

Survivors Demand Action: National Campaign Calls on APA to Recognize Complex PTSD in the DSM

The Healing and CPTSD Foundation launches Census, Petition, and CPTSD Alliance during the second annual CPTSD Awareness Month

NEW YORK, NY, UNITED STATES, August 21, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Millions of Americans living with Complex PTSD (CPTSD) remain invisible in U.S. mental health care. Although the World Health Organization has recognized CPTSD since 2018, the American Psychiatric Association (APA) continues to exclude it from the DSM — leaving survivors misdiagnosed, under-treated, and denied access to proper care.

“Survivors are building what the system failed to provide. Recognition in the DSM is long overdue—and we won’t stop until it happens.”

Danielle Carpio

This September, during the second annual CPTSD Awareness Month, The Healing and CPTSD Foundation is launching a nationwide campaign to change that.

“We’re not asking to be seen, we’re demanding it,” said Danielle Carpio, Founder & President of The Healing and CPTSD Foundation. “Survivors are building the research, the resources, and the communities that the system has failed to provide. Recognition in the DSM is long overdue — and we won’t stop until it happens.”

Four Campaign Pillars

The Foundation’s advocacy campaign is anchored in four major initiatives:

The CPTSD Alliance – A survivor-led coalition uniting individuals, organizations, clinicians, and researchers to push for recognition, research, and resources.

The CPTSD Census – The first survivor-driven, trauma-informed data initiative designed to map the real impact of CPTSD on healthcare, relationships, work, and daily life. Findings will guide systemic reform and policy proposals.

Global Petition to the APA – A growing petition urging the APA to finally include Complex PTSD in

the DSM.

New DSM Proposal – The Foundation is actively preparing a new formal proposal for CPTSD's DSM inclusion, working alongside researchers, clinicians, and survivor experts to challenge decades of inaction.

The Hidden Toll of CPTSD

CPTSD develops from prolonged trauma such as childhood abuse, neglect, domestic violence, or systemic harm. Unlike single-incident PTSD, Complex PTSD stems from long-term trauma exposure and often includes emotional dysregulation, hypervigilance, chronic shame, relationship struggles, and nervous system distress.

Survivors often wait years or even decades before receiving a correct diagnosis. In the meantime, they are misdiagnosed with conditions such as depression, anxiety, or borderline personality disorder — labels that stigmatize and fail to treat the root cause.

A Personal Fight for Recognition

For Carpio, the diagnosis itself was life-changing.

“When I was finally diagnosed with CPTSD, it was the first time I realized there wasn’t something fundamentally wrong with me — there was something fundamentally wrong with what happened to me. That shift changed everything, and it’s why this fight for recognition matters so deeply.”

Call to Action

The Healing and CPTSD Foundation is urging journalists, policymakers, clinicians, and the public to amplify this movement and help end survivor invisibility.

[Take the CPTSD Census](#)

[Join the CPTSD Alliance](#)

[Sign the Petition](#)

“If the APA continues to deny CPTSD, it is actively choosing to ignore millions of survivors,” Carpio added. “This September, we’re calling on the world to stand with survivors. Recognition starts with visibility — and together, we can end the silence around CPTSD.”

About The Healing and CPTSD Foundation

The Healing and CPTSD Foundation is the first nonprofit organization dedicated solely to supporting survivors of Complex PTSD. Founded by survivors, for survivors, the Foundation provides education, advocacy, and financial assistance for those navigating the long-term impacts of trauma. With the world's largest trauma-informed community, the Foundation is breaking the silence around CPTSD and pushing for systemic change.

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