**Module 6: Dissociative Disorders**

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

**6.1. Clinical Presentation**

* Describe dissociative disorders.
* Describe how dissociative identity disorder presents.
* Describe how dissociative amnesia presents.
* Describe how depersonalization/derealization presents.

**6.2. Epidemiology**

* Describe the epidemiology of dissociative disorders.

**6.3. Comorbidity**

* Describe the comorbidity of dissociative disorders.

**6.4. Etiology**

* Describe the biological causes of dissociative disorders.
* Describe the cognitive causes of dissociative disorders.
* Describe the sociocultural causes of dissociative disorders.
* Describe the psychodynamic causes of dissociative disorders.

**6.5. Treatment**

* Clarify why treatment for dissociative disorders is limited.
* Describe treatment options for dissociative identity disorder.
* Describe treatment options for dissociative amnesia.
* Describe treatment options for depersonalization/derealization disorder.

KEY TERMS

**Depersonalization**: A feeling of unreality or detachment from oneself, often described as an out-of-body experience where one observes their own thoughts, feelings, and physical being as if they were an outsider.

**Depersonalization/Derealization Disorder**: Characterized by recurrent episodes of depersonalization and/or derealization, where individuals feel detached from themselves or their surroundings, experiencing sensory changes and distortions of time, distance, and size/shape of objects.

**Derealization**: Feelings of unreality or detachment from the world, where familiar surroundings seem unfamiliar, and individuals feel emotionally disconnected from close friends or family members.

**Dissociative Amnesia**: Identified by the inability to recall important autobiographical information, usually of a traumatic or stressful nature. It includes localized amnesia, selective amnesia, systematized amnesia, and generalized dissociative amnesia.

**Dissociative Disorders**: A group of disorders characterized by disruption and/or discontinuity in consciousness, memory, identity, emotion, perception, motor control, and behavior, often appearing following significant stress or prolonged stress.

**Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID)**: Involves the presence of two or more distinct personality states or an experience of possession. The disorder is characterized by identity confusion/alteration, recurrent dissociative amnesias, and involuntary and unwanted possession-form identities causing significant distress or impairment.

**Final Fusion**: The stage in the treatment of dissociative identity disorder where all subpersonalities are fused into one unified self, leading to the complete loss of separateness among alternate identities.

**Generalized Dissociative Amnesia**: A rare and extreme form of dissociative amnesia where there is a complete loss of memory for most or all of one's life history, including identity, previous knowledge about the world, and well-learned skills.

**Hypnosis**: Used in the treatment of dissociative amnesia, it involves helping individuals recall dissociated memories, particularly traumatic experiences, by encouraging a controlled recall of these memories.

**Integration**: The ongoing process in treating dissociative identity disorder that involves merging subpersonalities into one personality, requiring awareness of the various subpersonalities and addressing their conflicts.

**Localized Amnesia**: A type of dissociative amnesia where an individual cannot recall events during a specific period, which can range from a short time immediately surrounding a traumatic event to months or years.

**Selective Amnesia**: A form of dissociative amnesia where an individual can recall some but not all details of events during a specific period.

**Subpersonalities**: In dissociative identity disorder, these are the distinct personality states or identities present in an individual, each with its own patterns of perceiving, relating to, and thinking about the environment and self.

**Systematized Amnesia**: A type of dissociative amnesia where an individual fails to recall a specific category of information, such as not remembering specific rooms in a childhood home or certain people.