

PTSD Awareness Event Coming to Second Life December 19

Posted by

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PEJ News - jplatt - Fearless Nation, the online community for people suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), will host a massive online event in Second Life (SL), the online virtual environment, to bring awareness to the needs of PTSD survivors and their families. The "Be Fearless" event will run for 24 hours beginning at midnight PST (UTC -8) on December 19, 2009 and run through midnight PST on December 20.

The event will include an open house of the Fearless Nation Second Life community, information and resources about PTSD, and an art show entitled "From the Abyss," allowing visitors to see the world through the eyes of a PTSD survivor. It will also include 24 hours of music and dancing spearheaded by DJ Britsurfer Bauer. Gifts, prizes and SL land giveaways donated by SL residents will also be offered to attendees.

Second Life SLURL: <http://slurl.com/secondlife/Paradise%20Aloha/76/121/25>
www.fearless-nation.org Fearless Nation, the online community for people suffering from Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), will host a massive online event in Second Life (SL), the online virtual environment, to bring awareness to the needs of PTSD survivors and their families. The "Be Fearless" event will run for 24 hours beginning at midnight PST (UTC -8) on December 19, 2009 and run through midnight PST on December 20.

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"The 'Be Fearless' event is an opportunity to raise awareness about PTSD and to dispel the stigmas associated with this disorder," says Colleen Crary, founder of Fearless Nation. "We live in a world where it is estimated that 14 percent of the population may have some form of PTSD, yet it remains a highly misunderstood condition."

PTSD can result when one has experienced actual or threatened death or serious injury; threat to one's physical integrity; witnessing an event that involves death, injury, or a threat to the physical integrity of another person; learning about unexpected or violent death, serious harm, or threat of death or injury experienced by a family member or other close associate. Characteristic symptoms include persistent re-experiencing of the traumatic event; persistent avoidance of stimuli associated with the trauma; numbing of general responsiveness; and persistent symptoms of increased anxiety.

Fearless Nation is an international multicultural community of PTSD and trauma survivors, offering support, education and understanding of PTSD. The group welcomes PTSD sufferers, their families, friends, and clinicians, war veterans, law enforcement personnel, emergency response workers, torture and crime victims, man-made and natural disaster survivors, and survivors of all traumas.

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Fearless Nation uses immersion in the Second Life Virtual Reality Environment (VRE) to give traumatized individuals experiences in social interaction and avatar activities that promote trust, skill mastery, and health through:

- * Creation of a flexible "physical" presence (the avatar)
- * Control over environment (can build, create own space, choose interactions)
- * Education about PTSD (knowledge is power)
- * Trying activities that diminish fear and anxiety such as:
 - o Talking openly in a safe space about traumatic experiences
 - o Progressive muscle relaxation (avatar yoga, movement, dance)
 - o Performance (music, singing, speaking, poetry, storytelling, dance, showing art, speech-making, etc.)
 - o Creative expression (music, art, poetry, clothing, etc.)
- * Social interaction with others (rebuilding social skills)
- * Supporting other PTSDers (getting outside one's own trauma)
- * Receiving support from other PTSDers (accepting help and rebuilding social skills)
- * Advocating for PTSD awareness and treatment (giving back)
- * Trying new ways to approach problems (re-conceive the perception of traumatic experiences)

"I see the virtual environment of Second Life to be of great value to PTSD sufferers and their families," says Crary. "Research has shown that virtual reality environments can help people with PTSD to re-train their brains toward healing and recovery through shared experiences. SL provides the perfect environment for this approach, and despite the heavy hardware required, is low-cost and accessible to those seeking help. It provides privacy and anonymity for those seeking community."

If you are not already a "resident" of SL, you can get a free account and avatar at www.secondlife.com. Once you have an account, you may attend or participate in the "Be Fearless" event by visiting the SL events page for December 19 or going to the Second Life SURL: <http://slurl.com/secondlife/Paradise%20Aloha/76/121/25>. You can also find the Fearless Nation community by searching in SL for "PTSD" or by visiting the Fearless Nation website at www.fearless-nation.org.