

# well, this sucks.

ptsd sucks. a self guided journal to help you cope after a traumatic event.



anna cook | hannah scott | julia casey | amanda bagwell

***well, this sucks*** is an outlet for survivors of natural disasters dealing with PTSD. This journal guides the user to confront, understand, and cope with their trauma through a series of writing, drawing, coloring and breathing exercises.



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# the problem



After a natural disaster victims seek immediate physical aid including food, shelter, rescue, and medical assistance. Often times, mental health is generally overlooked and pushed aside to attend to more 'important' needs. Victims of natural disasters have suffered through displacement, injuries, loss of family members, friends and/or personal belongings, all due to something out of their control. That dramatic of a shift in lifestyle comes at a cost, and in many cases, it can come in the form of PTSD. **It is averaged that about 5% to 10% of the people who have lived through a natural disaster will suffer with PTSD.**

In many instances, PTSD goes untreated and can lead to grave consequences for those dealing with it, such as suicide or harm to oneself or others. The people suffering may not even know what to look for, how to cope, or get through this mental illness, and with our journal we hope to make that process a bit easier.

# background



In 2017, Hurricane Maria ripped through Puerto Rico, causing massive physical damages and many people to be displaced. Due to these drastic changes many of the people developed PTSD. Adults, reported after five months had an increase of 29% in suicide rates, and during Hurricane Sandy, telephone screening revealed that 14.5% of adults tested positive for PTSD.

In adults, some of the most common symptoms were anxiety, avoidance, depression, outbursts of anger, and paranoia that the disaster could happen again. One woman stated that she wished “to not wake up or feel pain anymore.”

# user group

Young adults make up a large percentage of those affected by PTSD. Often times, they are inexperienced in handling difficult emotional trauma and don't have the resources to get help. By working with this group, we are able to mold the way they cope with trauma. Conditioning their coping mechanisms in positive ways helps to prevent negative behaviors that may affect the rest of their lives.

This group is also poised to enter into the real world, and by learning to cope with their trauma, they will be better prepared to handle those challenges. This journal can aid in helping them feel safe and confident in their environments. Additionally, therapy can be expensive, or unavailable to many. Since this age group may not necessarily have access to their own funds, or have their family support them, our product would be a simple solution while still having access to learn how to deal with their trauma moving forward.

# understanding ptsd

## causes



Child Abuse



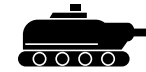
Serious Accident



Terrorist Attack



Natural Disaster



Combat



Assault

A variety of incidents can cause PTSD, and it can affect people of any age. About 10% of people who live through a natural disaster will suffer from some form of PTSD.

# understanding ptsd

## symptoms



Avoidance



Reliving the event



Negative Changes in Beliefs



Feeling Anxious/Hyper

People who have PTSD experience physical, mental, and emotional symptoms that can go unnoticed for years. These may include headaches, anxiety, depression, negative thoughts, flashbacks, avoidance, and more. Each person's experience with PTSD is very different, but they often experience similar symptoms no matter the traumatic event.



# understanding ptsd

## treatments



CBT Cognitive Behavioral Therapy



COT Cognitive Processing Therapy



PET Prolonged Exposure Therapy

CBT is the most common and effective treatment for PTSD. It involves working with a therapist and talking/recalling memories. COT is a similar method, but includes other forms of recalling memories which include writing, drawing, and meditations. PET involves the process of actually dealing with the exposure to thoughts, events, feelings, and situations that may arise from CBT and COT.

# psychotherapy

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy is one of the most widely used and effective methods in treating PTSD. The goal of CBT is to create a healthy way of thinking about the trauma the survivor experienced. In this process, the survivor first identifies their automatic responses and thoughts towards the trauma and begins to gain more awareness of those thoughts. The next step is to process the worst occurrences of their experience by confronting these memories and writing them as they remember the event. This helps them change their thought process surrounding the event and promotes ways of understanding why they feel the way they do about that the trauma. By the end, the survivor has learned how to manage their thoughts about the trauma and can deploy healthy coping mechanisms when dealing with negative emotions later in life.

## Prolonged Exposure Therapy

At the beginning of PE, the therapist generally will use breathing meditations to learn how to calm some forms of anxiety. By practicing the breathing techniques, it allows the survivor to have a better plan of action for when they are experiencing an anxiety attack. Thus learning how to feel in control of their emotions.

# constraints



Mental Illness Rates



Cost for Therapy



Delayed Symptoms



self guidance

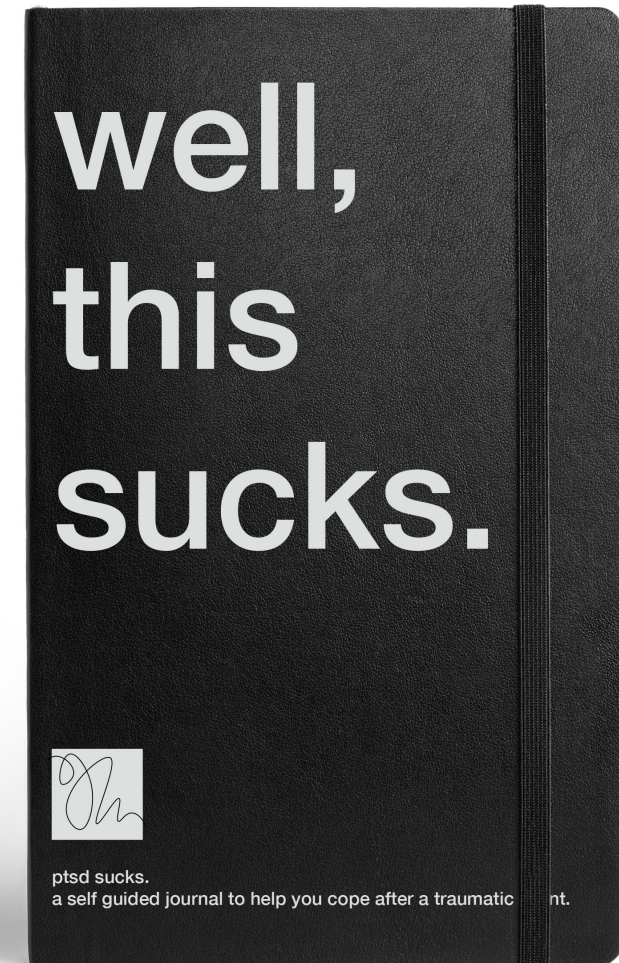


mental health as priority

**well, this sucks** aims to help survivors to process, understand and work through the emotions they're feeling, after a natural disaster. Through creative expression, this journal provides drawing, breathing and relaxation exercises and techniques. Fixing all of the victims trauma is not the desired outcome. The hope is that they better understand their emotions and can start to rebuild themselves.

Compact and portable, the journal provides an outlet for the owner in any space they feel most comfortable in, or just wherever the mood strikes them. Throughout the journal, there are inspirational quotes used to motivate and inspire the owner. There are also self-care tips that provide breathing exercises and other types of meditation practices to help the owner heal from their trauma.

The journal is meant to treat its users as adults and to be an empathetic and safe space for survivors to work through their trauma. It may act as a capsule for them to remember the steps they took to heal and the tragic event they survived.

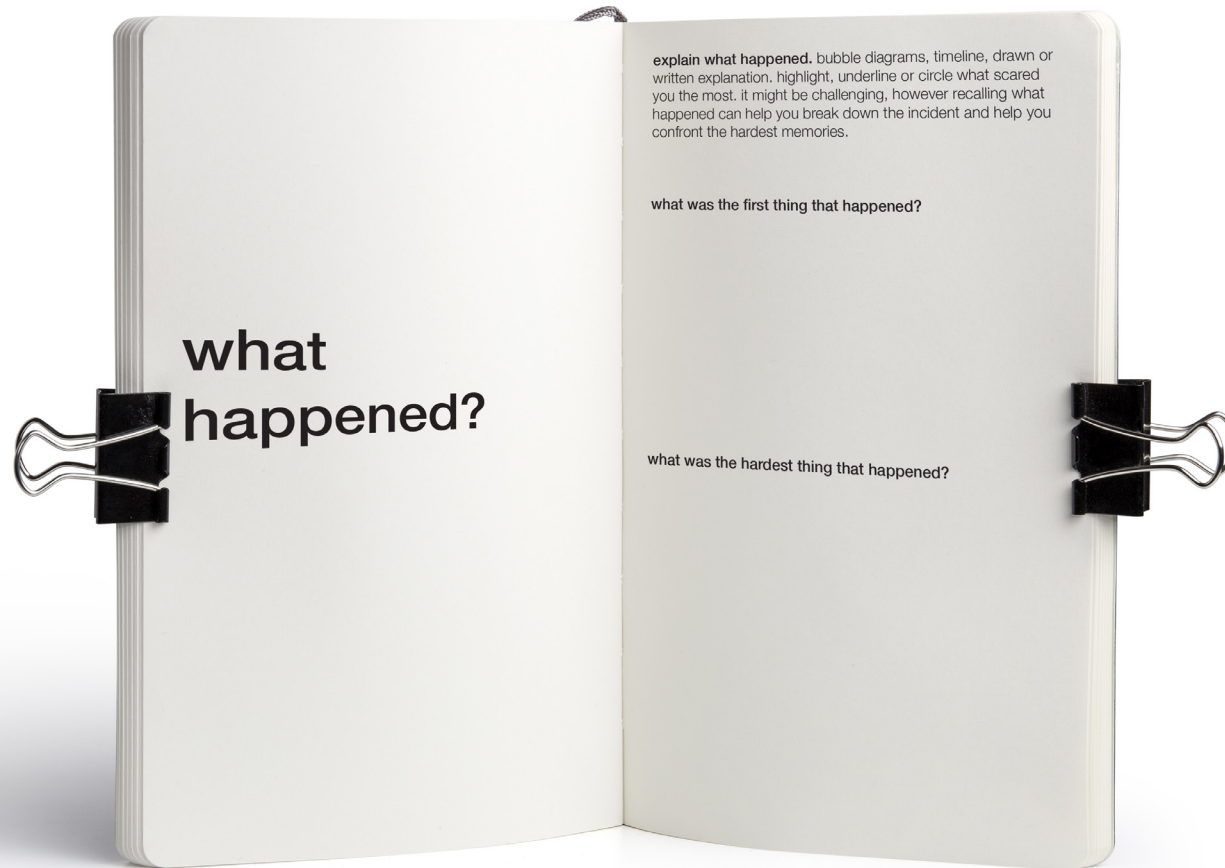




***well, this sucks*** has a minimalist design and few color options. This approach allows users of a wide age range (kids to young adults) to both understand through simplicity but also leaves plenty of room for creativity and self-exploration.

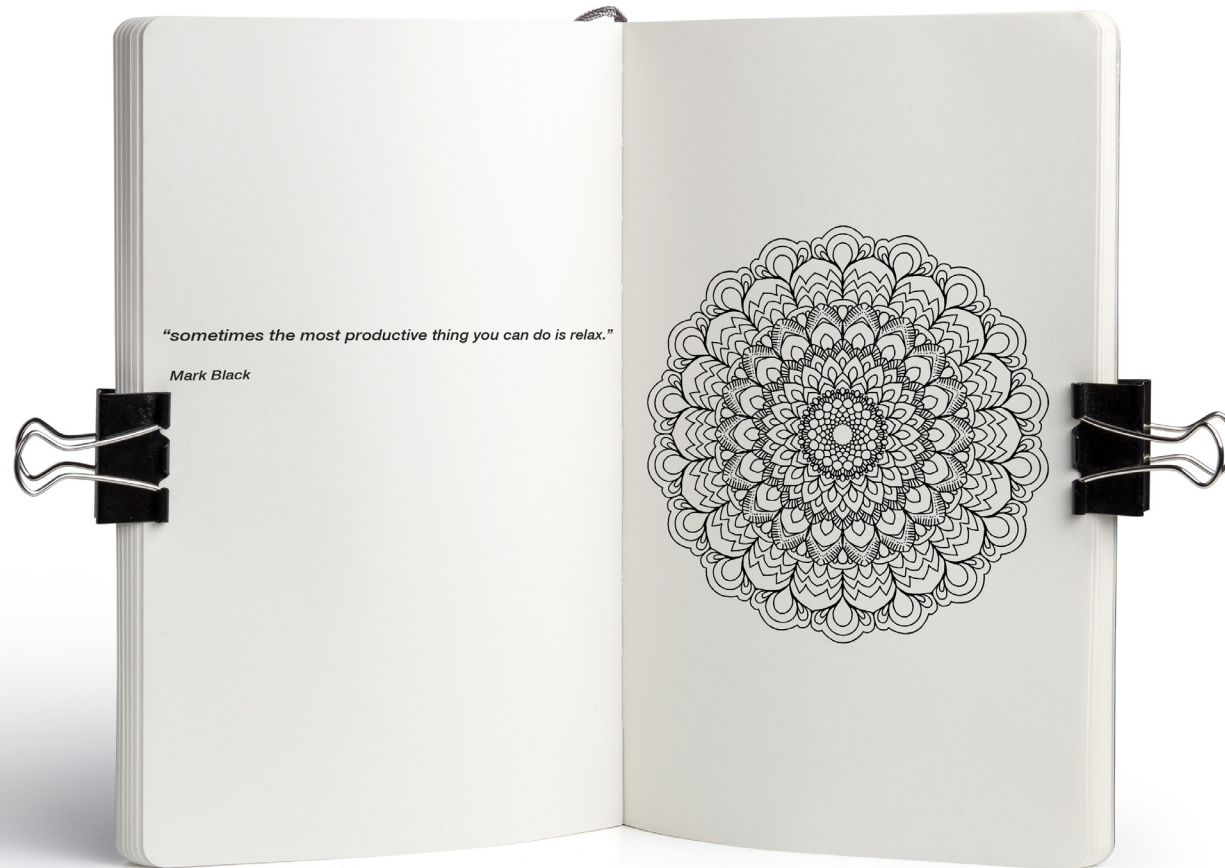


***well, this sucks*** is designed to encourage self-guided creativity while easing the user through methods of coping with PTSD.



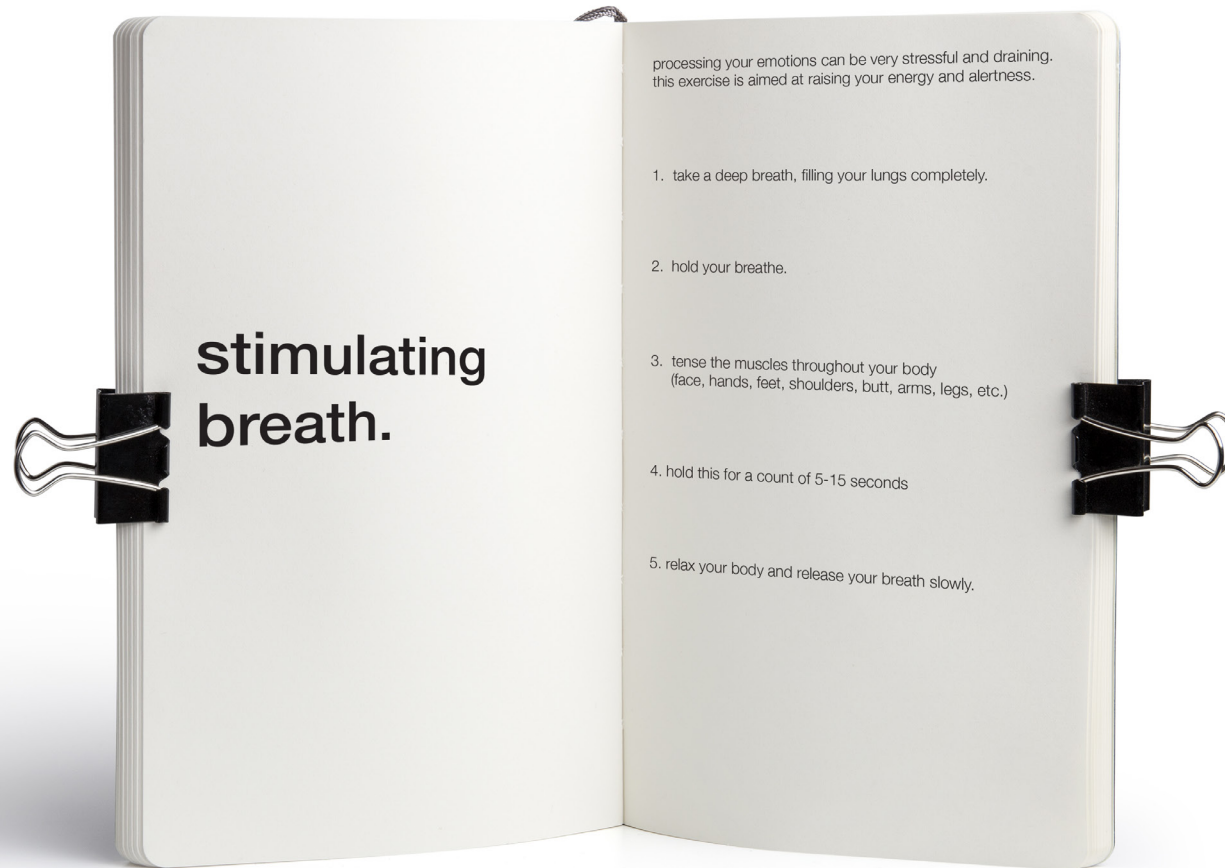
Methods of CBT, COT, and PET are included through a series of writing prompts. These prompts ask the user to identify and recall events, track their anxiety and triggers, and take time to think about the positives in their life.





Art therapy is also included. Some of these ask the user to recall events. Others are simply drawing, coloring, and scribbling prompts that are meant to relax the user, allowing them to take breaks from the CBT and COT prompts.





Methods of COT are scattered throughout the journal. These take the form of various breathing walkthroughs and meditations.

# benefits

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT)
- Allows for people to vent or be distracted
- Helps sort through thoughts and how the event happened,
- Not feel judged by others

Blank and minimalist pages allows for creativity

- A way to show steps took to gain control over their emotions
- Provide a means of meditation and mindfulness
- Can look back and say they conquered the event
- Inexpensive compared to therapy

# next steps

The next steps in the process to further create and refine this product would be to include testing this information with someone who suffers from PTSD and make changes based on their feedback. As well as make a large amount of copies and hand them out to people within our target age range with surveys attached to them. Additionally, reach out to other therapists about using more methods for helping cope with PTSD, using higher quality paper, binding and cover. Finally, incorporate other sensory experiences with the journal (visual, vibration, smell, touch).

# sources

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