

Self-Journaling Prompts

Benefits of Journaling

Do you know that feeling you get after an hour or so of talking or texting a friend about all the things that went wrong that day or something your partner keeps doing that frustrates you? At the end of the conversation, you may not have a ‘solution,’ but you feel just a little lighter, and the thing that was stressing you out doesn’t feel so ‘big’ anymore, right? Getting your emotions voiced and out of your system is beneficial, and when a friend isn’t around, you can still journal your way through the feelings.

Did you know that self-journaling is a scientifically backed method to relieve stress or anxiety? The National Institute of Health (NIH), the World Health Organization (WHO), and independent researchers have all endorsed expressive writing as a potential tool for women’s adjustment and health.

Journaling is a great way to:

- Manage anxiety.
- Reduce stress.
- Cope with depression.
- Help prioritize problems, concerns, and fears.
- Track symptoms over time.
- Recognize triggers.
- Identify any negative behaviors or thoughts.
- Practice positive self-talk.

“Expressive writing interventions typically involve writing about one’s deepest thoughts and feelings about a particular stressful event for at least 15 min a day for 3 days.”

Ways to Journal

While many people find it therapeutic to put pen to paper and write down their feelings, others prefer to use their phone or tablet to capture their thoughts. There’s no one ‘right’ way to journal; finding something that works for you is most important. So, you may want to buy a pretty journal and curl up in a quiet spot to write down your thoughts and feelings. Or you may want to take a walk and record an audio note on your phone. Some people are more comfortable typing. So, open up a blank document and let your fingers fly across the keyboard.

Tips for Successful Journaling

- **Write whenever you can or need to.** For some people, this might be every day. For others, once a week may be a better option.
- **Don’t worry about grammar or spelling.** This is your personal space for self-expression, and no one is here to grade you. So, feel free to let your thoughts flow without any inhibitions.
- **Get creative!** Maybe the words you want to say aren’t coming to you. Try doodling or writing down the lyrics to a song that may summarize your feelings.
- **Use a writing prompt.** We’ve provided a few writing prompts that you can use to help jumpstart your journaling habit.

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Writing Prompts

Here are some prompts you can use while journaling. Some of these prompts encourage you to reflect on any anxieties, fears, or concerns you may be experiencing or your thoughts about becoming a mother. Other prompts encourage you to think about things that may be holding you back or that have changed in your life. There are also prompts for women who may have experienced a traumatic birthing experience and need help processing what happened.

** Previa Alliance mom, if you need help processing your feelings or want to talk with a mental health counselor to help you better understand the feelings you are struggling with, send us a text to support@previaalliance.com. A Patient Navigator will connect with you and find a therapist with you. **

General Reflection Prompts

- What do you want your child to know about you when they are older?
- What favorite childhood memories do you have that you want your child also to experience?
- What is something you want to be different for your child than what you experienced in your childhood?
- Is there anyone who is currently draining your energy? Is this a sign that boundaries need to be adjusted in this relationship? In what way?
- What would you tell your *past* self?
- What is something that the *current* you needs to hear?
- What would you like to say about the *future* version of you?
- What compliments do others give you? Do you believe these things? Why or why not?
- What is the best way to communicate your needs to your support system? Do you feel that you can do so?
- Do you feel that your fears or anxieties are holding you back? What would be different about your life if you didn't have these fears/anxieties?
- What parts of daily life cause stress, frustration, or sadness? What can you do to change those experiences?

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Thoughts of Motherhood Prompts

- How has your support system changed since becoming a mother? Do any of these changes surprise you?
- What are some unexpected joys that you have experienced since becoming a mom?
- What is harder than you thought it would be before you became a mother?
- We spend much of our time taking care of others. How do you nurture yourself? Are you doing these things regularly?
- How are your close relationships? Are you holding back from saying something you need to say to someone? What would you say to this person if you could?
- When are you too hard on yourself? Do you feel that you are harder on yourself than others? How can you build more self-compassion?
- What is something you have struggled to do since you became a mother?
- What are daily habits that help you feel like your best self? Are there ways to incorporate and adapt these habits into your current life?

Addressing Trauma Prompts

- What reminders do you have about your birth trauma? How can you best care for yourself when faced with these reminders?
- What would be a sign that you have started to heal from your trauma?
- Imagine you are telling the story of your trauma to a friend or loved one who has unconditional compassion for you. What would they say to you? What is something that you need to hear?
- What is something that you look at differently now because of your trauma? How does this change your current decision-making? Is there anything you would like to overcome?
- What you would tell another mom who went through the same thing as you? What would she need to hear?