

HOW TO JOURNAL FOR MENTAL HEALTH

Journaling is a tool for self-expression, self-awareness, and self-improvement. It is an amazing way to let go of all your emotions, thoughts, feelings, and to track your triggers and stressors. Plus, it is a great for reflecting and planning. These things make journaling a wonderful habit for maintaining mental health.

There is increasing evidence to support the notion that journaling has a positive impact on physical well-being. Journaling can help you:

- Manage anxiety
- Reduce stress
- Cope with depression
- Track any symptoms day-to-day so that you can recognize triggers and learn ways to better control them
- Provide an opportunity for positive self-talk and identifying negative thoughts and behaviors

So, how do you use your journal for mental health?

- Write about anything and everything. Oftentimes, I



- write just a few words in my daily log, but if I have a lot I want to get out, I will print out a piece of graph paper and go to town.
- Have a conversation with yourself. Write as if you were talking to someone else. Answer your own questions and experiment. Use the prompts and templates to think, envision, write, and process.
- Write out a daily and weekly rhythm. A rhythm is a routine that creates a framework for your typical day. Planning a daily rhythm will help you connect with yourself and others, stay focused, get organized, keep your household running smoothly, and help you find the time to do the things you love.
- Track your habits. It will keep you accountable in self-care, mindful living, your eating and sleeping habits, and more.
- Record gratitude and affirmations.

Tips on journaling:

- Don't make it complicated. The focus is on doing it. Get something on paper and go from there. You'll eventually find your groove and style.
- Be flexible and give yourself grace. You will go through different seasons

when you write more or less or have to change things up. That is perfectly fine and why I set this up as a "print-as-you-go" journal: flexibility.

- Add journaling to your daily rhythm and stick to it. This way it becomes a habit (that you look forward to!) and not a chore.
- When possible, create a relaxing environment for journaling to be still, listen, and let your thoughts flow.
- Use your journal as you see fit. If you don't want to share your journal with anyone, great! If you do want to share some of your thoughts with trusted friends and loved ones, great! If you want to share it with the world, great!
- This journal is about you, and it's for you. It really, truly should have your roots and soul, so don't put form over function. Besides, if you really screw up, you can always recycle that page and print a new one. If you get in a habit of not being real within your journal, it's not going to help you as much as it can.

I hope you look forward to your journaling time. Know that you're doing something good for your mind and body. Know that this is a worthwhile investment in yourself.

