



JOURNALING CLUB

Region 9 Area Agency on Aging

www.nemcsa.org

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ZOOM MEETING INFORMATION

Meets via Zoom on the Second Friday of the month from 3:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.

Meeting ID: 825 0058 9360
Passcode: journal

Dial by Phone: 1 312 626 6799
Meeting ID: 825 0058 9360
Passcode: 8487629





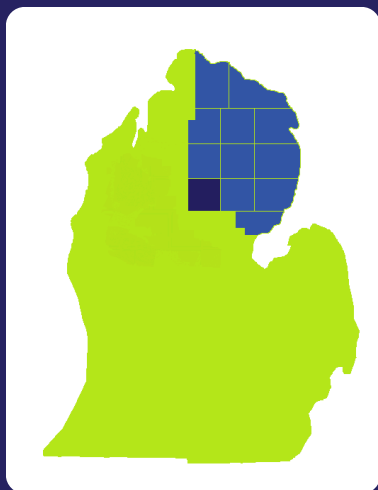
GUIDEBOOK

The Journaling Guidebook is updated annually. Corrections, changes, or suggestions should be e-mailed to the Region 9 Area Agency on Aging at mainvilleb@nemcsa.org.

REGION 9 AREA AGENCY ON AGING

Region 9 Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is a division of Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency. Region 9 AAA is a nonprofit agency that manages a wide variety of services to help seniors and adults with disabilities remain living in their own homes or with family caregivers.

Business hours from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. to answer your questions, register you for workshops, provide resources, and support you.



FUNDING

Funding for this manual is made possible through the Title III E National Family Caregiver Support Program. This program is funded in part by the U.S. Administration on Community Living Supports (ACLS) Bureau through the Michigan Department of Health and Human Service and Region 9 Area Agency on Aging.



BENEFITS OF WRITING FOR CAREGIVERS

CONVENIENCE AND FREEDOM

As a caregiver, your time is precious and packed full of responsibilities. Many people find freedom in choosing when and where to write.

INCREASE SELF-AWARENESS

Writing forces you to slow down and pay attention to what is going on in your life.

EXPRESS YOUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS

Writing is not only creative but also therapeutic. This tool can help release pent-up feelings of anger, resentment, fear, sadness, and jealousy. It helps you to untangle your thoughts.

PROTECTS AND MAINTAIN YOUR ENERGY

As you write, think about what gives you energy and fuels your passion.

SAFE PLACE

It can provide a caregiver with a safe place to feel their feelings, helping them avoid the negative consequences of burying their emotions.

COMBATS LONELINESS AND ISOLATION

Journaling can give a caregiver someone (or something) to talk to.

SELF-IMPROVEMENT

Writing down your thoughts, feelings, and experiences can help you better understand yourself, your values, and your beliefs. It allows you to explore your thoughts and emotions, leading to personal insights and growth.





TIPS FOR JOURNALING

- Set a timer for 10 minutes.
- Write what is in your heart.
- Let one idea lead to another.
- Forget about grammar and spelling.
- Keep going without judgment.
- Try to write 3-4 times a week.
- It is your choice if you share your writings with others.
- Express yourself through bullet points, short sentences, complete paragraphs, or drawing pictures.
- Just write, don't edit.

WHAT IF YOU CANNOT THINK OF ANYTHING TO WRITE ABOUT?

Use a sentence to start.



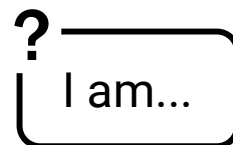
Write whatever is in your head.



Start with an image.



Use prompts.



WRITING ABOUT POSITIVE EXPERIENCES FOR JUST 15 MINUTES A DAY THREE TIMES A WEEK MAY HELP EASE FEELINGS OF ANXIETY AND STRESS AND BOOST RESILIENCE.

POSSIBLE JOURNALING TOPICS:

- Venting
- Difficult Feelings/Emotions
- Losses
- Daily Routines
- Past
- Self-Care Activities
- Favorite Activities/Past times
- Future
- Hobbies
- Social Media
- Travel Destinations
- Dreams
- Goals
- Mental Health
- Physical Health
- Family
- Pets
- Fears
- Gratitude
- Forgiveness
- Healing
- Positive Attitude
- Self-Forgiveness
- Change
- Disease
- Mindfulness
- Change in Season
- New Beginnings
- Caregiving Role
- Benefits of Caregiving
- Coping Techniques
- Frustrations
- Lessons Learned
- Support
- Stressors
- Personality

**KEEPING A JOURNAL LED TO MORE OPTIMISM AND
GRATITUDE, BOTH OF WHICH CAN BOOST WELL-BEING.
ANONYMOUS**



PROMPTS

- Who do you trust most? Why?
- What are your strengths in relationships (kindness, empathy, etc.)?
- What drains or overwhelms you? Why? Is this something you can change?
- Describe yourself using the first 10 words that come to mind.
- Finish this sentence: "My life would be incomplete without ..."
- What parts of daily life cause stress, frustration, or sadness? What can you do to change those experiences?
- Describe your favorite thing to do when feeling low.

**"JOURNALING HELPS YOU TO REMEMBER HOW STRONG YOU
TRULY ARE WITHIN YOURSELF."
— ASAD MEAH**

PROMPTS



DEALING WITH EMOTIONS

- What difficult thoughts or emotions come up most frequently for you?
- Which emotions do you find hardest to accept (guilt, anger, disappointment, etc.)? How do you handle these emotions?



STRESS/OVERWHELMED

- When I get overwhelmed ...
- What is one thing you can improve on (time management, communication, etc.), and how can you do this?
- Was today a difficult day? If so, what made it difficult and what can you do to prevent from having days like this in the future?



FINISH THE THOUGHT

- I felt this week was ...
- I could use help with ...
- I'm feeling judged because ...
- I feel I could have responded differently to ...
- I'm going to take these actions to help myself ...
- I showed kindness by ...
- Something funny or amazing that happened ...
- A memory that popped into my mind ...
- Something to vent about ...
- Something I am grateful for ...



SELF-CARE

- What did you do for Self-Care?
- What would you like to do for Self-Care?
- Are you taking time to care for yourself?
- Do you allow yourself time to relax and breathe? If the answer is no, what can you do to give yourself this time?
- What is a new skill that you would like to learn and how can you learn it?
- Make a list of twenty things that make you happy.



JOURNALING FOR CAREGIVERS

- Dear self. A letter to yourself offers you time to reflect by using your words to define and describe self. What if you speak to yourself the way you would speak to a friend? Would your tone and words change?
- I am ... Caregivers tend to feel overwhelmed and stretched thin, and sometimes it's hard to focus on all of the things that we are doing well. Make a list of positive affirmations.
- At the end of the day, we do well to acknowledge and celebrate the good things that happened. These may be big or small.
- Journaling can be as simple as writing a list every day of several things for which you are grateful.

**"A JOURNAL CAN OFFER YOU A PLACE TO BE SOMEONE,
ANYONE, WHO YOU WANT TO BE."
— BRIAN LEDGER**



THE CIRCLE OF CONTROL

The goal of this activity is to see what you control and don't control in your life. Start by writing all the things about the situation you cannot control on the outside of the circle. Then list all the things about the situation you can control in the center of the circle.



**WHAT YOU
CANNOT CONTROL**

**“START WRITING, NO MATTER WHAT. THE WATER DOES
NOT FLOW UNTIL THE FAUCET IS TURNED ON.”
LOUIS L’AMOUR**



**“WHAT HAPPENS TO US IS NOT AS IMPORTANT AS THE MEANING
WE ASSIGN TO IT. JOURNALING HELPS SORT THIS OUT.”**

MICHEAL HYATT

RESOURCES

- Region 9 Area Agency on Aging
- Adult Day Centers
- Northeast Michigan Community Service Agency (NEMCSA)
- Local County Commission or Council on Aging
- Online Resources (YouTube, Trualta)
- Therapists
- 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline
- Disease Specific Organizations (Alzheimer's Association, Parkinson's Disease)
- Michigan Department of Health and Human Services
- Veterans Affairs
- Catholic Human Services
- Northeast Michigan Community Mental Health Authority

“SOMETIMES THE ONLY PAPER WILL LISTEN TO YOU.”
ANONYMOUS



CONTACT



www.nemcsa.org



989.358.4616



mainvilleb@nemcsa.org



2569 US-23 South
Alpena, MI 49707

Funding for this manual is made possible through the Title III E National Family Caregiver Support Program, which is provided by the U.S. Administration for Community Living, MDHHS Bureau of Aging, Community Living, and Supports, and NEMCSA Region 9 Area Agency on Aging.

The NEMCSA Region 9 Area Agency on Aging (AAA) is pleased to provide you with this guidebook of helpful materials and publications directed toward family caregivers.