

GUIDE TO JOURNAL WRITING

Journal writing (JW) can be a healthy and therapeutic exercise. It involves a daily reflection on your experiences and the recording of that reflection in a notebook solely devoted to journaling and/or as email communication to your therapist. The Journal writing does a number of very positive things:

1. JW provides a structured activity intended as an extension of therapy sessions
2. JW requires that you take responsibility for your growth and healing
3. JW involves you in your growth and healing on a daily basis
4. JW helps you explore your thoughts, feelings, and experiences
5. JW provides you with the opportunity to reflect and draw conclusions, make connections, and discover insights about your thoughts, feelings, and experiences
6. JW can help your decision making process, discerning choices and courses of action
7. JW can help raise new issues of concern or help resolve those you are presently working on
8. JW can help you track unwanted behavior and track successes in implementing new, healthier behavior
9. JW can help you take action in your life

How you write your journal and what it will look like will depend on a number of things such as:

1. the specific issues you are working on
2. whether or not you enjoy writing
3. your personality:
 - a. Are you reflective by nature? If not you may need to learn to be more reflective
 - b. Are you philosophic or pragmatic? Your journal entries will reflect that orientation
 - c. Are you disciplined and consistent or do you procrastinate and avoid? This will be reflected in the time you invest in your JW, how often you actually reflect and write, etc. If

you procrastinate. An email journal with your therapist may prove helpful in keeping you on-task

- d. Are you self-directed? This will impact how much or how little structure you will need imposed on your JW*
- 4. Your level of commitment to the process and to actively working on your particular issues*

- 5. Whether you are writing only for yourself or for specific use in therapy sessions. In the case of the latter, an email journal with your therapist may be most helpful*

Journal Writing can be an important adjunct to your therapy. Work closely with your therapist – he/she can assist you in developing an effective plan!

**Act For Today
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