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May 27, 2016

Writing as Therapy: Women's Writing on Vulvodynia

Thank you for your positive response to my invite to contribute a piece of your own writing for inclusion in my book with the working title *Writing as Therapy: Women's Writing on Vulvodynia*.

I envisage the book to be a mosaic of our stories, consisting of long or short written pieces voicing the real experiences of women with Generalized Vulvodynia or Provoked Vestibulodynia (PVD), accompanied by a foreword and supporting text by me. I'm hoping that writing this book will contribute to greater awareness and openness about these conditions. Reading first-hand accounts by other women who have been there can also be helpful to women who have not been diagnosed. The benefits could extend to women's various relationships and interactions with others, including spouses/partners, family members, medical doctors and psychologists, to name a few. Although writing is a confirmed form of treatment for healing from traumas, nevertheless the process can sometimes cause distress. I sincerely hope this is not the case for you, but I enclose a list of resources where you could obtain support if you should experience psychological distress when writing about your experience with vulvodynia.

Having indicated that you are willing to contribute your writing anonymously, here is what to do:

1. Format: I leave the type and style of writing open to your own creativity. Any short or long piece in any form will be welcome, ranging from a factual account of any kind like an anecdote, an observation or a diary entry to an imaginative sketch, a story or poem; in short, any original, written expression of your feelings and experiences about having vulvodynia and living with it, relating to any stage from before being diagnosed to the present.

Please send me your writing either by email at writing.as.therapy@ubc.ca or by snail mail, addressed to me at my departmental address above by July 29, 2016. The written piece you send me should not exceed 4,000 words, but could be considerably shorter if you decide to write a poem or a brief paragraph.

2. Time: You could spend 20-30 minutes on the writing or as much time as you would like. There are no expectations other than that it should be a genuine and original piece of writing by you reflecting your experience, however short or long.

3. Content: It is only regarding content that you are asked to restrict yourself to the topic of your own experience with Generalized Vulvodynia or PVD. The purpose of the book is to create more openness about these conditions and about our experiences. Although this is a sensitive and private matter to write about, I am hoping that making our voices heard will benefit many other women with vulvodynia and bring about more understanding of the condition.

4. Privacy: You are welcome to send me your writing under your own name or under a pseudonym. Please indicate clearly whether you wish your writing to be completely anonymous or whether you would like to be recognised in the book, and give me your name exactly as you would want it to appear.

5. Permission: Please confirm that you are granting permission for your written material to be used by checking the box below and returning this letter with your contribution, either electronically or as a paper copy.

Permission to use the material:

My written material sent to Dr. Ina Biermann may be used, under my name or anonymously, in full or in part in her book on women's writing on their experiences with Generalized Vulvodynia or PVD (with the provisional, working title *Writing as Therapy: Women's Writing on Vulvodynia* and future research by her on women's writing about vulvodynia.

Your name or pseudonym exactly as you want it to appear in the book:

*Please check
this box to
confirm
permission:*

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If you have any concerns or complaints about your rights as a research participant and/or your experiences while participating in this study, contact the Research Participant Complaint Line in the UBC Office of Research Ethics at 604-822-8598 or if long distance email RSIL@ors.ubc.ca or call toll free 1-877-822-8598.

Many thanks that you are participating in this project. I'm looking forward to receiving your writing. Please contact me if you have any questions.

Best wishes,



Ina Biermann, DLitt et Phil
Lecturer, Department of English, UBC

Encl. Participant list of resources