



HIDDEN STORIES

Hi! We are Root Experience, and we have been working on a collaborative, community focused project that aims to bring to light an everyday struggle that affects so many of us...

Hidden Stories is about understanding how it feels to navigate the world with an invisible disability. It's an interactive community-based project that's centred on understanding the experiences of those of us living with invisible illnesses, such as autism, ME, and depression. We have done this through creative workshops, where we invited a group of individuals affected to explore how life is for one another. Their responses provided us with a window into their 'hidden' worlds - through which we were able to invite discussion, empathy and acceptance.

Everyone should be visible

We believe that every part of us is important, every strength, every vulnerability, every difference. By keeping some of these parts hidden, we're not allowing ourselves to truly be seen, or to understand or feel compassion for one another as human beings. We want to empower people to build a community that supports what's hidden, where we can all reveal our true, whole selves without fear of judgment.

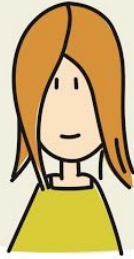
Hidden Stories is an opportunity to talk about what's unseen in our lives. Our ultimate goal is to break the stigmatising cycle of being hidden from society and inspire people to build a more compassionate community as an antidote to isolation and loneliness.

What has been done already?

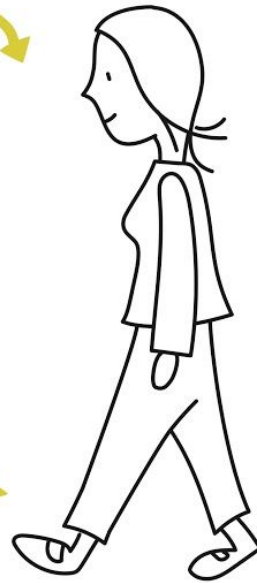
Thanks to receiving Awards for All funding, we were able to bring together a group of people interested in exploring their invisible disabilities through drama and visual art. Our design team created an interactive exhibition inspired by the creative responses to our original group of participants with various invisible conditions at Brighton Dome.

Over 80% of visitors to the exhibition said the event had a high impact on them, with 60% saying that the event had changed their outlook on invisible conditions. This demonstrates the powerful impact this kind of creative engagement can have, and we know from positive feedback that this work has the potential to connect people to their environment and each other. Our project has the ability to change lives

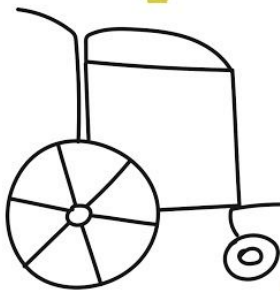
Hi! THIS IS ME!
DAYS OF MY LIFE



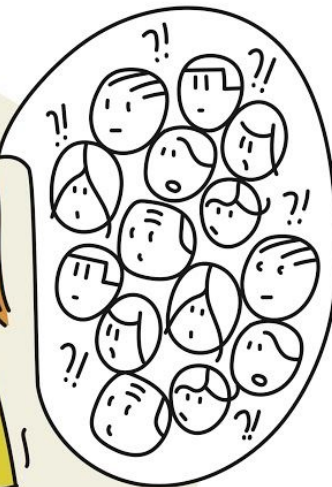
GOING FOR A SHORT WALK
ON A GOOD DAY



BUT OTHER DAYS
TOO EXHAUSTED



DO THEY THINK
I'M FAKING IT?



What's next?

If we are successfully awarded the People's Projects funding we will be able to grow the number of people we are currently able to help to include nine new locations across ITV Meridian West - Worthing, Southampton, Portsmouth, Chichester, Swindon, Oxford, Bournemouth, Crawley and Woking; and continue our work in Brighton.

We have collected the stories of our 6 original participants, and will collect more stories by running workshops in each location, resulting in a diverse collection of stories illustrating a range of invisible conditions.

These stories will form an illustrated book which will serve as a manual for change, created in collaboration with graphic designer Tinne Luyten.

The book will contain:

- personal stories supported by beautiful illustrations
- information about the condition and where to seek help
- Open letters written about what people would like others to learn about their condition which can be used as conversation starters with colleagues or family members.

If we received the funding it would allow us to collect the stories through creative workshops, work with the illustrator to create the illustrations, work with support groups to research what should be included in the letters and freely distribute the book across the region.

How can I help?

We have been shortlisted for funding from The People's Projects, a high profile funding opportunity that gets voted for by you, the public. Voting opens at 9am on Monday 16th April and closes again on Monday 30th April. Which means we need your help. We need to ask as many people as possible to vote for the Hidden Stories project so that together we can get this work out into communities. You can do this in several ways...

First of all you can vote online. To do this go to <https://www.thepeoplesprojects.org.uk/> And on the right-hand side of the screen you will see this box:

Find your local projects*

Locate Me 

OR



Type Hidden Stories into the box and press enter. It will then allow you to vote for the project and you'll receive a confirmation email... YOUR VOTE ONLY COUNTS ONCE YOU HAVE RESPONDED TO THE CONFIRMATION EMAIL.

Secondly you can then tell all your friends and family to vote for us too. Word of mouth is the best way of telling people about our project. If you take part in any clubs, go to the gym, or work with a team of people, see if you can get them to vote as well. Try and target 10 friends who you think will be inspired by the project and ask them to vote too. And if you would like us to send you some flyers to give out while you are doing this then please email Jessica at jessica@rootexperience.org

Also you can print out copies of the postal vote below, which is freepost, so you can print out as many copies of this as you like and give them out to people in your workplace, or to friends and family.

SENDER	
Voter's name:	
Address:	
Postcode:	
Contact Telephone No:	
Vote for PROJECT:	
	FREEPOST THE PEOPLE'S PROJECTS

You can also tell people about our project online. This can be done through emails or through social media. Here is a ready made email for you to use as a template, but feel free to edit this into your own words...

I've just voted for this socially vital project and I'm hoping that you will also take a moment to vote for it too... Hidden Stories is a collaborative, community focused project by celebrated community arts charity Root Experience, whose work aims to bring to light an everyday struggle that affects so many of us. Hidden Stories is about understanding how it feels to navigate the world with an invisible disability. It's an interactive community-based project that centres around understanding the experiences of those of us living with invisible illnesses, such as autism, ME, and depression. To find out more about what the project will involve go to <http://www.rootexperience.org/hidden-project/>

I've just registered my support of the work that Root Experience are doing by backing Hidden Stories in a national campaign headed up by National Lottery initiative, The People's Project, where the public get the chance to decide how National Lottery funding can make a difference in their local community by voting between 95 organisations shortlisted across the UK. Groups are competing for up to £50,000 of funding to improve the lives of people in their communities. Hidden disabilities is an important issue and I'm therefore backing their bid for the People's Project and you can do this too by going to www.thepeoplesprojects.org.uk and voting for Hidden Stories today. By doing this you will help support Root Experience to enable our community and other communities across the UK to learn more about hidden disabilities.

And these are our social media details:

Web: <http://www.rootexperience.org/>

Twitter @rootexperience / #Hidden

Facebook: RootExperience

Youtube: RootExperience

Instagram: RootExperience

And these are some suggested tweets. Again, please feel free to edit these if you'd like to...

Help @rootexperience bring to light the everyday struggle of hidden disabilities by voting for them in the #PeoplesProjects 🗳️ www.thepeoplesprojects.co.uk - vote for Hidden Stories in the Meridian West region! #Hidden

Vote for @rootexperience in #PeoplesProjects and we can help enable communities to learn more about hidden disabilities. Show your support and vote for Hidden Stories today at www.thepeoplesprojects.org.uk #Hidden

Help Hidden Stories enable more communities to support people living with hidden disabilities by voting for @rootexperience in #PeoplesProjects 🗳️ www.thepeoplesprojects.org.uk #Hidden - and help them win #NationalLottery funding 🎉

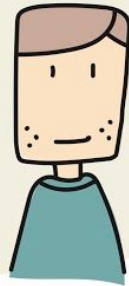
Do something good today and vote for Hidden Stories in the #PeoplesProjects 🙌 www.thepeoplesprojects.org.uk - votes close Monday 30 April at midday. People across the UK need better understanding of hidden disability. Your vote can make this happen! 🙏

Vote, like and RT to help @rootexperience win the #PeoplesProjects! Cast your vote here: www.thepeoplesprojects.org.uk - last day for votes is Monday 30 April at midday. - vote for Hidden Stories in the Meridian West region! #Hidden

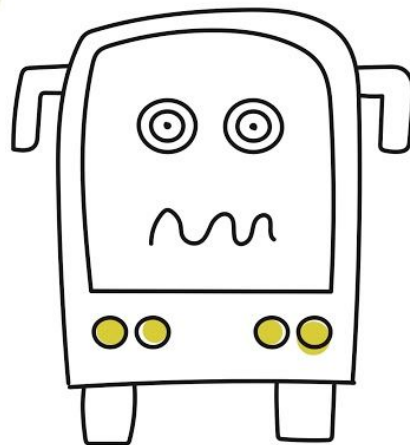
It's your last chance to vote for us in #PeoplesProjects! Help enable more communities to support people living with hidden disabilities. Votes close at midday today! Go to www.thepeoplesprojects.org.uk to vote for Hidden Stories in the Meridian West region!

GETTING IT TOGETHER

BRAVING THE CROWD

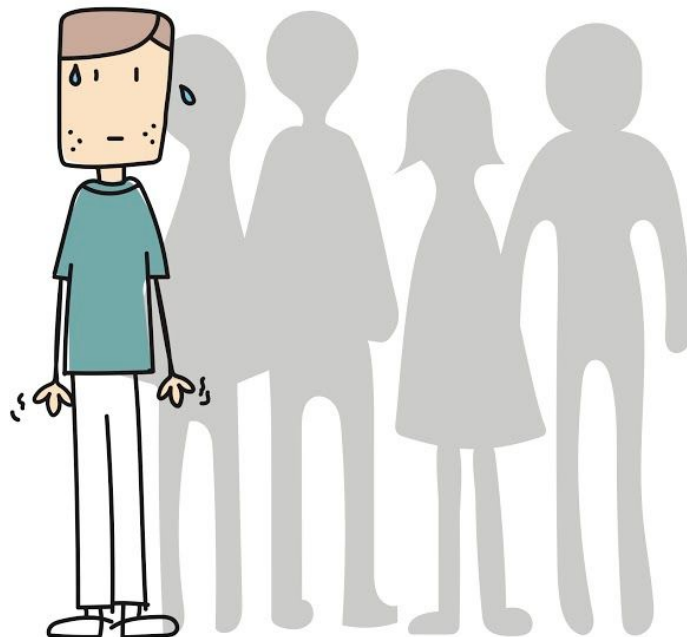


PUBLIC TRANSPORT
TRIGGERS A LOT OF
ANXIETY IN ME



BRIGHTON STATION	
ROUTE	DESTINATION
1	FEAR
2	ANXIETY
3	PANIC

I TRY TO KEEP
MY FEAR INSIDE,
WILL THEY
UNDERSTAND?



Thank you for taking the time to support the Hidden Stories project. We hope this work inspires you. And that together we can help to break the stigmatisation that surrounds invisible illness and build a more caring and compassionate community.

Yours,

Jessica Cheetham

Producer: Jessica Cheetham | 07746 313 410 | jessica@rootexperience.org
<http://www.rootexperience.org> | @rootexperience | #Hidden

