

‘BROKEN CRAYONS STILL COLOUR’ HOW PTSD UK IS HELPING PEOPLE UNDERSTAND POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER THROUGH ART

Submitted by: PTSD UK

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27th June marks International PTSD Awareness Day and to honour this, PTSD UK are launching their first art book to help people understand more about Post Traumatic Stress Disorder – a condition which is estimated to affect over 2,600,000 people in the UK at any one time.

Broken Crayons Still Colour: Understanding Post Traumatic Stress Disorder through Art is a collection of almost 200 unique artwork pieces (including poetry, illustrations, digital design, glasswork, sculpture and quilting) which express the experiences of people affected by PTSD and C-PTSD and were kindly submitted to PTSD UK as part of an art competition they ran.

PTSD UK is the only charity in the UK dedicated to raising awareness of PTSD – a condition that some people develop after experiencing or witnessing a trauma. A trauma is defined as an event or events which provoke fear, helplessness, or horror in response to the threat of injury or death and therefore can affect anyone. Examples of traumatic events include assault, road traffic incident, natural disasters, domestic abuse, child abuse, war, acts of terrorism and traumatic childbirth.

The majority of people exposed to traumatic events experience some short-term distress, but eventually, their trauma fades to a memory – painful, but not destructive. However, around 20% of people who experience a trauma go on to develop Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD or C-PTSD). In the UK, that's around 6,665,000 people, yet it is still an incredibly misunderstood, often misdiagnosed and stigmatised condition – and so the mission of PTSD UK is to raise awareness of PTSD and help support everyone affected by the condition, no matter the trauma that caused it.

CEO and Founder of PTSD UK, Jacqui Suttie said, “I know first-hand that Post Traumatic Stress Disorder can make you feel helpless, alone and isolated from those around you – but having a book, filled with beautiful imagery and insightful words which lets you see that you're not alone, is something that we felt would be so valuable in moments of despair when you're looking for comfort from PTSD or C-PTSD. Just knowing that other people have those same thoughts, feel the same overwhelming fear and dread that you have and physically experience their trauma time and time again like you do at night, along with messages of hope and resilience can provide reassurance, comfort and ultimately feelings of empowerment and control to help people work towards recovery when they're ready.

Additionally, art therapy has increasingly shown significant and sustained benefits as a complementary and integrative therapy option for people with PTSD and C-PTSD. Trauma affects both the verbal and non-verbal aspects of memory and art therapy can allow the brain to open up in a different way to other therapies, enabling complex feelings to be expressed. It can provide a safe environment for authentic expression, an opportunity to ‘verbalise’ inner emotions without having to talk, can help contain overwhelming emotions and help reconcile feelings of guilt. This is why this book has been created.”

The A4 hardback book contains over 250 pages of incredibly powerful artwork with some explicit content and themes from people affected by PTSD and C-PTSD including those with the condition themselves and also their loved ones affected in their own way too. The book also hopes to inspire people to make their own

art and so contains several pages at the back to write, doodle or scribble thoughts and feelings.

The book is priced at £30, and all profits from this book will be donated to PTSD UK – the only charity in the UK dedicated to raising awareness of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (both PTSD and Complex PTSD) and the causes, symptoms & the treatments available, no matter the trauma that caused it.

You can order a copy directly from PTSD UK on their website (for pre-orders, books will be shipped to arrive on the 27th June): www.ptsduk.org/product/broken-crayons-still-colour/

Please contact Jacqui Suttie, CEO and Founder of PTSD UK for more information on hello@PTSDuk.org