

How to Talk to Medical Professionals About Plurality

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Content Warnings:

- General medical language.
 - Implied ableism.
 - Integration mention.
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This is a post we decided to make due to the abundance of plurals we see looking to talk to a medical professional about their system--either for a diagnosis or for help with inner-system management--but not knowing where to start. This is based on personal experience as well as some input from others in the community, but is not a fail safe. Also keep in mind that you don't have to tell anyone about anything if you don't want to, especially if it's not safe to do so.

Firstly, decide if you want to come out. Does your medical professional understand plurality at all? Would they be open to learning if not? These things can be hard to figure out, but they're important. In our experience, we've had a few psychologists know nothing about plurality and we've had to explain to them our experiences and how it all works, but in the end, they ended up being the most accepting of us. Take your time to see if you feel like they'd be accepting or not.

Good signs of someone who might accept plurality include:

- They're already very accepting of your experiences and seem to listen well.
- They don't dismiss you or anything you say.
- Knowledge/acceptance of other similar topics, or even just acceptance of "weird" things in general.

Switch to someone else if you need to. This is important. If you're being dismissed or having things pushed onto you that you don't want, you need to find a new person to talk to. If you feel unsafe at any point, know that it's perfectly okay to change to another psychologist/doctor/etc if it's possible for you. It's your health and you decide what you want to do with it.

Get ready for questions. Most likely, they're going to ask you questions about your experiences. Questions about how many people in your system there are, what terms you use to describe yourselves, how long you've known of your system and maybe even if you know why you're plural. Be patient and explain as much as you feel you need to.

Be open and honest. You need to be honest about your experiences, wants and goals from the beginning. Do you want to be referred to by a collective name? Do you want them to ask who's fronting during sessions? Do you want a referral to a specialist? These things need to be put out there from the beginning so the person you're speaking to can know how to move forward with helping you. Make it very clear if you want to integrate or not, if you want a diagnosis, what you want help with, etc.