

- Journaling

Journal writing can improve mental health

Positive effects of journalling on mental, emotional health

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FINDING a way to process emotions and experiences has become increasingly important, especially at a surrounding that often feels overwhelming and constantly demands on our time and attention.



Journalling, a simple yet powerful practice, has long been recognised as a tool for self-reflection and emotional well-being. Here is how journalling can serve as a tool for mental health.

Power of self-awareness

One of the primary benefits of journalling is its ability to foster self-awareness. By writing down thoughts, feelings and experiences, individuals gain a clearer understanding of their emotions and behaviours. Journalling creates a safe space for introspection, allowing people to explore their inner world without judgement. Over time, this practice helps to identify patterns in thinking and emotional responses, leading to a deeper awareness of one's mental and emotional landscape.

Mood improvement and stress reduction

Journalling has been shown to have a profound impact on mood regulation and stress reduction. Writing about emotions, particularly challenging or difficult ones, allows individuals to process their feelings in a structured way. This act can lead to a sense of relief and reduced emotional tension. Numerous studies support the idea that expressive writing, particularly about stressful or traumatic experiences, helps individuals to cope with negative emotions, ultimately improving their mental health.

Journalling helps regulate mood by encouraging positive thinking. Many people use gratitude journals, a specific form of journalling that focuses on recording things they are thankful for each day. This practice helps individuals focus on the positives in their lives, which can improve overall happiness and reduce feelings of anxiety and depression. By consistently reflecting on positive aspects of life, even during challenging times, individu-

als can train their minds to focus on gratitude and optimism, leading to long-term mood improvement.

Emotional clarity and decision-making

When faced with a difficult decision or confusing emotions, journalling can provide clarity. Writing out thoughts helps organise and untangle emotions that may feel overwhelming or complex. By seeing their thoughts laid out on paper, individuals can more easily understand their feelings and motivations, making it easier to arrive at a decision or solution.

Personal growth

Beyond emotional clarity, journalling serves as a powerful tool for personal growth. Regularly writing about experiences, goals and dreams encourages self-reflection and personal development. By setting intentions and tracking progress, individuals can see how far they have come over time, reinforcing their sense of achievement and motivating future growth.

Journalling encourages a growth mindset – the belief that abilities and intelligence can be developed through effort and perseverance. By reflecting on successes and failures in a journal, individuals can recognise that setbacks are part of the learning process rather than indications of personal failure. This shift in perspective fosters resilience and encourages a more positive outlook on challenges, promoting continuous self-improvement.

Therapeutic benefits of journalling

Journalling has also been used as a therapeutic tool in various mental health practices, particularly in cognitive behavioural therapy and mindfulness-based therapy.

Writing about emotions, triggers and reactions helps individuals explore their mental patterns and challenge negative thought cycles. This is particularly beneficial for those dealing with anxiety, depression or trauma.

Writing about traumatic experiences allows individuals to process their emotions in a structured way, helping them make sense of what happened and reduce the emotional weight of the event. Journalling about trauma does not need to be detailed or even shared with others, simply expressing feelings on paper can promote healing and recovery. For those with anxiety, journalling serves as a release valve for worry and negative thoughts. By externalising their concerns, individuals can reduce rumination and overthinking, leading to a greater sense of calm and emotional control. Writing down worries before bed, for instance, can help people “empty” their minds and improve sleep quality by reducing nighttime anxiety.

The practice of journalling, whether done daily or weekly, offers significant benefits for emotional health. As an accessible tool, journalling is an invaluable resource for anyone looking to improve their emotional well-being and navigate life’s challenges with greater clarity. Journalling has the power to transform both mindset and emotional health.