 to 1 percent of the general population. DID is a serious mental illness that occurs across all ethnic groups and all income levels. It affects women nine times more than men. In addition to the dissociation—split personalities—individuals living with DID may also experience any of the following symptoms:

- Depression
- Suicidal Tendencies
- Anxiety and panic attacks
- Alcohol and drug abuse
- Confusion
- Memory problems
- Delusions
- Headaches
- Flashbacks
- Eating disorders
- Personality change
- Selective loss of memory
- Disorientation

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**What is dissociation?** Dissociation is a disturbance of thinking, awareness, identity, consciousness or memory. It can occur in people who have other mental health conditions in addition to DID including borderline personality disorder (BPD) and posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Some people have dissociative events that last only moments while others have experiences that last extended periods of time. There is an association between traumatic events and the process of dissociation.

## Mental Health Conditions are the leading cause of disability across the United States.

**What does treatment for DID look like?** Treatment for DID consists primarily of psychotherapy, often with hypnosis. The therapist attempts to make contact with as many alters as possible and to understand their roles and functions in an individual's life. In particular, the therapist seeks to form an effective relationship with any personalities that are responsible for violent or self-destructive behavior and to curb this behavior. The therapist aims to establish communication among the personality states and to find ones that have memories of traumatic events in an individual's past. The goal of the therapist is to enable the individual to achieve breakdown of the patient's separate identities and their unification into a single identity.

Retrieving and dealing with memories of trauma is important for a person living with DID, because this disorder is believed to be triggered by physical or sexual abuse in childhood. Young children have a pronounced ability to dissociate and it is believed that those who are abused may learn to use dissociation as a defense. In effect, the child slips into a state of mind in which it seems that the abuse is not really occurring to him or her, but to somebody else. In time, such a child may begin to emotionally and cognitively split into alternate identities. Research has shown that the average age for the initial development of alters is 5.9 years old. In individuals where dissociation is thought to be a symptom of another mental illness such as

borderline personality disorder (BPD) or posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD), treatment of the primary cause is of utmost importance.

### What can a friend or family member do to help someone who lives with DID?

What can a friend or family member do to help someone who lives with DID?

- Be informed. Learn all you can about DID.
- While a friend or family member can help and support a person living with DID, they need professional help to support their recovery process. You can help them locate a therapist who is trained and experienced in treating the condition and encourage them to attend therapy appointments regularly.
- Agree to attend a therapy appointment with your loved one, if he or she is open to it. The therapist can give you some more information about DID and help you find additional ways to help.
- If your friend or loved one living with DID “switches” to another alter, they may sound and act differently and this change can be abrupt. They may not know who you are. Introduce yourself if they don't know you and offer reassurance if they are frightened.
- Peer support is vitally important to many who live with mental illness. Therefore, you can encourage your loved one to join a support group for people living with DID or a peer support group for people living with mental illness, such as NAMI Connection Recovery Support Groups.
- Be aware of signs that your loved one might be at risk for suicide as this is not uncommon for someone affected by DID. If you think they may be at risk for harming themselves, call the Suicide Hotline at 1(800) 273-TALK, get them professional help as soon as possible or take them to the nearest emergency room.
- Be willing to simply listen if your loved one wants to talk. Listening without interruption and without judging when your friend or loved one wants to talk is extremely helpful. You don't need to try to solve their problems; just listen.



Even though most people engaging in treatment can successfully manage their condition less than half of the adults in the U.S. in need of mental health services have access to, or get, the support they need to recover.

## Discussion Questions

1. Being a single parent, what kinds of support do you think Jane—and others with DID—might need to that they can also receive appropriate mental health care?
2. How important is the relationship Jane has with her mental health care provider, Dr. Waters, and what does this mean to the progress of her recovery journey?
3. How important are the friendships and social relationships to Jane’s recovery journey?
4. What strikes you as the most surprising about Jane in the show?
5. What role do TV shows and creative projects, such as films, play in public education and awareness about mental health conditions?
6. What moment of the show or episode strikes you as being one of the more informative about DID?
7. There is so much discussion in the public dialogue on reducing the stigma of mental health issues. How do you see this show changing the conversation around mental health?
8. Are education and awareness the same? Is one more important than the other? How important do you feel an accurate portrayal of mental health is in shows such as *Many Sides of Jane*?
9. Why do you think research is important in terms of learning more about DID and other mental health conditions?
10. What do you think are some of the hopeful aspects of this series in terms of Jane’s journey?

[Read Jane’s Blog](#)



### About NAMI

NAMI is the National Alliance on Mental Illness, an association of hundreds of local affiliates, state organizations and volunteers who work in communities nationwide as part of the nation’s largest grassroots mental health organization. NAMI offers help and hope, improves lives, takes a stand and educates families and those living with mental illness.