

Expressive Writing



Writing about difficult experiences in our lives can improve physical and mental health. Scientific research has found that expressive writing has a positive impact on physical and emotional health. Be sure to experiment and find a style of writing that works well for you.

What to Write About

- Something that you are thinking or worrying about too much
- Something that you are dreaming about
- Something that you feel is affecting your life in an unhealthy way
- Something that you have been avoiding for days, weeks, or years

Getting Ready to Write

1. Find a time and place where you won't be disturbed.
2. Write for a minimum of 15 minutes a day for at least 3 or 4 consecutive days.
3. Once you begin writing, write continuously. Don't worry about spelling or grammar. If you run out of things to write about, just repeat what you have already written.
4. You can write by hand or you can type on a computer. If you are unable to write, you can also talk into a tape recorder.
5. You can write about the same thing on all 3-4 days you can write about something different each day. It is entirely up to you.

Instructions for writing

Over the next four days, write about challenging/upsetting experience in your life. Really let go and explore your feelings and thoughts about it. In your writing, you might tie this experience to your childhood, your relationship with your parents, people you have loved or love now, or even your career. How is this experience related to who you would like to become, who you have been in the past, or who you are now?

You can write about the same issue every day or a series of different issues. Whatever you choose to write about, however, it is critical that you really let go and explore your very deepest emotions and thoughts.

Warning: *Many people report that after writing, they sometimes feel somewhat sad or depressed. Like seeing a sad movie, this is normal and typically goes away in a couple of hours. If you find that you are getting extremely upset about a writing topic, bring this up with your provider during the next appointment.*

What to do with your writings

Many people choose to share their writings with their provider to go over them together during an appointment. This can help you understand what you have written and help you with any obstacles or “stuck points” you might encounter. Whether or not you choose to share your writing with your provider, keep in mind that the writing is for you and for you only. Its purpose is for you to be completely honest with yourself, and to help you make sense out of what has happened to you. Whether you keep it or save it is completely up to you.

