

## **Preconference-Workshop**

### **Pathological daydreaming: New evidence for an addictive dissociative absorption disorder**

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Dissociative experiences include amnesia, depersonalization/derealization, alterations in identity and absorption. All experience clusters except absorption have been associated with childhood trauma and neglect. Absorption experiences occur more frequently in non-clinical populations, are not trauma-related and, therefore, as fairly normal. Daydreaming, a form of absorptive behavior, is a common mental activity that can help solve problems, trigger creativity, and inspire great works of art and science. Evidence suggests that some people have a capacity for vivid absorptive fantasy that is experienced with an acute sense of presence. This ability to script an alternate reality that can offer an intense experience appears to be highly gratifying. In fact, the experience seems so rewarding that if curbed, elicits a yearning to resume it that is akin to addiction. For individuals who are coping with past and current distress, life in a fantasized alternate world, seems a soothing, affect regulating alternative. However, when daydreaming becomes compulsive and time consuming, the consequences can be dire: Daydreaming activity can interfere and sometimes even replace real-life social, academic and vocational activities. This workshop will not only describe the full range of dissociative disorders. It will also present the discovery process of maladaptive daydreaming (MD)<sup>1</sup>, a mental activity that can be classified as dissociative disorder, an attention deficit disorder, an OCD-spectrum disorder and also a behavioral addiction. MD experiences are shared and discussed in many internet venues by many thousands of individuals seeking support and coping advice. The workshop will also offer a review of the latest empirical data collected on the subject and will present a case report. A video clip featuring a testimony of a maladaptive daydreamer will be screened.

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<sup>1</sup> Störende Tagtraum