

MENTAL HEALTH

THERAPEUTIC WRITING

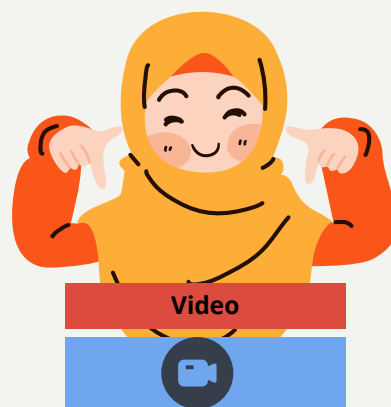
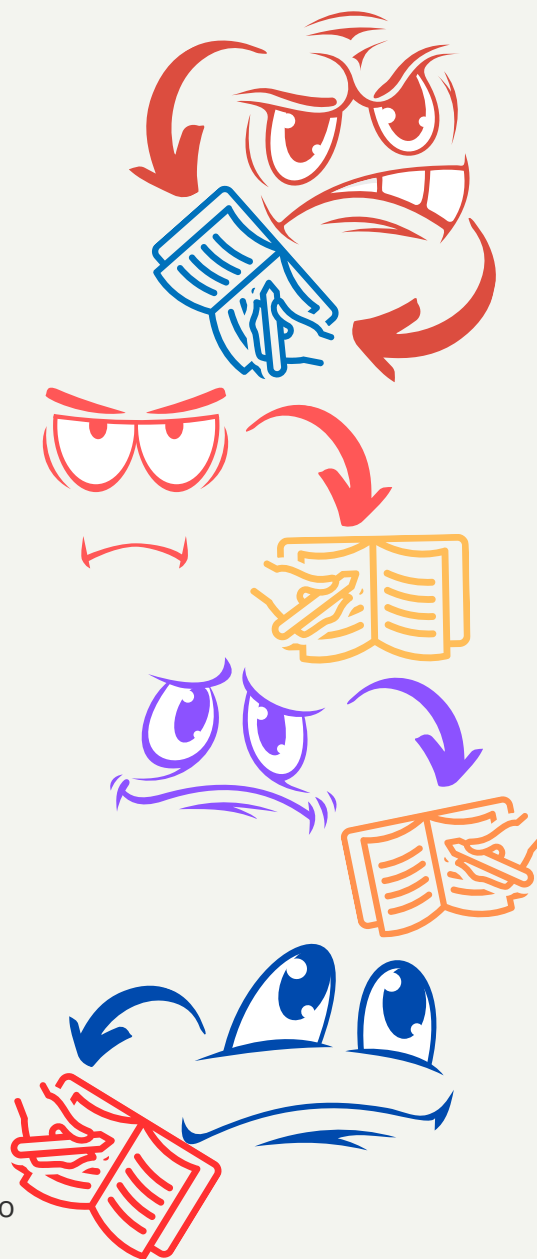
Therapeutic writing or journaling is a space where you can record your feelings, fears, or worries. This activity helps us better understand all our daily thoughts and emotions so we can reflect on them. The more you write, the more patterns you will find. Writing about our lives in detail can help us cope better with stress and anxiety while improving our emotional development.

HOW TO START

1. Write about what's been on your mind and how it began.
 - a. Describe your fears and the problems you are going through in detail. Is this worry something that could really happen, or is it your imagination making it bigger?
2. Look at what you wrote. Ask yourself: 'Is this the whole story?'
 - a. Think of other times you felt scared or unsure. What can you say back to the worry to make it smaller or go away?
3. If you feel better after responding to your problem, think about what worked and write it down. If your reaction didn't help, write something new you could try next time when dealing with a similar situation.

TIPS

- Be open to express your feelings
 - It's better to recognize your emotions than to try to suppress them.
- Write your journal in the present tense.
- Don't worry about spelling.
- Use a notebook or phone app
 - The important thing is to have a space where you can write and capture your thoughts.
- Be honest when you write. Do not write things that didn't happen, or try to improve the way you acted.
- Keep your journal in a safe place.



Watch the following video explaining therapeutic writing:

The information in this handout is based on FamilySearch.org.

If you are interested in learning more about different self-help strategies, visit our Unaccompanied Children Resource Center at ucresourcecenter.org.

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IDEAS FOR STARTING A JOURNAL



Photo Journal

Choose personal photos and answer a series of questions about them. The questions may include: "How do you feel when you look at these pictures?", and "What do you want to say to the people, places, or things in these pictures?"

Letter to Someone

Write a letter to someone explaining how you feel and the problems you're experiencing at the moment. You can write to anyone you want—a loved one, or even yourself. It's not necessary to send the letter; you just need to express what you're going through.



Timed Topic

Choose a specific topic and then write about it for a short period, usually between 5 to 15 minutes.

Sentence Starters

Complete several sentences with as much explanation and detail as possible. Some examples include: "What worries me the most is...", "I have trouble sleeping when...", or "My happiest memory is..."

Lo que más me preocupa es _____

Tengo problemas para dormir cuando _____

Mi recuerdo más feliz es _____



100 List

Write 100 items related to a selected topic. You'll likely repeat some items or identify patterns that you can reflect on afterward. Some possible topics include: 100 reasons to wake up in the morning; 100 things I love; 100 things I want to do in my life.

Dialogue

Create a conversation with two perspectives or two positions. For example, you can write a conversation between your childhood self and your future self. This process can increase awareness and expand your perspective on the topic you discuss.



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