





PEACEFUL PLACE  
THERAPY



# Splitting BPD

Navigating Extremes and Finding Emotional  
Balance

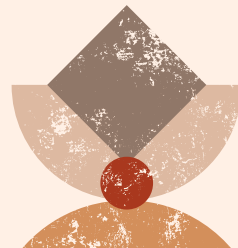
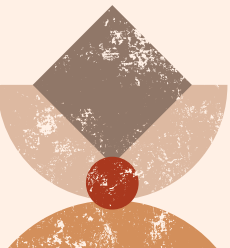


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# What Splitting Feels Like

Splitting isn't just an abstract concept—it's something that might feel like it's taking over your emotions and thoughts in real time. One moment, you're seeing someone, a situation, or yourself as completely positive—like you're standing on solid ground, full of hope and confidence. But in an instant, something can happen—an argument, a miscommunication, a feeling of being let down—and suddenly it feels like the ground has dropped out from under you. Now, everything is negative. It feels impossible to hold on to any of the good that was there just moments ago.

When you're in this headspace, it's hard to see the middle ground, the "gray area." It feels like you're either deeply connected to someone or completely cut off, either confident or full of doubt, either sure of your decisions or questioning everything. This back-and-forth can leave you feeling exhausted, confused, and sometimes like you don't know who or what to trust—including yourself.





# Why Does Splitting Happen?



02

## A Defense Mechanism

- Splitting is a defense mechanism that your mind uses to protect you from overwhelming emotions.
- If you've been through a lot of pain or fear, especially in relationships, your brain might default to an "either-or" mode as a way of trying to make sense of things quickly.
- It's as if your brain is saying, "This is too much, too fast—let's break it into simple categories."
- While this may be your mind's way of protecting you from getting hurt, it can also create more emotional turbulence and make things feel unstable.





# Why Does Splitting Happen?



03

## Fear of Abandonment

- At its core, splitting is often driven by a deep fear of abandonment or rejection.
- If you've been hurt before, especially by people you've trusted, it can feel safer to either idealize someone (so they don't leave) or devalue them (so you can protect yourself from the hurt before it comes).
- This push-pull can make relationships really difficult because it's hard to hold onto the idea that someone can care about you and still sometimes let you down.

# Relationships

You may find yourself cycling between feeling extremely close and connected to someone and then, after a disagreement or feeling ignored, completely withdrawing. It might feel like you can't trust them anymore or like they're going to hurt you, even if the conflict was brief. This emotional swing can feel really painful, especially when you long for stability but can't seem to find it.



# Self-Concept

You might wake up one day feeling proud of who you are, full of hope for what's ahead. Then something triggers a shift—maybe you make a mistake or feel like you've let someone down—and suddenly that positive self-image is gone. Now you feel worthless, questioning your abilities, doubting whether you're worthy of love or success. This can happen fast, and it often feels like there's no way to stop the emotional spiral.



# Decision Making

Splitting can show up in how you approach decisions. It may feel like things are either perfect or a complete disaster, with no in-between. For example, you might start a new job or relationship and feel like it's everything you've ever wanted. But then, when something goes wrong—a bad day at work or a misunderstanding in the relationship—you might feel like it's all falling apart and isn't worth it anymore. This can make sticking with things really difficult because the highs and lows are so intense.



# Navigating Splitting

## 1 - Ground Yourself in the Moment

When you feel the extremes starting to take over, pause. Splitting is often a reaction to feeling overwhelmed, so calming your body can help slow down the emotional rollercoaster. Try grounding exercises like focusing on your breath, feeling your feet on the ground, or holding onto something physical like a cold glass of water. These simple actions remind your brain that you're in control and help you reconnect with the present moment instead of getting lost in the extreme emotions.

**Practice This:** When you notice yourself thinking “all good” or “all bad,” take five slow breaths, and with each exhale, remind yourself that it's okay to hold both good and bad feelings at once.



# Navigating Splitting

## 2 - Challenge the Extremes

One of the most powerful ways to manage splitting is to start gently questioning your thoughts. For example, instead of thinking, “I’m a failure because I made a mistake,” try asking, “Can I acknowledge my mistake and still see that I’m doing my best?” This isn’t about dismissing your feelings—it’s about creating room for more than one truth to exist at the same time.

Practice this: Write down the extremes you’re feeling (e.g., “This person is terrible” or “I’m worthless”) and then see if you can find a middle ground (e.g., “This person upset me, but they’ve also supported me before” or “I made a mistake, but I’m still learning”).



# Navigating Splitting

## 3 - Validate and Explore Your Emotions

Splitting happens because the emotions feel too big to hold all at once. You might feel angry, sad, betrayed, or scared, and those feelings are very real. The trick is to allow yourself to feel these emotions without letting them define the entire situation. Acknowledge what you're feeling, and then try to explore where the intensity is coming from. Is there a fear of rejection or abandonment behind the anger? Is the sadness tied to something deeper, like feeling disconnected?

**Practice this:** When you feel overwhelmed by splitting, take a moment to journal or reflect on what you're feeling. Start with the immediate emotion (e.g., "I'm angry"), then ask yourself, "What's underneath this? Am I feeling hurt, scared, or something else?"





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