

- Journaling / Diaries / Mental health

## Try journalling

Writing down your thoughts and feelings can boost your mental health.

The Week - Junior · 16 Jun 2023 · 19

Adiary is for keeping note of your day-to-day activities; a journal is where you can explore your thoughts.



### What is journalling?

Journalling is writing down whatever you're thinking and feeling. It can include your dreams, fears, hopes, ideas and worries. You can use any notebook, it doesn't have to be a special one. Your journal is a place where you can write down what you find difficult to say out loud. You can use prompts or questions to guide your writing, such as, "What am I proud of?" or, "How can I be kind today?" (see panel for more suggestions), or you can write whatever comes into your mind. You don't have to keep what you've written. You can tear up the piece of paper afterwards if you like.

### How journalling helps

Your journal is just for you. No-one else needs to see it, so you are free to write whatever you like. By writing in your journal you can work through a problem or puzzle as if you're in conversation with yourself.

Chartered psychologist (an expert in thoughts and feelings) Suzy Reading advises doing a "brain dump" before bed. "Jot down all the things buzzing about in your head to calm your busy mind," she says. Cross off the things that you have no control over, or the things that don't actually bother you. "Highlight what you need to remember or work through, reminding yourself it's not time for that now, it's time to rest."

### How to start journalling

You can start journalling straight away, all you need is paper and pen or pencil. If you want to be able to re-read your writing, choose a notebook to be your journal. Do you want to

write when you feel like it or would you like to make it a habit? For example, you could write every day when you get home from school to help calm your mind. You can choose how long you write for or how much you write. Some days you might have more to say than on others. It isn't schoolwork so don't worry about spelling, grammar or punctuation. If you get stuck, Suzy Reading suggests drawing. "Even colours can be a helpful way to express yourself and let go. Don't pressure yourself to make it beautiful, this is about having fun and being yourself."