

Assumptions Aside:

Writing Away the Stigma of Mental Illness

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Prompts



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- 5 things you can see in the room with you
- 4 things you can feel
- 3 things you can hear
- 2 things you can smell
- 1 thing you can taste

- Respect everyone's boundaries
- Everyone's experiences are valid
- Practice self-care and community care



Write a Letter

If you are stuck in your work, write a letter describing your current dilemma. Outline what you are trying to accomplish and name the obstacles in your way. As you write about this thing you want to do, you may very well find it taking shape right there on the paper.



Change Point of View

Write about yourself in the third person rather than the first person. Gain some distance.

“In her seminal book *Dream Power*, Ann Faraday relates how a woman discovered the underlying resentment she felt toward her family when she spoke in the voice of a stove that had blown up in her dream.”

Statistics

- Approximately 1 in 5 adults in the U.S.—43.8 million, or 18.5%—experiences mental illness in a given year.
- Approximately 1 in 25 adults in the U.S.—9.8 million, or 4.0%—experiences a serious mental illness in a given year that substantially interferes with or limits one or more major life activities.²
- Approximately 1 in 5 youth aged 13–18 (21.4%) experiences a severe mental disorder at some point during their life. For children aged 8–15, the estimate is 13%.³
- 1.1% of adults in the U.S. live with schizophrenia.

Mental Health Resources

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance

DBSAAlliance.org

National Alliance of Mental Illness

nami.org

Inside Our Minds

insideourminds.org

University of Pittsburgh Faculty & Staff Guide for Helping Distressed Students.

<https://www.studentaffairs.pitt.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/WEB-Helping-Distressed-Students-Guide1.pdf>

Creative Nonfiction Writing Resources

Writing Exercises & Prompts

The Observation Deck: A Tool Kit for Writers

by Naomi Epel

“How to Use Journaling to Cope With PTSD: Expressive writing for physical and psychological health with PTSD.”

<https://www.verywellmind.com/how-to-use-journaling-to-cope-with-ptsd-2797594>.

by Matthew Tull

Readings

Writing Away the Stigma: Ten Courageous Writers Tell True Stories About Depression, Bipolar Disorder, ADHD, OCD, PTSD & more.

Lee Gutkind and Chad Vogler, Editors

A ‘Bright Light,’ Dimmed in the Shadows of Homelessness

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/03/nyregion/nyc-homeless-nakesha-mental-illness.html>.

by Benjamin Weiser

Organizations

Girls Write Pittsburgh

<https://www.facebook.com/girlswritepittsburgh/>

Creative Nonfiction

<https://www.creativenonfiction.org>