

Student Counseling Services

Journal Prompts to Facilitate Coping with the 2020 Coronavirus Pandemic

Overview:

Journaling is an exercise often used as a means of pursuing mental health and well being. Here is some information on [how journaling works and why it works](#). Creating a written or typed narration of your thoughts, experiences, and feelings provides you with an opportunity to make internal experiences tangible. Establishing a tangible narrative through journaling allows you:

1. Sift through your cognitions (or thoughts)
2. Shift your perspective(s) when necessary
3. Unpack/explore and/or process thoughts, feelings, and experiences

The above enables you to determine how to move forward in a manner that facilitates your mental health and wellbeing and is consistent with your life goals.

While having an ongoing practice of journaling may be a component of your regular mental health care regimen (you've got one of those right? If not establish one ASAP! Here's an [example](#) of one that might help you do this). At this time, when our day-to-day lives and campus activities have been disrupted due to the coronavirus pandemic, it is [particularly important](#) for us to make sure that we're attending to our mental health intentionally, strategically, and proactively. Below are some journal prompts that may help you to incorporate journaling into your coping strategy/mental health regimen.

Journal Prompts

Reflecting on the New (temporary) Normal: What has changed in your day-to-day life since COVID-19 became "a thing"? Which changes have caused the greatest imposition(s)? Which changes have led to the most distress? Which changes, if any, have been pleasantly surprising? Which changes have led to some *relief* of distress?

Note: If your response to the last question is "None!" then *create* some changes that lead to stress relief; this might be new self-care and coping strategies you've employed. Feel free to use the [SCS COVID-19 Coping Resource](#) to help you find some strategies.

Movement Toward Joy Part I: What are things that bring me joy (e.g. activities, hobbies, experiences)? Why do these things increase my joyfulness? What is it about *these things* and what is it about *me* that leads to interaction (between myself and these things)-based joy? Which people/relationships increase my joy? What is it about these people and what is it about *me* that leads to interaction-based (between myself and these people) joy? What may I do to maintain my connections to people and things adding to my joyfulness during the pandemic?

Movement Toward Joy Part II: Who in my immediate present circle seems most in need of joy? What may I do to increase their joy? What may I do to add to the joyfulness of all others around me? How may I add joy to the lives of the people from whom I am physically distanced at present?

Moving Outside of the Self and Into the Community: Reflect on the changes you've experienced due to the pandemic in the context of the [larger picture](#). You are being positioned in some ways due to the campus shift to remote operations. How are other folk in the larger community being positioned? What is your role in the Nation's response to the pandemic? How does being an individual who may or may not be in a "high risk" category tie into your role in decreasing the spread of the coronavirus? Are there ways you may be of service to your local friends, family, and campus community members at this time? What might that look like?

Gaining Perspective: What are you learning about yourself as a result of the coronavirus-related shifts in your life? How have you come to learn these things? What are you learning about other people (both close others and not-so-close others) as a result of our present situation? How have you come to learn these things? What are you learning about institutions (colleges & universities, the government, etc.) related to these shifts? How have you come to learn these things? What are you learning about your home, local, and global communities? How have you come to learn these things? How may you integrate this new learning and related perspectives gained into your life moving forward?