

Journaling After Your Therapy or Counseling Sessions

Objective

To process thoughts and feelings through journaling following your counseling sessions.

What to Know

When you journal immediately following a counseling or therapy sessions, you increase self-awareness and create new patterns in the way you think. You reinforce the things you learned in your session which can result in new insights and behavioral patterns.

Here are some tips to help you get started.

- **Journal in the format that works for you.** There are many options, from long-format journaling to bullet journal lists to smartphone apps. This worksheet includes a basic template. You can use a physical journal, app, or plain notebook. You might want to get creative and use stickers, colored pens, patterned paper, and so forth.
- **Handwrite if you can.** Research indicates that handwriting increases neural activity in certain sections of the brain – quite similar to meditation!
- **Avoid playing catch-up.** If you miss a few post-counseling journaling sessions, try not to worry. Just pick up where you left off and do not get discouraged.

You can decide with your counselor or therapist if sharing your reflective post-counseling journal entries will be helpful. Whether or not you share your journal entries, by increasing your awareness of yourself and your experiences, journaling can help make your experience with counseling more effective.

What to Do

Make copies of the next two pages or use your own journal. Dedicate 1-2 journal pages for each counseling session and try to complete your entry within 24 hours after each counseling session.

After you start journaling, review your last journal entry before the next counseling session. Think about if you want to use the information during your session.

My After-Session Counseling Journal

Date: _____ Focus of Session: _____

Five take-aways from the session (*this section might include concepts, an action plan, goals, counseling milestones, and so forth*).

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

Briefly summarize the most important part of the session.

Feelings experienced during the session.

What was the hardest part about the session?

What WASN'T said, but should have been said?

Any other thoughts or sensations for reflection? Write or draw about them below.

Remember to mention during the next session:

Homework assigned? YES NO

If yes, record it here: _____

Homework completed? YES NO

If no, why not? _____

Reflection on This Exercise

How helpful was this exercise? _____

(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What did you learn from this exercise?
