

Focused Expressive Writing (F.E.W.)

Step #1: The original story: Express your current emotions associated with a specific life event

Briefly in a sentence or two write down one past or current major stressful life experience. Do not focus too much on the actual experience but focus on the way it has made you feel and the emotions that you have associated with that experience. In your writing, really let go and explore your deepest emotions and thoughts connected with that specific life event.

One of the major stressful events in my life has been and this specific experience has made me feel (fear, sadness, shame, guilt or anger)

Step #2: Impact of story: Express that the emotions may be contributing to your physical symptoms

Write how those suppressed negative emotions may be contributing to your nervous system hypersensitivity. Write down the possibility that those emotions may be linked to your current physical symptoms such as back, neck, knee, or shoulder pain, muscle tension or spasms.

My suppressed negative emotions such as may be contributing to my nervous system hypersensitivity making me feel pain in my

Step #3: A new version of the story: Express possible new and more helpful perspectives, thoughts and feelings associated with that same specific life event

Now that you are aware of the link between your emotions and your current physical symptoms, write down going forward from today, possible new perspective and more positive thoughts and feelings you **choose to** associate with the specific life event mentioned in step #1.

From now on, I will no longer unconsciously feel the negative emotions of (express the emotions) when I think about (name the event) I am now aware, rational and have conscious control so I choose to experience more helpful thoughts and feelings such as (hopeful, peaceful, proud, grateful, confident, love). It is obviously much better for my emotional and physical health if I associate these more empowering emotions when I think about (name the event) I realize that I cannot change past events, but I have full control on how I feel about and react to the event from now on.

Now set a timer to 15 minutes on your phone, grab a pen and a blank piece of paper, find a quiet room and begin. You may look at this page as you write so you remember the 3 steps.



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If you are ready for the challenge, commit just 15 minutes, 3 times a week for the next 3 weeks to sit alone in a quiet room and practice “**Focused Expressive Writing**”.

Suggestions for F.E.W.

- 1) Set a timer for 15 minutes so you don't quit ahead of time
- 2) You may use a pen & paper, type it out or use dictation software
- 3) Don't worry about spelling, grammar or sentence structure
- 4) Be honest and write down thoughts and feelings; there's no need to be fearful or embarrassed
- 5) Keep your pen moving, even if it doesn't make sense; don't judge ...what you're writing is OK
- 6) At the end, you may keep or destroy the paper as no one else needs to read it, even you don't need to read it again
- 7) Although some report being immediately upset by the writing experience, after a few days many report finding the experience valuable and therapeutic

On a scale of 0-10, how important is Focused Expressive Writing (F.E.W.) to you? _____

Why did you not give it a lower number? What makes F.E.W. important to you?

- Reduce my nervous system hypersensitivity
- Feel a sense of control over past and current life stresses
- Look at specific life events in a more positive view
- Calm the mind
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On a scale of 0-10, how confident are you that you will take 15 minutes to do F.E.W. 3 times a week for 3 weeks? _____

How could you modify your goal to increase your confidence to a 9 or a 10 that you can do this?

How many times a week? _____ How many weeks? _____

What will you do today to get started?