

Common terms used in plural spaces

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This is a non-comprehensive dictionary of common terms used currently in plural spaces. Many dictionaries and glossaries are either not good enough for the current vernacular, or they are extremely heavily loaded with labels that are rarely used or redundant that make learning the lingo very intimidating. Hence this guide.

This guide is for only the 'essentials', the most common terms people use as of writing this that can let you get a foot in the door regarding all the hundreds of words plural folks use to describe themselves.

To reiterate: **Not every term that people use is going to be in here.** There are simply too many microlabels for that. This is ONLY a guide for the most common terms to avoid swamping folks who notoriously don't have the best memory in too much information.

Not everyone uses the terms listed, they may use their own words for the same concepts, or they may not use any words for those concepts at all. Its important to note that no one is required to adopt any term that may personally fit them. Use what sparks joy and is useful, don't use what you find uncomfortable or useless.

If there are terms you come across that are not listed here, asking the person who posted them to define the terms they are using is the recommended option. This also eliminates doubt as to what they mean, as not everyone uses the same definition for certain words. It is good practice to do this to ensure communication goes smoothly.

This will be broken up by category;

- **Basic Terms-** The ultimate barebones terms to know.
- **General Terms-** Other common general terms used.
- **Types of Systems-** Terms that describe a kind of system.
- **Types of Headmates-** Terms that describe a kind of headmate.
- **Misc-** Other miscellaneous terms.

Basic Terms:

- Plural- Someone who is 'more than one' in a body. Can be conjugated in many ways. This is an opt-in label, and not everyone who falls under it may consider themselves plural.
- Singlet- Someone who is not plural, or someone who is 'one mind one body'.
- System- The group of people within a body. May also commonly be called a collective, community, or household.
- System Name- A name for the system as a whole. Some systems have one, and some do not.
- Headmate- A entity inside a system. An inclusive community-made word and the generally preferred general term to use when speaking broadly of entities in systems. Other community words for the same are systemmate, inhabitant, or headvoice. Similar medical-origin words for the same are alter, part, personality, or ego state. Avoid applying medical oriented language to others without asking, as some find the language dehumanizing.
- Facet- A less separate/defined headmate. Aspect is a similar word. Fragment, and 'part with low elaboration' are medical origin terms for this and may be seen as dehumanizing or medicalizing to use without asking on others.
- Inner World- An internal space that represents ones psyche. Headmates may go here when not fronting. Not all systems have inner worlds, and they are not exclusive to plurality. An inner world may be anything from a temporary thought construct to aid communication to a place that is just as real as 'real life' to that system. An inner world may also be called an otherworld, headspace, wonderland, or mind palace.
- Outer World- 'real life'. The world outside the inner world. May also be called meatspace.
- Switching- The act of switching control of the body from one entity in a system to another.
- Fronting- The act of controlling the body. May also be called being out or piloting. When more than one headmate is controlling the body at a time, this is called co-fronting. Fronting is also frequently called driving or piloting.
- Co-consciousness- When more than one headmate is aware of what is going on but not necessarily fronting at a time. Frequently confused for co-fronting.
- Disassociation- The disconnection between a person and ones identity, agency, memories, emotion, body, or the world around them. Very common to plural folks, particularly those with dissociative disorders. Depersonalization, derealization, and dissociative amnesia are subtypes of this.

General terms:

- Blurry- A form of depersonalization where its hard to tell who is at front exactly. Usually considered a negative experience.
- Blendy- When two or more headmates are 'blending' together a bit for a short while, usually connotative of this happening at front. Some systems find this a negative experience similar to blurring, while others find it a positive one that lets one be closer to their headmate.
- Integration- The act of lowering dissociative barriers in a system. May be used interchangeably with Final Fusion by community members and therapists alike. This is because of the popular view in psychology that all plurals are just disassociated singular people who will acknowledge being only one person if you lower dissociation. As the community is aware of this, integration is often treated as the same thing as FF even if there is technically a difference.
- Final Fusion- The act of a system becoming a singlet by merging all the headmates into one entity and the only acknowledged treatment for DID. It may be shortened to FF. Living as a nondisordered plural system is often only considered as a last resort. This has a low success rate for working and often does not stick when it does work. Final fusion is a valid treatment goal, but its pushed on the community heavily as the Only treatment. Some systems see FF as a type of death, but others see it as healing. May also be called full integration, unification, or merging.
- Headpressure- A 'pressure' sensation in the head area associated with learning system skills like communication. Its theorized to be caused by blood moving around the brain in ways it usually doesn't. A common phenomenon particularly in tulpamancy circles where neural pathways have to be created wholesale.
- Losing Time- When one cannot remember chunks of time due to dissociative amnesia. This may be called timeloss or having blackouts.
- Passive Influence- When thoughts and emotions that another headmate has about something are experienced by the person at front briefly as if they are their own. May also be called thoughtleak, thoughtbleed, or bleedover.
- Role- A thing that a particular headmate does. Not all system or headmates use or have roles. Some systems find roles limiting or dehumanizing, while others find them useful to describe how their system works.
- Singletona- The 'singlet' presentation of a plural person. This is the person that the system pretends to be/masks as when not out about being plural. This singlet mask may be an actual person in the system or not.

- Splitting- The act of a headmate being created by 'splitting' a bit of personality off from another in the system. This is usually connotative of happening due to stress or otherwise adverse experiences. Some systems split headmates and some do not. Some simply have headmates form or appear, others only discover headmates that have always been there instead.
- Switch Trigger- A kind of trigger that makes a switch happen. Can be anything, positive or negative.
- Switching Headache- A headache brought on by a switch. A more severe form of headpressure. Unlike headpressure, a switching headache is not a good thing. May also be called a dissociation or fronting headache.
- Switching Type- A type of switch. Not all types of switches are listed, only broad common categories of switches. Switching may feel differently for different systems, between different headmates, or at different times.
 - Amnesiac Switches- Switches where a person does not remember what happened at front while they were switched out.
 - Covert Switching- The act of switching without realizing until after the switch has occurred.
 - Cycling- The act of switching multiple times in a short period. Can cause headaches in some people. May also be called rapid switching.
 - Possession- In the context of the tulpamancy community, this refers to a range of experiences between a kind of co-fronting where the tulpa has primary control while the tulpamancer is also still fronting and a 'possessive' switch.
 - Possessive Switch- A kind of switch where the person who switched out still is capable of making independent memory and thinking while not controlling the body at all. More common to spiritual systems. This may be described or explained with a variety of frameworks including but not limited to polyconsciousness, high dissociative barriers between headmates, or high parallel processing. These frameworks have additional connotations to them.
 - Non-Possessive Switch- A kind of switch where it feels like the person who switched out 'became' the person switching in. It may also feel like 'passing the I' to a headmate. This may be described or explained with a variety of frameworks which any given system may not fit into including but not limited to monoconsciousness, low parallel processing, everpresent I, continuous front, or low dissociative barriers between headmates. These frameworks have additional pieces and connotations to them.

Types of systems:

- Disordered System- A system that qualifies for a current plural-related dissociative disorder diagnosis or considers their plural experience disordered. Some may prefer to say they 'have a disorder' or that they are 'a system with a dissociative disorder' instead of saying they 'are disordered'. This does not necessarily correlate to origin beliefs. To qualify for any current dissociative disorder, the exclusion criteria must be met; that its not due to drugs/alcohol, that its not a spiritual or cultural thing, and it requires significant impairment or distress. Having a dissociative disorder is strongly associated with trauma, but its not a required component for diagnosis.
 - DID- Dissociative Identity Disorder. In the current iterations of the ICD and DSM, is characterized by being plural, switching, and in the DSM having dissociative amnesia(not necessarily for switching) beyond ordinary forgetting. The ICD does not require amnesia for diagnosis but notes that it typically occurs.
 - OSDD1- Other Specified Dissociative Disorder type 1. May be shortened to just OSDD. It is when a system does not fully meet the criteria for DID- for example not switching, or not having amnesia, or having undefined headmates. Its commonly thought that OSDD1 is broken into subtypes a and b, but this is only the case for its predecessor, DDNOS.
 - UDD- Unspecified Dissociative Disorder. A diagnosis for when there isn't enough information for another diagnosis. Often a temporary diagnosis, but not always.
 - P-DID- Partial Dissociative Identity Disorder. ICD-only diagnosis for disorderly nonswitching systems, or systems that switch very rarely and only under acute stress.
 - MPD- Multiple Personality Disorder. Old diagnosis for any multiple. MPD was on the books before the DSM required significant impairment or distress, so it is not a requirement for this disorder.
 - DDNOS1- Dissociative Disorder Not Otherwise Specified type 1. Old diagnosis for any system that didn't fully meet the criteria for DID in the DMVIV. DDNOS1 is also broken up into subtypes a and b, a being for systems with less defined headmates, and b being for those with no amnesia. DDNOS1a or DDNOS1b may also be stated as just DDNOS.
- Nondisordered System- A system that does not qualify for a dissociative disorder or does not consider their plural experience disordered. This does not necessarily correlate to origin beliefs. May also be called healthy multiplicity or healthy plurality in older contexts, as previously before the added exclusion criteria, all plurals were considered disordered. Those who were not distressed or impaired by their plurality claimed this label.
- Multiple- A plural system with strongly defined headmates. Connotative of claiming separate

personhood, but not always.

- Median- A plural system with less defined headmates. Connotative of not claiming separate personhood, but not always. Median systems may consider themselves multiple 'versions' of the same person or states of a single overarching person, but not always. May also be called a midcontinuum system.
- Hybrid System- A system with most multiple and median headmates. This is not used that often, and there are many proposed terms for this.
- Subgroup- A grouping of headmates in a system, which are grouped because of the way they function in relation to one another and the rest of the system. There are several frameworks for this based on slight differences in how they function and how the given wider system conceptualizes them.
 - Subsystem- A subgrouping where a headmate is a system unto themselves. Often a subsystem is a median system, but not always.
 - Layer- A medical word for a part of the system that is partitioned from the rest of the system in some way. Often a layer is thought of as being constructed above or below another layer of a system and communication difficulties between layers is common. Layers are common, but not exclusive to polyfragmented systems.
 - Sidesystem- A system that exists alongside another system within the same body.
 - Parallel System- Either a system that exists alongside another system within the same body or a system experiencing parallel existence within another body.
- Supersystem- The wider system within one body, encompasses all the inhabitants of the body of a system that has lots of subgroups. May also be termed as the greater system. In very complex systems with subgroups inside subgroups, polyplex may be used.
- Nonswitching System- A system that does not switch. Headmates may co-front, but the person at the front never leaves the front.
- Polyfragmented- A medical term for system with a large number of members, usually over a hundred- connotative of them being not fully separate entities or very complex and arranged in lots of subgroupings with communication or memory issues between them. It is sometimes shortened to polyfrag. Avoid applying medical oriented language to others without asking, as some find the language dehumanizing. Polyplural is a proposed community term for very large and complex systems to remove the medical stigma of polyfrag.

- Origin- The believed or theorized way as to how a system became a system or how a particular headmate formed. There are many origin terms, though only some broader umbrella categories will be listed as there are many specific microlabels. Some systems put a lot of stock in origins as an important part of their identity to label, and some do not.
 - Adaptive- A system that believes they became a system to adapt to something such as trauma or other neurodivergence. Traumagenic is a term for trauma origin, and many neurogenic systems(origin due to neurodivergence) count as adaptive as well.
 - Endogenic- An umbrella term for a system that believes they were formed from something other than trauma.
 - Created- A system that believes they became a system due to creation, often intentional. Parogenic is one general word for this, but many created systems do not like it and have their own words and subcommunities.
 - From Birth- A system that believes they have always been a system. They may attribute this to things such as spirituality or genetics. Some neurogenic systems consider themselves this kind of system. An older term is natural multiple.
 - Spiritual- A system that believes they formed due to spiritual or metaphysical origin, such as long term spirit possession or being born with multiple souls.
 - Gateway System- A type of spiritual system who's headspace is believed to be another world, or has a gateway to another world within it.
 - Mixed Origin- A system that believes multiple things contributed to becoming a system, or has headmates that formed from different types of things.
 - Soulbonding System- A type of often spiritual system that involves making a strong connection to fictional character until they become a headmate. This system type has its own subcommunity that evolved separately from the wider community and has its own terms and culture. Not all soulbonders consider themselves plural.
 - Tulpamancy System- A type of intentionally created system. This system type has its own subcommunity that evolved separately from the wider community and has its own terms and culture. Not all tulpamancers consider themselves plural.
 - Daemonism System- A type of created system that involves personifying an 'inner voice' in the shape of an animal. Not all daemians consider themselves plural.
- -Based- when a system has a particular thing heavily effecting their functioning as a system in some way. This may or may not align with their origin. Common -based terms are trauma-based, spiritual-based, and creation-based.

Types of headmates:

- Age Slider- A headmate that changes ages over time. This may be a real cognition/mentality change or just an 'apparent age' change of their appearance in headspace. Apparent age and actual age may not match.
- Core- A headmate the rest of the system split off from. Often but not always is the original member of the system. Some systems have a core, some do not.
- Daemon- The mental construct created in daemonism. A daemon may or may not be sentient, capable of fronting or switching, or consider themselves a separate entity. Usually in the shape of an animal to follow the novel series (His Dark Materials by Phillip Pullman) that the practice was inspired from.
- Frontrunner- The headmates in a system who front, often used by larger systems. Some systems use it only for those who front with frequency in the place of 'host' language.
- Gatekeeper- A headmate that can control certain technical aspects of a system. For example memory sharing, what headmates can front, dormancy, or headmate formation.
- Host- The 'main' fronter, the one that claims the most 'ownership' of the body, or the one called to the front the most. The host may or may not be a core or original. In daemonism systems, the host may be called a Daemian or daemonist. In tulpamancy systems the host may be called a tulpamancer. In soulbonding systems, the host may be called a soulbinder. Multiple people may be hosts in larger systems. These people may be called co-hosts.
- Little- A headmate that is a minor and/or notably younger than the body in either internal appearance or actual cognitive mentality, memories, or ability. May also be called a syskid. Headmates in the age range between 13 and 18 in adult systems are sometimes called middles.
- Nonfronter- A headmate that does not front. May also be called an insider, though this sometimes refers to all headmates besides the host.
- NPC- A nonsentient entity in the headspace that 'fills out' an inner world. May be 'programmed' to act a certain way or 'puppeted' to have them do things. They are not usually counted as headmates.
- Original- The 'original' entity in the system. Some systems have one of these and some do not. The original may or may not also be a core or a host.

- Othertive- The inclusive umbrella word for a headmate that is based on another entity of some kind. The medical-oriented word is introject. Xtive is another proposed word for Othertive.
 - Factive- A type of othertive that is 'based on' or identifies in some way as a real entity.
 - Fictive- A type of othertive that is 'based' on or identifies in some way as a fictional entity or species.
 - Inourced- A type of fictive that is 'based' on or identifies in some way from something in media the system did make, such as fully original species or characters.
 - Outsourced- A type of fictive that is 'based' on or identifies in some way from something in media the system did not make, such as fan characters, or fictional species or characters.
- Persecutor- A headmate that harms the system or body. This role term is controversial because it makes a judgment about a often traumatized entity as being 'bad' by nature. They are sometimes called maladaptive headmates instead.
- Protector- A headmate that protects the system from something.
- Servitor- A created entity that is not fully sentient and may only parrot or carry out 'preprogrammed' tasks. A servitor may be made into a 'full' headmate with effort.
- Soulbond- The entity that is connected to in a soulbonding system. The entity may be within the system itself permanently, on a 'psychic link' while they live in their own world, or may go back and forth between their world and the soulbonder's mind. A soulbond may also be called a muse.
- Thoughtform- A umbrella term for any complex thought construct, including but not limited to headmates, servitors, or programmed spells in the context of occult practices.
- Trauma holder- A headmate that holds a trauma for the system, sometimes a specific traumatic event.
- Tulpa- A headmate that is created through focus and treating them as real until they are in tulpamancy systems. An accidental tulpa is a tulpa created by accident.
- Walk-In- A headmate from 'elsewhere'. In tulpamancy spaces this is any headmate that was not created through focus. In occult contexts, this is a person whose original inhabitant departed the body and was replaced with a new one.

Misc:

- Alterhuman- An alternate human identity or an alternative to humanity; a subculture for those who experience an identity that does not conform to average human identity. An extremely wide umbrella that includes a large number of experiences, though only a few will be listed. Includes plurality under it but not other neurodivergences, a decision that the wider plural community was not consulted for first. Some systems consider themselves alterhuman for being plural, but many do not.
 - Therian- Identifying as an animal in part or in whole on an integral level. Counts under the alterhuman umbrella. Nonhuman system members may or may not consider themselves a therian as well.
 - Otherkin- Identifying as a nonhuman entity in part or in whole on an integral level. Counts under the alterhuman umbrella. Nonhuman system members may or may not consider themselves otherkin as well.
 - Fictionkin- Identifying as a fictional entity in part or in whole on an integral level. Counts under the alterhuman umbrella. Fictives may or may not consider themselves fictionkin as well.
- Antipsychiatry- A movement based on the view that psychiatric industry has major problems and is often more damaging than helpful. May be shortened to antipsych. Often focused on the rampant psychiatric abuse, the pathologization of normal responses to circumstances, the structural oppression of various bigotries baked into the system, and its role in incarceration. Some antipsych folks dismiss all psychotherapy and medication as a scam, whereas others have a more nuanced take. A large number of systems are antipsych or psych-critical because of the abuse they have faced from the psychiatric industry.
- DSM- The diagnostic manual for psychological disorders in the USA. The DSM V is the most current version of the manual. This manual determines what diagnoses are valid conditions and can be diagnosed.
- False Memory Syndrome- May be abbreviated as FMS. This is a made up condition where someone believes fabricated memories of trauma or abuse to be real. Its mainly used to dismiss reports of abuse. It has been thoroughly disproved that this happens. 'Recovered' memories of abuse are usually quite accurate.
- ICD- The diagnostic manual outside of the USA. Includes a section for psychological disorders. The ICD-11 is the most current version of the manual. This manual determines what diagnoses are valid conditions and can be diagnosed.

- Mad Pride- A movement spearheaded by users and former users of psychiatric services that advocates for and celebrates those who may be considered mentally ill or otherwise 'insane'. It celebrates the 'mad' identity and focuses on issues like the right to autonomy and refusal of treatment. It has roots in the antipsychiatry movement. A large number of systems are part of the Mad Pride movement.
- Neurodivergency- A divergence from the 'normal' brain. Includes all mental illnesses, neurological conditions, developmental disorders, and nonpathological 'odd brain things' like synesthesia and plurality. Neurodivergency theory is that all brains exist on a spectrum and it should all be celebrated and accepted, though neurodivergent is colloquially used with the 'brain that diverges' definition and specifically for said groups. Being plural is generally a neurodivergency, though some spiritual systems do not consider themselves neurodivergent as their systemhood is not psychological in origin.
- Sadistic Ritual Abuse- Repeated extreme abuse usually done by a group over a long period of time to program the survivor so they will be easier to control. A specific ideology such as religion is often central to the abuse. May also be called Satanic Ritual Abuse or abbreviated as SRA. SRA plays a key role in plural history, as many cases of MPD caused by SRA were fabricated by therapists abusing their clients for clout during the Satanic Panic- which proceeded to make people disbelieve both MPD and SRA exist.
- Syscourse- The intracommunity slapfight about who counts as plural. This 'discourse' involves a lot of harassment and trolling and informs a lot of community trends in the current stage of the plural community's history.
 - System Gatekeepers- Also called system exclusionists, syskeepers, and sysmeds, these people believe that trauma is required to form a system, and that trauma must be before a randomly chosen age under 13. Some gatekeepers claim you must have a dissociative disorder to have a system and subclinical presentations do not count. They have a habit of fakeclaiming and harassing even diagnosed systems who criticize this.
 - Inclusive Plural Community- Also called system inclusionists. These people believe that the only thing required to be plural/a system is to be 'more than one' and your personal lore/origins does not matter in this. They believe in believing people about their experiences and allowing people who have historically been in the community and help build it and its vocabulary to continue to stay in it.

- Theory of Structural Dissociation- The most popular, but not only theory for how the dissociation of traumatic memories in PTSD and dissociative disorders works. May be abbreviated as ToSD. Most of the paper's content pertains to PTSD rather than DID and works best in that context. It asserts that trauma is the cause of dissociation, and creates 'parts' of the self when the trauma is not integrated properly, one or more that are 'normal' and often amnesiac, and one or more that are pure trauma response. It also claims that young children do not have a real personality/sense of self before the age of 6, and theorizes that DID occurs when this dissociated trauma happens before that and interrupts the normal formation of a 'true personality'. It considers all headmates and the system at large as less than a person unless fully integrated and refers to all headmates as 'it', strongly championing unification. Many plurals strongly criticize ToSD for this, as even many diagnosed DID systems do not fit its model (in age of trauma, level of personhood of headmates or as a child, etc).
- Voidpunk- A subculture focused on reclaiming dehumanization suffered by society. Open to all minorities, including those who are neurodivergent. Many plural systems are voidpunk.

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