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A *System's Guide* is an online and physical handbook for Plurality - an identity umbrella encompassing familiar terms like *Split Personality* and *Dissociative Identity Disorder*.

Front Attitude Calibration is one of its guest-written addenda, which explore niche and nuanced topics within plural experiences and social spaces.

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An essay on the interpretation of a switching/speaking system

A System's Guide To Plurality Addendum:

Front Attitude Calibration

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sys.guide/calibration

While it's inevitable to hit some front mismatches, or miss a switch that required a change in behaviour or attitude, these small missteps can usually be easily rectified (honestly just talk it out). What is essential is learning how to adjust your expectations, and not carrying the same set of expectations for every system member long term.

This will both make it easier to interact with rougher headmates ("the girl with the crude sense of humor told me to suck her dick but I know that means she trusts me and feels comfortable here") and make you safer for the gentler ones ("oh the age regressor is in front again, I'll shelve the heavy discussion for later and get out a plush so they can manage this state better").

If you are interacting with plural systems, you should be, at a baseline, expecting system members to behave differently from each other.

This means calibrating your expectations differently for each headmate, which then requires some effort to figure out or ask who you're talking to.

The most common way to encounter this reality tends to be with fronts that are ruder or more hostile than average.

Other systems may have less control over their fronts, or even have more fragile and vulnerable headmates triggered into front by conflict.

What this means is you also need to be able to step down onto a gentler level for interacting with these less confident headmates.

Trying to have the kind of heated argument that you might expect to function with another adult, with a younger or more emotional part of a system, can easily turn one sided, leaving them feeling distressed or abused.

Long term damage to relationships can happen in these spaces, e.g. "I thought they wanted to see me so I fronted, but then they told me off and I shut down and don't really trust them any more".

These are the same skills you should be learning when meeting any new person. If you can, for example, come to understand someone's autistic affect as something other than disinterest and not simply abandon those connections, you can do this too.

The cases where plural expression oversteps other's boundaries are all very visible failures, though.

What often fails less visibly are the ways allies failing to calibrate properly can hurt a system.

Many systems have headmates who front to handle conflict (voluntarily or otherwise), but might work to hold their less confident fronts for longer periods and teach them those same skills.

While it's important to respect the boundaries of people your system interacts with, sentiments like "I don't like that alter they're scary/mean/rude" or "i miss the other you who was more affectionate" from bad allies, are frequently a result of simply failing to do this calibration.

If you learn what it means when a colder, more standoffish headmate speaks to you - which of their sentiments express genuine affection. If you learn to understand rudeness or playful ribbing as a sign of trust and friendliness. You can start to map the different expressive ranges within a system to the set of things they actually communicate.