Twitter Thread by Dr. Nicole LePera



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When we're raised in homes that are stressful, chaotic, unpredictable, or emotionally neglectful— we dissociate.

Dissociation is when we're physically present, but mentally gone. And struggle with having memories.

Here's why (■):

Our core need is to attach to a parent figure. This allows us to survive.

We also have an internal defense system that's developing in order to keep us safe.

Think of the defense system as an internal alarm signaling danger.

When a parent figure is shaming, abusive, has rage cycles, or is emotionally neglectful— this creates a conflict between our attachment & defense system.

Our nervous system is activated (to fight, flight, freeze or fawn.)

At the same time, our attachment system needs that connection.

Regardless of a parents behavior, we will always seem to be loved, accepted, and chosen by a parent figure.

This creates an internal conflict.

So, our brain copes with this conflict by dissociating.

It's a brilliant protection mechanism that allows us to: stay emotionally connected to our parent while also shielding (on a surface level) from what we're experiencing.

This causes an internal separation.

One part of us goes about daily life, interacts with people, & appears present.

Another part (all subconscious) is developmentally traumatized. Emotionally immature. And is deeply mistrusting.

We continue to dissociate into adulthood.

This looks like: chronic day dreaming, “spacing out,” feeling numb, losing chunks of time, or feeling like you’re “above” yourself— not actually in the body.

It’s common for people who’ve dissociated through childhood to lack memories. In my case, I have almost no childhood memories— just scattered “feelings” of what happened.

This isn’t because I had “severe” trauma.

It’s because I had long term emotional disconnection from a parent.

In moments where we feel the original core wound from a parent (in my case like I’m being emotional abandoned)— our defense system can come up to protect us.

When this happens, we regress into childlike behaviors (slamming doors, yelling, stomping around, name calling, giving silent treatment, pretending someone isn’t there.)

It’s healing to understand this isn’t actually you— it’s a PART of you.

This part of you is trying to keep you safe.

It’s stored the traumatic experiences & needs valuation, reassurance, & acceptance.

Not more shaming or rejection.

If you liked this thread, please vote in my polls. This subject was chosen by my Twitter community.

Appreciate you all.