

# WRITTEN SELF-REFLECTION

*Creativity applied to anxiety (Activity 4/12)*

## DESCRIPTION

This activity is all about framed writing. A 2018 study Trusted Source suggests that writing on various topics, responding to questions that help to understand oneself better for just 15 minutes a day three times a week may help ease feelings of anxiety, and stress and boost resilience. Research from 2002 suggests that when your writing focuses on exploring and making sense of what happened, writing about a traumatic or stressful experience can help you heal and recover. It is important to write about what stresses you and what causes negative emotions in you, but also describe positive experiences.

## OBJECTIVES

- To write down things that cause stress
- To write about positive things that make one smile and feel happy
- To answer questions about oneself that will help one understand themselves better and strengthen the I-concept.

## RESOURCES AND MATERIALS

1. Question sets for self-discovery and self-reflection (see Module sets below)
2. Pens or markers and paper

## IMPLEMENTATION – INSTRUCTION

1. This activity should take place in 5 stages over 5 sessions as there are 5 sets of questions.
2. For each module, the participants should have around 20-30 minutes, so that they can answer without rush. Some sessions may be combined.
3. The moderator gives the participants the sets of questions and paper and markers of different

colours. Each colour should correspond to a certain module.

4. When the participants finish their writing, they don't have to share what they have written with anyone (only if they want to).
5. They are just invited to share their emotions after completing the exercise.

## QUESTION SETS AND PROMPTS

### MODULE 1. LOVE AND RELATIONSHIPS

1. Who do you trust most? Why?
2. What are your strengths in relationships (kindness, empathy, etc.)?
3. How do you draw strength from loved ones?
4. How do you show compassion to others? How can you extend that same compassion to yourself?
5. What are three things working well in your current relationship? What are three things that could be better?
6. How can you better support and appreciate your loved ones?
7. What does love mean to you?
8. List three things you'd like to tell a friend, family member, or partner.

### MODULE 2: SELF-REFLECTION

1. What values do you consider most important in life (honesty, justice, altruism, loyalty, etc.)? How do your actions align with those values?
2. What three changes can you make to live according to your personal values?
3. Describe yourself using the first 10 words that come to mind. Then, list 10 words that you'd like to use to describe yourself. List a few ways to transform those descriptions into reality.
4. What do you appreciate most about your personality? What aspects do you find harder to accept?
5. Explore an opinion or two that you held in the past but have since questioned or changed. What led you to change that opinion?
6. List three personal beliefs that you're willing to reconsider or further explore.
7. Finish this sentence: "My life would be incomplete without ..."
8. Describe one or two significant life events that helped shape you into who you are today.
9. When do you trust yourself most? When do you find it harder to have faith in your instincts?

10. What three things would you most like others (loved ones, potential friends and partners, professional acquaintances, etc.) to know about you?

### MODULE 3: UNCOMFORTABLE EMOTIONS

1. What difficult thoughts or emotions come up most frequently for you?
2. Which emotions do you find hardest to accept (guilt, anger, disappointment, etc.)? How do you handle these emotions?
3. Describe a choice you regret. What did you learn from it?
4. What parts of daily life cause stress, frustration, or sadness? What can you do to change those experiences?
5. What are three things that can instantly disrupt a good mood and bring you down? What strategies do you use to counter these effects?
6. What are three self-defeating thoughts that show up in your self-talk? How can you reframe them to encourage yourself instead?
7. What go-to coping strategies help you get through moments of emotional or physical pain?
8. Who do you trust with your most painful and upsetting feelings? How can you connect with them when feeling low?
9. What do you fear most? Have your fears changed throughout life?

### MODULE 4: LIVING YOUR BEST LIFE

1. Describe your favorite thing to do when feeling low.
2. What three ordinary things bring you the most joy?
3. List three strategies that help you stay present in your daily routines. Then, list three strategies to help boost mindfulness in your life.
4. How do you prioritize self-care?
5. Describe two or three things you do to relax.
6. What aspects of your life are you most grateful for?
7. How do you show yourself kindness and compassion each day?
8. Write a short love letter to some object or place that makes you happy.
9. What place makes you feel most peaceful? Describe that place using all five senses.
10. List 10 things that inspire or motivate you.
11. What are your favorite hobbies? Why?

## MODULE 5: PERSONAL GROWTH AND LIFE GOALS

1. What parts of life surprised you most? What turned out the way you expected it would?
2. What three things would you share with your teenage self? What three questions would you want to ask an older version of yourself?
3. List three important goals. How do they match up to your goals from 5 years ago?
4. Do your goals truly reflect your desires? Or do they reflect what someone else (a parent, partner, friend, etc.) wants for you?
5. What helps you stay focused and motivated when you feel discouraged?
6. What do you look forward to most in the future?
7. Identify one area where you'd like to improve. Then, list three specific actions you can take to create that change.
8. How do you make time for yourself each day?
9. What do you most want to accomplish in life?
10. List three obstacles lying in the way of your contentment or happiness. Then, list two potential solutions to begin overcoming each obstacle.

## POSSIBLE MODIFICATIONS

The order of the modules doesn't matter. They can be held in 5 sessions, or some of them may be combined.

## EXPECTED RESULTS

- When answering the questions, the participants will reflect on their lives and will understand their emotions better.
- They are expected to feel less anxious