



EXHIBITION:
TAUNTON LIBRARY
1ST - 13TH FEBRUARY

MY NAME IS SABINE

I am raising awareness of Postpartum Psychosis
and my journey of recovery through art

Art has been my therapy since suffering from Postpartum Psychosis in 2010. I believe I started painting again late in 2011, when I was weaned off medication. I experience art through my emotions and subconscious mind. The process is more important than the actual outcome. My paintings often evolve into a meaning, something I experience. My painting comes as an outburst and subsequently channels my emotions into creativity enabling me to feel calm and content, - as if my “happy-hormones (release of Serotonins) are having a party again”. My chemicals, the hormonal imbalance, is reflected in my work. When I do not sleep, I paint. I am on my path of recovery, learning in stepping stones...trying to overcome the obstacles of my agora and social-phobia.

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For further information on Postpartum Psychosis visit:

WWW.APP-NETWORK.ORG

What happens when I am poorly?

I struggle for two weeks per month or even more, because of my hormonal cycle. I have chosen not to take any medication as I want to be my true-self. It is manageable. I have a support network in place. It is not always easy to find the right coping mechanism for certain triggers. Even so preferring to live in “my organized chaos” my partner makes sure a routine is kept in place for our little unique family.

Because of the stigma attached to mental health disorders, and the lack of Education indicates that there is not enough awareness and sensitivity towards people with mental health issues. I often have had experiences where people do not know how to approach such sensitive issues, especially institutions, establishments and authorities. Even close friends often cannot share empathy or compassion; it is not written on my forehead nor is my condition stereotypical. I suffer from agora and social-phobia. Because of my fear and anxiety I might be disheartened and motivation level is lower than expected, but I keep on working to overcome my obstacles.

I am not depressed! When chemicals are on over-drive, occasionally I get frustrated, because I cannot accomplish certain tasks I want to do. My friend, who is a professional in mental health from Germany, explains “that in my case there are too many cars, but not enough garages to park in; in other words awful lots of neurotransmitters sparking and not enough synapses as receivers. If you would be depressed, you would not get the cars started”, which is exactly the opposite of my condition.”

When I have too many cobwebs, I am busy trying to do my own processing. My partner often cannot make sense of what I am saying. There are situations where I say something, which is not compatible with what I think. Or I thought I spoke, but I kept silence. Therefore communication can be quite difficult, because I am dissociating myself and somehow live in a different hemisphere. My listening skills at that time are very poor. I would rather be silent. I am not very sociable, when I am not well and prefer to be with my close family. I am still eloquent via mail, but would not like to talk to people. The phone and approaching strangers is often out of the question.

I am very hyper sensitive and I do hear and smell things more profoundly, but it does not mean that it is linked to reality, especially when I am stressed. My daily routine becomes more difficult, as my concentration level is down. In addition I try to multi-task, but often do not finish the jobs. Decision making is quite a challenge and generally copying with external influences could lead to stressful situations.

All the above mentioned aspects can be physically debilitating, possibly leading to anxiety, often sleep deprivation, no appetite, upset stomachs, headaches and lots more. The conflict of my pragmatic mind with the overwhelming experiences of emotions creates a conflict with my inner self jeopardizing a healthy balance of body, mind and soul.