

TOPICS: ANXIETY / STRESS

CREATIVE

Writing For Mental Health
Addiction And Trauma

Worksheet



The Mental Health Creative Writing Worksheet for *anxiety and stress* can be used in the beginning or ending of OST. It can be used as a 30, 45, 60 minutes stand alone activity. It can be used as a mental health check-in with students. It can be used as a social activity. The worksheet was created to help students express their emotional and mental needs and challenges indirectly to create a safer experience.

This worksheet is written as a buffet of exercises. It is not written as lesson plan. The Mental Health writing exercises helps the participants practice being present, connecting and exploring themselves and their thoughts and feelings, in a non-direct way.



GUIDELINES FOR USING THE MENTAL HEALTH

Writing Prompts

- 1 If a participant doesn't want to write or share or both, try encouraging them, but if they insist that they are not going to write or share, don't make them write or share. Give them alternatives, like writing only words and sharing in their own words verbally. Or just sharing verbally.
- 2 Don't analyze, critique, process or comment on the participant's writings. Just listen and give positive affirmation on whatever they wrote. Examples: That was great. Thank you for sharing. Great job. Thanks for your honesty. How did it feel to write this?
- 3 Make sure you create an open, compassionate, and accepting writing environment. First, because many participants get scared when they hear that they have to write because of bad past school experiences, and they relate writing to being made fun of or to not being appreciated, praised and seen. And second, because creativity in general and creating something and then asked to share it with strangers can be a vulnerable experience.
- 4 Remind participants that they can always write as short or as long as they want, and that it doesn't matter what they write or how they write it, it's about showing up and participating.



JOURNALING EXERCISES

1 Write an instruction sheet for a **stressful** day in your life. "Follow these steps" (like an Ikea instruction sheet or a driving navigation instruction sheet). What should you do to feel better.



IMAGINATION EXERCISES

1 Describe in a few sentences your perfect date with yourself. Where will you go? What will you do? You can make it realistic or you can describe it without worrying about time and money.

3 What electronic device can you invent to help you with your **anxiety** and your emotions and why?

5 Write a poem using, in the poem, the words "yesterday," "today," "tomorrow." Write it in a square shape on a page.



METAPHORICAL EXERCISES

1 You are going to be cloned. Write an instruction sheet to your clone on how to be you. What would you like to share with your clone that will be helpful? Your past, your present, a wish for your future. **Give instructions to your clone on how to deal with anxiety.**

3 Write a rental agreement with your mind **about your anxiety and stress.** Your mind is an entity that occupies space inside of you. You are the landlord, and you are going to be living with your mind for many years. What are the rules your Mind has? What are the restrictions? What does the Mind get? What are the rental parameters? How much does your Mind pay rent? For how long is the rental agreement for? What happens if the contract is broken? What is the landlord (**you**) going to provide the Mind with? What does the rent come with?

Explain to the participant that this is a metaphorical exercise. The participant can write it in their own words or in a rental agreement form.

Examples: Positive thinking is required between the hours of 6am and 11pm. The Mind will be provided with meditation, **breathing**, health food and connection. The renter is not allowed to have any negative guests in their space, like addiction, depression, negative thoughts, etc.

2 Have the participant make a top-10 list on different topics that are related to their life. Lists can be done about different topics:

- Your life lessons, positive affirmations for yourself, best life moments, best experiences with friends, things you like about your life. Your Hobbies. Things that make you happy, **Things that helps with anxiety and cetra.**

2 Create a logo for yourself, for your identity. "You, Inc." What is your tag line? What is the design? What is the name of your company? It's okay if you are not an artist. It can look bad. Focus on the idea.

4 First, write the title of a song that you love. Second, invent a title for things in your life. You can make up the title, or if you can't make up a title, you can use the title of a song that already exists.

What would be a title for a song about **(add new topics for your participants)**

- Your family, Your worst day last week, Your best day last week, Something you desire, Your challenges, Something you love to do, Your feelings, Your best friend, something you want to change in your life, **anxiety**, Your personal theme song

2 Invent a potion for something you need help with in your **anxiety** (like in the **Harry Potter books**). Use magical elements with real elements. Invent what are the ingredients. How do you make the potion? How do you take the potion and what will the potion do and heal and how?

4 Write a bio for a feeling you feel a lot. **Or for your anxiety.** Think about what the journey of this feeling is for you. Why do you feel it? Where is it coming from? What is the feeling's purpose? What is the feeling's accomplishments? What is the feeling's job description?

(This exercise can be done with different feelings. Positive feelings. Negative feelings. It can be done with thoughts. It can be done with different parts of the self.)

