**Exercise – Journaling**

Journaling has been scientifically proven to have therapeutic benefits.

Overall, journaling, or expressive writing, has been found to:

* + Boost your mood
  + Enhance your sense of well-being
  + Reduce intrusive thoughts
  + Improve overall memory

It can also help with stress management, the processing of emotions, and prioritizing actions that are in line with core values and beliefs.

**This Journaling Challenge should be done each day for the next 10 days.**

**Here are the steps to follow:**

* Make or buy a journal
* Find a space without distractions then set aside 15 minutes each day.
* Aim for writing consecutively (i.e., once each day).
* Don’t feel like you must write the hardest things first
* Write about what feels right in the moment
* Keep your journal private
* Use the WRITE Format (See Below)

**W – What do you want to write about?**

Think of the word WRITE as an acronym.

**Starting with W…**

* Think about **what** is going on in your life, your current thoughts, feelings, what you’re striving towards, or trying to avoid right now

**R ­– Reflect from within**

* R is for Reflection
* Take the time to look within yourself, breath, and direct your attention to the paper.
  + If you’re having a hard time starting use any “I” statement such as:
    - “I want…”
    - “I feel…”
    - “I wonder…”
* Attempt to keep it in the present tense, with starters like:
  + “In this moment…”
  + “Right now…”

**I – Investigate your thoughts and feelings**

* Spend time to go inwards and investigate your thoughts and feelings
* If you hit a mental block, try to regroup with a deep breath. You can also try reviewing what is already on the page and keep going.

**T – Set a Timer**

* Set a realistic time for your journaling, no more than 15 minutes
  + If it feels daunting or overwhelming, you won't get the writing done.

**E – Exit and Reflect**

* After you have had a chance to write, go for a walk, have a shower, watch a tv show, get in a different space, and then come back to what you wrote and reflect
* Exit with a sentence like
  + “As I read this, I notice…”,
  + “I’m aware of…”, or
  + “I now feel…”
* If there are any items that need to be put into action, write it down as a brief plan to set intentions for yourself