



What Is Borderline Arts?

Our Beginnings



Borderline Arts is a small Derby-based charity working almost alone to raise awareness of, reduce the stigma surrounding and support sufferers of Borderline Personality Disorder, which is a complex, severe and enduring mental health condition.

Our charity was set up in April 2013 by Sarah Eley after she found herself in various life-threatening situations as a result of having Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD). In February 2015 we became a Registered Charity, and we are at present the only UK charity working specifically to promote understanding of BPD and to support those with the condition.

Sarah did an amazing job in setting up the organisation to help others and eventually securing charitable status, but the toll on her own health was severe and Sarah found herself back in hospital and sectioned for several months in 2017.

Thankfully, she is much stronger now and has assembled a great team of volunteers to support her with Borderline Arts. She has been able to recruit some people to key positions who are fortunate not to suffer from BPD, but also to have volunteers on board who have firsthand experience of the condition, both of which have proved crucial. As a result, our charity is going from strength to strength and achieving much with regard to our core aims.

What is BPD?

BPD is a complex, severe and enduring mental health condition. It is officially known as Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder (EUPD) in the UK, but we refer to it as BPD as the term is better known.

There are **nine symptoms** of Borderline Personality Disorder. To be diagnosed with BPD, a person must have **at least five of the nine** symptoms and the symptoms must have a **significantly detrimental and long standing** impact on everyday life.

The symptoms (with a very brief description) are shown on our flyer::

What is BPD?



1. You are extremely afraid of being alone and worry that you will be abandoned or rejected. You sometimes take drastic measures to avoid this.
2. You find it hard to think in shades of grey. Everything and everyone tends to be totally wonderful and perfect or terrible and evil, which can cause relationships to be unstable and intense.
3. You have a severe and persistent unstable sense of identity, e.g. you think drastically differently about yourself depending on who you are with.
4. You tend to impulsively take risks or do things that are self-damaging without thinking about the consequences (not including self-harm/suicide).
5. You recurrently harm yourself and/or attempt suicide or think about doing so (for example, cutting yourself or overdosing).
6. You frequently have intense emotions that are extremely up and down (e.g. feeling positive one hour and utter despair another). Your emotions are often out of proportion with the situation making your emotions very unstable.
7. You experience intense chronic feelings of emptiness.
8. You experience intense, inappropriate anger or have difficulty controlling anger.
9. In particularly stressful times, you may believe in things that are not real or true (called delusions) or see or hear things that are not really there (called hallucinations). You may become very paranoid and disconnected from reality.



A doctor may diagnose you with borderline personality disorder if you have five or more of these symptoms and if the symptoms have a significantly detrimental and long-standing impact on your everyday life.

Needless to say, experiencing even a few of the behaviours can create a life of pain and suffering. Additionally, it is a condition that is highly stigmatised, even amongst mental health professionals.

Meet Our Team

We are a small team consisting of 7 trustees, and 4 additional regular volunteers. We are also helped by our 'Bank Volunteers' on an ad hoc basis for special events etc.

The Trustees



Sarah Eley
Founder



Kev Bagshaw
Chair



Pauline Shephard
Secretary



Lesley Edwards
Treasurer



Vicky Vaughan
*Website &
Workshop Support*



Lisa Ceranic
*Volunteer Coordinator &
Database Manager*



Jill Broughton
Trustee

Other Volunteers



Du'aa Albadwi
Workshop Support/Admin



Becca Gamble
Workshop Support



Rob Cutillow
Workshops Coordinator



Evie Goring
Admin/Social Media

Our Aims

Our main aims are to use the arts to:

- **Raise awareness** and **tackle the stigma** surrounding BPD in the wider public
- **Support/educate** those involved in the lives of BPD sufferers (e.g. family/carers/professionals etc)
- **Nurture creativity** through activities and events, **empowering** sufferers.

There are Several Strands to how we achieve these aims, as explained below:

What Do We Do?

Art Group for Adults with BPD



This bi-monthly for individuals with BPD is free to attend. It enables those with the diagnosis to come together and engage in creative activities, which focus on exploring, expressing and celebrating the positive aspects of ourselves and our lives.

We chose this focus, as many of us with BPD struggle to know who we are beyond the BPD label. Much of the time we can even feel we are 'innately bad'. We want to promote the view that BPD is essentially a list of (albeit often overwhelming) difficulties we face, but that it does not define who we are!

Feedback has been really positive:

“Attending this group has really opened up a new way for me to express myself. Things are still very tough, but having a safe, friendly environment where my inner creativity is encouraged to come out has been so beneficial for me. I'm now using the skills I learn in the group to help me at home - art has started helping me in times of crisis as a distraction/soothing technique that I wouldn't have used before. This group has been a real lifeline for me - it really is appreciated”.



We hope that having fun and creatively exploring these themes will continue to help group members to build up a more positive self image and sense of identity.

Creative Writing Group for Adults with BPD



This monthly for individuals with BPD is free to attend. It offers a chance for like-minded people to gather in a safe environment, socialise and have fun, whilst gaining knowledge, experience, and confidence in using creative writing as a tool for escapism and self-expression.

A selection of poems that were written during one of these group sessions can be found on our website: www.borderlinearts.org/borderlinewriters

Creative Educational Workshops

We are the only UK Charity who run BPD-specific training. Our training is facilitated through our Creative Educational Workshop and is aimed at health professionals or students who work with those with BPD.



*MA social work students
Nottingham University*

The workshops are interactive and engaging, with creative activities to aid experiential learning, enabling participants to:

- * Express their personal thoughts and feelings about BPD
- * Learn more about the condition (from both a medical perspective & firsthand experience)
- * Learn ways to sensitively support/relate to someone with BPD

At least one facilitator will have a diagnosis of BPD so that we can share first hand experiences - this gives participants a much deeper insight and understanding of BPD. Past attendees have regularly commented that this was the most helpful aspect of our workshop and is sought after by professionals and greatly appreciated.

We run these workshops for mental health professionals about 6 to 8 times a year. We currently run regular workshops for staff at the Radbourne Psychiatric Unit in Derby and the Hartington Psychiatric Unit in Chesterfield.

Each participant is given an information handbook and a certificate of attendance to take home.



*Radbourne Psychiatric Unit Nursing staff
Kingsway Hospital*

General Awareness Raising



We attend a huge variety of events to raise awareness of Borderline Personality Disorder. This is sometimes in conjunction with other mental health charities such as Rethink and Mind. Such events include Derby city celebrations, university open days, local community friendship gatherings, networking lunches at the YMCA etc.

In addition we have provided informative talks to professional groups such as social workers and staff at doctors' surgeries.

Art Exhibitions for Adults with BPD

We hold art exhibitions where artists diagnosed with BPD can display their work alongside a short description of how their image expresses their experience of living with BPD. The exhibitions are vibrant, sharing hard-hitting messages (often using a unique sense of humour).



The purpose of these exhibitions is to empower artists with BPD to share their talent and their story in a medium that often expresses much more than words can, while raising awareness/reducing stigma of BPD.

Getting art around BPD out in the open gives a chance for conversations to be had around the diagnosis; constructive dialogue and information sharing is key to tackling stigma.

Creating and exhibiting art creates a sense of worth and purpose, and to be a part of something constructive. This is particularly important for those with BPD.

At our last art exhibition, 94.03% of visitors said that they felt that events such as this will help reduce any possible stigma surrounding BPD. One exhibition visitor (echoing the response of most visitors) commented:

“I found the exhibition informative, moving and encouraging. I knew a little bit about BPD before I came, but reading people’s experiences of it and seeing their creative responses has really helped me to understand a bit more about what life can be like. Thank you.”

And 100% of visitors with BPD said that viewing the exhibition helped them to feel more understood, accepted, to better understand themselves, to feel comforted or less alone, and said that they found it helpful to know the exhibition is increasing understanding of BPD.

One visitor with BPD (echoing the response of most visitors with BPD) commented:

“It gave me more compassion towards myself and my struggles”.



Installing our last art exhibition

Some of the art that we have exhibited is also on our online Art Gallery, which you can find here:

www.borderlinearts.org/about-art-gallery

Also, thanks to the wonderful [V21 Arts](http://www.v21arts.com), you can have a browse through our 2017 exhibition from the comfort of your own sofa via a virtual art gallery experience! So, grab a cuppa, get comfy and have a virtual mooch around it by going to www.borderlinearts.org/exhibitions

Film/Theatre

One of the strands of Borderline Arts is 'Theatre' (which includes Film). Through this strand, we create and perform performing-arts pieces/films which convey what it is like to have BPD. As always, our aim is to raise awareness of BPD and reduce the surrounding stigma. The film/performance facilitates:



- * Deeper and wider **understanding of BPD** for loved ones, carers and health professionals. This can **improve relationships** and the **care/support** those with BPD receive.

- * The opportunity to **watch other people's BPD experiences** being acted out, in a safe non-triggering way. This can **reduce the sense of isolation** for those with BPD, as they can see that they are not alone in their experience.

- * **A platform for aspiring actors/crew** to take part in a film or theatre project in a safe and encouraging environment. This helps to **increase confidence** and **foster creativity**.

Our current project is a short film called 'Frankie'. The piece is about a young lady who has BPD. It explores the different sides of Borderline Personality Disorder (BPD) through a mixture of live theatre and film. We see the main character's experiences and stories and her journey through the health system.

Our aim with this piece is not only to raise awareness and get people talking and asking questions about BPD, but perhaps also to challenge the current healthcare system, and ultimately showing that people with BPD are just people!

We are currently in the process of linking with Derby Quad and local film producers to arrange logistics and apply for funding and are excited about where it is heading!

Why is our Work Important?

The Issue

*Approximately 1-3% of the population have a **diagnosis of BPD***

*As many as **1 in 10** people with BPD die from suicide*

Despite this horrifically shocking and tragic reality, there is a huge lack of understanding and support for those with BPD and for their families and friends. Access to therapies and family support is extremely limited with lengthy waiting times. We believe this lack of support/awareness and these horrendous 'statistics' are unacceptable.



Addressing the Issue

Below, we explain why our main aims (mentioned earlier) are important and their potential impact:

1. Raising awareness & tackling the stigma surrounding BPD in the general public...



...can **reduce** feelings of **shame** for those with BPD and **decrease** their **fear** of being **judged** or socially **excluded** due to their condition...

This enables those with BPD to **feel more able to ask for/access help**...

Receiving help sooner can **stop BPD symptoms getting worse** & even **improve mental health**...

This greatly improves **quality of life** for those with BPD & their loved ones.

2. Educating professionals/carers about BPD...

...equips them with a more **informed and caring attitude** toward those with BPD and toward the condition itself...

This increases their **empathy** with and **understanding** of those with BPD...

As a result, individuals with BPD feel **understood/validated** and receive more **effective/higher quality care**...

This increases their sense of worth as they feel **cared about** and **valued**...



This can **stop BPD symptoms getting worse** & even **improve mental health**...

3. Nurturing creative expression & showcasing talent of individuals with BPD...



...provides a **safe, healthy emotional outlet**, essential for recovery (esp for the many with BPD who struggle to identify/express their feelings)...

Having creative expression celebrated/showcased is **empowering**; cultivating **self-esteem** and sense of **purpose**...

The positive social connections formed in the groups facilitate a **sense of belonging, acceptance & validation**...

This can **stop BPD symptoms getting worse** & even **improve mental health**...

THE IMPACT OF PREVENTING BPD SYMPTOMS FROM GETTING WORSE

There are far too many BPD symptoms/behaviours to list, but they include self-harm, eating disorders, overdoses & drug/alcohol addiction. None of our strategies are a magic cure, but we believe that they have *potential* to have a positive impact for those with BPD, their loved ones & society as a whole.

Social/Financial Impact: preventing the worsening of BPD symptoms can decrease:

- The need for **lengthy/intensive treatment**/support from professionals and loved ones
- **Unemployment** (many people with BPD are unable to work due to their symptoms)
- **Homelessness** (especially if drug/alcohol addiction is a struggle)
- **Social/financial costs** for society in general and for **Health/Social Services** (as a result of the decrease in unemployment, homelessness, drug use, intensive support required etc.)

Emotional/Psychological/Physical Impact: *but most important (& our motivation) is that preventing worsening of BPD symptoms can:*

- **Improve the quality of life** for those with BPD and their loved ones
- **Prevent symptoms worsening** & potentially avoid some **crises**.
- **Reduce the risk of attempted or even completed suicides** for many individuals with BPD

How Do We Monitor Our Effectiveness?

We monitor our effectiveness and the impact our work has on the general public, BPD sufferers and their families and professional mental health personnel by collecting and analysing **feedback from events, exhibitions, workshops and training courses**. This information is accessed, collated and assessed from our newly completed database to comprehensively inform future decision making/ ideas.

From our own experience as a charity, the feedback we receive and extensive research, we have found that it is clear that actively raising awareness of BPD, educating professionals and facilitating safe social and creative activities for those with BPD to get involved with, has a **hugely positive impact all round**.

Ultimately BPD can be intensely distressing and potentially fatal for those who fight to live with it on a daily basis, as well as being devastating for those around them. **We hope that we can continue to play a part in improving this situation for as many people as possible.**

Where Are We?



Borderline Arts is based in the **City of Derby** where we have our office and run our art and writing workshops.

We travel within approximately a 50 mile radius to attend a variety of events and to run training courses. This means in practice we mostly operate in Derbyshire but occasionally in surrounding counties such as Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Staffordshire and South Yorkshire.

We are extremely lucky to have secured office space and the use of another great room for our art and writing workshops in a building very close to Derby City Centre.

We are in good charitable company as most of the building is dedicated to food and clothing banks run by our very supportive landlord Farhad.



When Do We Operate?

Office Opening Hours: Tuesdays and Fridays 1– 4pm

Art Group: The last Friday of the month (*bi-monthly basis: Jan, Mar, May, Jul, Sep, Nov*) from 2-4pm

Writing Group: The second Friday of the month (*monthly basis*) from 2-4pm

Creative Educational Workshops: For mental health professionals - about 6/8 times a year.

General Awareness Raising (e.g. participating in Mental Health Events): Approx. 5 - 6 times a year

Art Exhibitions: Approx every 2 years.

Website: We maintain a comprehensive website: www.borderlinearts.org with information about BPD, our charity and upcoming groups/events. There are also articles, photos, online art and writing galleries and more. Individuals with BPD can submit artwork or creative writing pieces for our gallery pages.

Contact Details

Email: contact@borderlinearts.org

Phone: 07754 806814

Website: www.borderlinearts.org

Phone: 119 Osmaston Rd, Derby, DE1 2GD

Mailing List: Sign up at www.borderlinearts.org/latestnews

Can You Help?



As we don't receive any regular funding pots, much of our time is taken up by fundraising, which can detract from our essential work.

Receiving any donation, large or small, helps enable us to dedicate more time to our important work of raising awareness of the seriousness of this severe and misunderstood mental health condition and of supporting those who live with it, for example through our workshops, creative groups, exhibitions etc.

There are several ways you can help us financially, some of which don't cost you a penny:

Give a donation to Borderline Arts via Local Giving at: www.localgiving.org/donation/borderline

Do a fundraiser for Borderline Arts, please email us at: contact@borderlinearts.org

Shop online and raise money via: www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/borderlineart/

Browse our Amazon Wish List (it's got things like art materials, stationary, furniture etc.) at: www.amazon.co.uk/hz/wishlist/ls/1BX0G0RH50ER9?ref=wl_share

To find out more about what we do or how to get involved, please feel free to contact us!