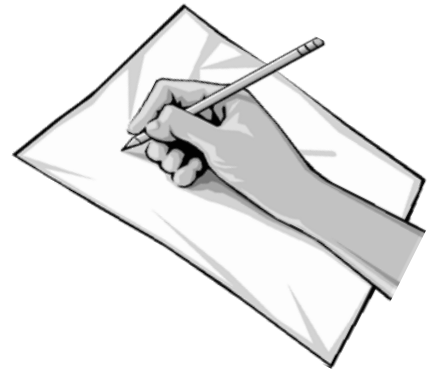


Keeping a Journal

Keeping a journal can be a good way to learn more about your thoughts and feelings. It's not always easy—it can be painful to write about bad feelings—but writing a journal is one of the best self-help methods you can use. To help you get started, here are some tips for keeping a journal.

✎ Instead of just writing about events and happenings, focus on your thoughts and feelings about those events.



✎ Write for yourself only. This forces you to be honest with yourself. (At some point, though, you may want to share the journal with someone. This could be a therapist, or a very trusted friend or family member who can give you feedback.)

✎ Set the stage for writing. Find a comfortable spot to sit, take a deep breath, and begin. Write for 20 minutes without stopping.

- ✎ Write every day, if possible. It may help to write at the same time every day, maybe after dinner or before bed.
- ✎ Remember that the way you write doesn't matter. You don't have to use complete sentences, correct punctuation, or any punctuation, for that matter.
- ✎ Buy a journal you'll enjoy using, perhaps with pictures or colored pages. Use colored pens or pencils if you like.
- ✎ If you really don't like to write, record your thoughts on a mini-cassette recorder.



Some tips to help you get your thoughts started...

“Today I feel...”

“One good thing that happened today was...”

“My goal for tomorrow is...”