

Dissociative Identity Disorder (DID) is a mental illness that's well known but not understood. When a person has been physically, sexually, or emotionally abused the stress of knowing their real personal identity becomes a problem. The film Psycho by Alfred Hitchcock unmasked this psychological issue before it was widely recognized. In this case, the film showed a severe case of dissociative identity disorder by having a character react to the emotional abuse by his mother.

Norman Bates was only trying to live his life except it was overcome by his overbearing mother. She made him believe that no woman was good for him and that he should just live his life with her. Since his mother was always in control of his life he heavily depended on her so when she died his only logical response was to become her. In reality, DID usually starts to show its signs early on in children's lives. A central self-consciousness forms in order to protect the child. Since Norman is only introduced in the film as an adult it's unknown whether or not he had any other personalities. The biggest one was him being his mother Norma Bates. This was his coping mechanism to deal with the death of his mother and his father.

At the end of the film, viewers are finally told why Norman behaved in the way he did. The psychiatrist describes the harsh traumatic experiences that Norman faced as he was growing up. We already know that his father is deceased but it's also revealed that he murdered his mother. Norman couldn't handle what he had done. In response to this, he wanted to keep his mother alive by "giving her half his life." This helped him continue on with his everyday activities as if his mother was truly there. Norman still acted as if his mother was controlling him, his relationships, and overall his performance in life.

Norman also displayed other signs of DID. Towards the end of the film, you would hear him having conversations and would automatically assume it was his mother. Since we now know that his mother is dead who was he really talking to? Norman had formed a relationship with his mother's personality which allowed him to alternate between himself. He was able to carry on full-on conversations as if a separate physical person had been there. This was a major key in figuring out that Norman would disassociate and become another person.

One of the last signs that Norman showed that displayed his DID was his social anxiety/impairment. Bates had jealousy issues with other women which caused his mother's personality to come out more. He had a really hard time speaking and relating to others. This caused large issues in his personal life. Essentially, the only love and affection he needed were from his mother.

Dissociative Identity Disorder is a disorder that's rare but very much so possible. Alfred Hitchcock did a great job of displaying the signs of a person struggling. To avoid his traumatic memories Hitchcock created a character with multiple personalities and what it's like for them. The film is very enjoyable to watch as you learn more about Norman and his abnormal life.