

Disorder Differences in Systemmates

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Systemmates share the same brain, which often leads to the assumption that they're all affected the same by the brain itself. Its wiring, its abilities, and its disabilities. But symptom holders or those with intra-disorders are fairly common--at least in circles we run in--and they're not often talked about for fear of fakeclaiming or appearing ableist. We have headmates who are affected in all sorts of different ways by our disabilities. Some find things harder than others, while others actually find some tasks or symptoms easier to manage. It absolutely varies from headmate to headmate, which makes certain headmates better suited for fronting during certain times than others.

Merlin is more affected by our psychosis, particularly hallucinations, and xe tends to be more susceptible to paranoia. Mystery is a psychosis holder too, and has more positive symptoms like hallucinations than the rest of us, but is less affected negatively by it. It often hallucinates and falls into delusional thinking, but it's not really too bothered by it. So Mystery is a good choice for someone to front when we're having a psychotic episode. Sometimes, having Merlin cofront with Mystery makes it easier for Merlin to not be so susceptible to xyr symptoms.

I (Martin) have more obvious anxiety than the rest of us, and struggle much more in social situations. I'm much better at hyperfocusing on tasks, though. So I'm better suited for staying home and working on whatever the current project we have at the time, or keeping our to-do lists in check. Vince on the other hand is calm in most social situations that are more professional--so he's good for business meetings and such. In more casual conversation though, Vena and Merlin are much better at it and better suited to non-professional social groups.

Vince is an intra-NPD holder and also holds stronger symptoms of our BPD. He struggles immensely with perceived rejection, much more than the rest of us. But he also almost completely lacks empathy, which makes it much easier for him to be calm and logical in stressful situations. He finds it easier to help friends and those he cares about during stressful times because he's not weighed down by feeling their emotions--whereas the rest of us might break down from stress.

We talk a bit about mental disability differences in headmates more than those who differ physically. Somehow it seems more controversial to mention that we have headmates that differ with physical symptoms while even in safe system spaces. It seems like most people (us somewhat included) mainly think of symptom holders as a mental disorder thing--a line of thinking we're trying to dispel. Headmates can have different disabilities and symptoms of all kinds, and it's not ableist or "harmful" to know that and speak about it. Headmates with different conditions to the body need to be recognised more.

Mike needed a cane in his memories and he absolutely needs our cane when he fronts more than the rest of us. He feels more at home and like himself having a cane by his side here, though, so it's good we already had one. I (Martin) need it more too--my joints are just more prone to pain. But our cane folds up nicely into our bag, so if we switch out in public, it's always with us just in case. Even if it's silly, we feel safer having a cane too--I mean, it's a metal pole. We're out as trans and clearly not your Regular Society Member, so it provides some feeling of safety to have.

Jayfeather was blind before, and since coming here he sure can see now, but he's much more light sensitive than the rest of us. The feeling of being able to see was nice at first, even if it was foreign, but sometimes he feels it's not worth the hassle. He needs to wear sunglasses when fronting because his eyes just end up hurting from even small amounts of light. Crowley is the same, except he wasn't blind in his memories--he just got used to always wearing sunglasses in his life to hide how his eyes looked, and needs them here now. They're both more prone to migraines due to this.

Merlin is more shaky on his feet than others who front often. His legs are digitigrade and in headspace he has his wings and tail to balance him there--but in the body, he doesn't have any of that. His legs are the wrong shape and he has no counterweight to his posture. Even with our cane, he's more prone to tripping than most.

Mystery was a godlike being that didn't need to eat human food, or any physical food at all. It often forgets that eating, sleeping and going to the bathroom are things the body needs to do, because it doesn't often feel the need to do them. That can be good if we're running low on food, or if we can't eat for a while such as before a medical procedure though, so it's useful in its own way. Mystery is also not used to using its hands for intricate things like tying shoelaces, as it's hands before we're longer, bigger, and mainly nonphysical. It didn't need to be intricate, so it's hard for it to do things others in here can.

There's so many more examples in our system. The thing is, there can be positives and negatives to any disorder, really--and headmates are no different with that. We don't necessarily assign headmates "roles" or "jobs" based on their symptoms or lack thereof, but for us to function better as a collective, people tend to gravitate toward doing certain things they know others can't. It's important for us to know how we differ with our disabilities, and work around them together as best we can.

Systemmates with different symptoms aren't uncommon, and they're not mocking disabled people, or lying for some benefit. I'd argue that for some systems with symptom holders or intra-disorder holders, it's incredibly important to know about how you differ and how to work together to be functional--whatever functional means for you.