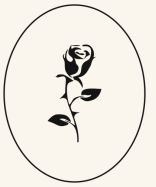


JOURNAL GUIDE

stress relief + self awareness





HELLO & WELCOME

So happy you're here! I designed this guide to help parents, kids, teens, and young adults figure out how to start journaling in a way that actually helps manage your stress, not giving you just another thing to add to your to do list. Journaling is such a great tool, but knowing how and when to use it is vital.

If you're new to T&R, welcome! We are a small private practice located in Frisco, and we serve teens & young adults for mental health therapy. Our goal is to help you find purpose and healing on your mental health journey, and create a life you love living. We are so glad you're here.

Samantha Earley



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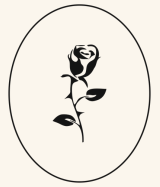
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OVERVIEW OF JOURNALING

Journaling is any form of self-expression. This could look like freeform writing, bullet-style lists, using markers and colored pens, brainstorming ideas, or even scrapbooking. There are many benefits to journaling, but this guide will focus on stress management and building self-awareness. So for our purposes today, we'll be using freeform writing and answering prompts.

But remember, if you, or your child, like to express yourself through colors and imagery, feel free to do so!

So, what are the **benefits** of journaling? *Well, for starters...*

- Stress reduction
- Helps identify triggers
- Promotes mindfulness
- Increases self awareness
- Better sleep
- Improvement in self confidence



HOW TO GET STARTED:

Getting your kiddo (or yourself, lol) to journal can be a challenge. Creating a routine or habit of journaling is important for stress relief. Consistency is key. Try journaling for a couple of weeks to really see results. Here's some tips to get started:

- Buy a new journal. Something separate from everything else! If you just flip a page and see a to-do list from the day prior, your mind is going to get distracted.
- Create a routine for self reflection. Clear a desk, grab a cup of tea, and get some fun pens out. Try first thing in the morning or right before bedtime.
- Make it small at first. Spending 5-10 minutes a day is enough to get started. It doesn't have to be long.





JOURNALING FOR KIDS

For kiddos, typically the best way to journal is either:

- freeform journaling about their day
- creative expression
- making lists

For freeform journaling, it's best to get any kind of journal and just let your child write whatever they want! The good, the gossip, and the funny.

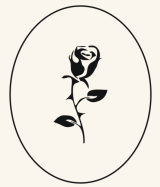
For creative expression, using colored pens, markers, wash tape, or magazines can help get the creative juices flowing. Try thinking of a theme and picking colors and images based on that.

I'd also recommend specific prompts for list-making:

1. What was stressful about my day?
2. What went well today? What didn't?
3. Three friends who made me smile today and why

You get the drill. The goal here is to NOT read what your child is writing. I know, scary. But think about it--for your child to fully embrace the art of journaling, start to make sense of their emotions, and learn new things about their inner world... them knowing that you're just going to read it behind their back WON'T help them understand their feelings--instead, they'll sensor what they say and treat it like a chore.





JOURNALING FOR TEENAGERS

I know I said this on the previous page, but it's even more important for teenagers.

DO NOT READ THEIR JOURNALS.

For teens, I recommend journaling in freeform. Now that we're older, we can start to piece together feelings and ideas a lot more easily. Still using creative expression can be helpful--something called "Junk Journaling" can be fun, which is where you gather little bits from your day (receipts, concert tickets, photos) and stick them into your journal to help you memory keep.

Prompts that are helpful include:

1. What qualities are important to me in a friend? Do my friends possess these?
2. What am I learning about myself this week?
3. Is there anything that happened this week that I need to let go of? Or is there any conflict I need to resolve? Why?
4. Write down all the negative thoughts & feelings... then rip it out.
5. Write positive affirmations about self, goals, and desires



NOW THE FUN BEGINS!



JOURNALING FOR ADULTS

As an adult, you can do whatever you want. And that message translates to journaling, too!

My favorite way to add journaling into daily routines includes gratitude lists, high and lows of the day (I call 'em thorns & roses!), writing about events that took place or patterns you're unraveling in yourself, and hopes for the future.

My favorite way to add in journaling for mental health:

My Thorn: what went wrong/what happened

My Rose: what went right/things I'm learning

Bud: what do I see growing or changing in myself, what am I currently working on, or how did I learn from this situation





STRESS MANAGEMENT 101

Let's use the analogy of a **backpack**.

When your backpack is heavy, all it feels like is weight. You may have an idea of what's in there, but all you can see and feel is how heavy this bag is. But, if I told you to start taking things out of your backpack, one item at a time, you'll start to see what's actually inside, and more importantly, see what really needs to be in there, what's unnecessary, and what needs our attention. Stress is a lot like that. Writing about your feelings can be a huge relief, just like unloading a heavy backpack. Stress will tell you that everything is a BIG deal. That's why I like journaling. When we process what is causing us stress, eventually we can begin to see what is truly a priority and what isn't. We can see what is in our control, and what is not.



A LITTLE BIT MORE...



SELF REFLECTION JOURNALING

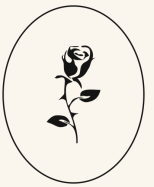
For my advanced journalers....

Here's something you can use when you need to identify patterns/triggers/trauma

Journal through each prompt:

1. What emotion am I feeling right now?
2. What triggered this emotion?
3. How does this emotion manifest in my body?
4. What thoughts accompany this emotion?
5. What do I need in this moment?
6. How do I typically respond to this emotion?
7. What would I say to a friend feeling this way?
8. What can I learn from this emotion?





GO GET TO JOURNALING!

I'm so happy you're ready to take the step towards journaling. And I know it may sound cheesy or cliché, but journaling really can positively impact your mental health. It's not just something to vent about what frustrated you that day. When used as we discussed in the guide, journaling can help you get a greater understanding of your emotions, your triggers, your goals and hopes, and relieve stress.

There are 1000 more ways to journal, and these are just a few! I've got a lot more tools on my website and instagram, so feel free to check out those pages for more.

www.thornandrosecounseling.com
Instagram: @thornandrosecounseling



NEED A LITTLE MORE?
LET'S WORK TOGETHER!



INTERESTED IN TRYING THERAPY?

WE'D LOVE TO DO A FREE PHONE CONSULT TO SEE HOW WE CAN HELP AND ANSWER ANY
QUESTIONS YOU MAY HAVE ABOUT STARTING THERAPY FOR YOURSELF OR YOUR CHILD.

REACH OUT VIA OUR WEBSITE OR EMAIL US FOR A CONSULT!

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