

# 16.3—Somatoform and Dissociative Disorders

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# What are Somatoform Disorders?

- Physical symptoms are brought about by psychological distress.
- Symptoms are not faked—the unconscious mind has immense power over the body

# Somatoform Disorders: Conversion Disorder

- Conversion of emotional difficulties into the loss of a specific physiological function.
- Loss of functioning is real but there is no physical damage.
- Prolonged handicap
- Many are panicked at loss of movement, some are indifferent—sign of psychological distress
- Symptom = not dealing with conflict
- Quite rare
- <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FP4k1Nm3jbM>

# Somatoform Disorders: Hypochondriasis

- Preoccupation with imaginary illnesses
- Spend copious amounts of time looking for signs of illness
- Misinterprets minor aches, sniffles, bruises and bumps as early signs of major illness
- Negative test results—get a second opinion!
- Repression of conflict

# What is a Dissociative Disorder?

- Involves a loss of memory or identity.

# Dissociative Amnesia

- Memory loss with no biological explanation
- Attempt to escape from problems by blotting them out
  - What would Freud say?
- Remember how to speak, but may forget who they are, where they are from, and who their family is
- Usually follows a traumatic event
- Not linked to brain damage, drugs, or regular forgetting

# Dissociative Fuge

- Dissociative amnesia coupled with active flight
- An individual wakes up and up and leaves his or her home, family, job, identity and memories behind and creates a new life elsewhere

# Dissociative Identity Disorder

- Previously: multiple personality disorder
- Two or more distinct identities
- Each identity has
  - A name
  - Outlook
  - Behaviour/habits
- Fight Club