

Journaling for Mental Health: A Practical Guide to Emotional Wellness

American songwriter Lucy Dacus made a powerful statement saying, "A journal is your completely unaltered voice." Journaling can be a useful outlet to reduce stress, process events and emotions, and help improve overall wellbeing. Whether you purchase a blank notebook or open the "notes" app on your phone, there are a variety of approaches to take when starting to journal.

Take a look at some of the different types of journaling:

Gratitude: Gratitude journaling involves regularly documenting things for which you are thankful, cultivating a positive mindset and promoting well-being. A simple tip to start is to set aside a few minutes each day to jot down three things you're grateful for. Whether big or small, this practice helps shift your focus towards positivity, fostering a greater sense of appreciation and mindfulness in your daily life.

Visual: Visual journaling is a creative and introspective practice that involves expressing thoughts, feelings, and experiences through images, drawings, and mixed media in a journal format. It allows for a visual representation of one's inner world. A tip to get started is to reserve a dedicated space in your journal for images, doodles, or even collages that resonate with your emotions or experiences. Let your creativity flow without judgment and use this visual exploration as a means of self-discovery and expression.

Stream-of-consciousness: Stream-of-consciousness journaling is a free-flowing, unfiltered writing technique where you jot down your thoughts as they come to mind, without worrying about grammar, structure, or coherence. It's a way to tap into your subconscious and explore your inner dialogue. To start, set a timer for a designated period (e.g., 10 minutes) and write continuously, allowing your thoughts to spill onto the page without censorship. This process can unveil insights, release pent-up emotions, and serve as a powerful tool for self-reflection.

Bullet journaling: Bullet journaling is a versatile and visual method of personal organization. It allows individuals to create a customized planner that suits their unique needs and preferences. This could include calendars, to-do lists, goal-trackers, habit-trackers, and a diary all in one. To begin, all you need is a dot grid notebook, and a no-bleed pen (or a pack of different colored pens; pick your preference!). Think about what purpose you want your bullet journal to have and organize the pages accordingly.



Some of the benefits of journaling:

1. **Helps reduce stress, and possibly boost health and wellbeing:** Allowing yourself to write out your deepest thoughts and feelings can help lower blood pressure and improve your mood.
2. **Provides a way to process emotions:** When you name and accept the specific emotions you are experiencing, it reduces their strength. Doing this in a safe contained space, encourages space from negative thoughts and allows you to look at them objectively.
3. **Manages worry and obsessive thoughts:** by externalizing anxious and intrusive thoughts, you can set them aside or look objectively for possible alternative solutions.

References

[Discover 8 Journaling Techniques for Better Mental Health | Psychology Today](#)

[What Is a Bullet Journal? How Beginners Can Get Started \(oprahdaily.com\)](#)

[15 Benefits of Journaling and Tips for Getting Started \(healthline.com\)](#)

[The Mental Health Benefits of Journaling | Psych Central](#)

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