

- I. Personal Writing as a Tool for Professional Development**
 - A. An intriguing body of research shows that**
 - 1. In a variety of patient populations (rheumatoid arthritis, asthma, mental disorders) writing is associated with reduced symptoms and improved psychological health
 - 2. In normal populations, writing about past and present traumas predicts better immune function, decreased physician visits, and improved wellbeing
 - B. A theoretical model suggests that writing is beneficial because it**
 - 1. Counteracts passivity and helplessness by promoting active reflection
 - 2. Reduce feelings of frustration, helplessness
 - 3. Creates understanding and coherence from previously chaotic events
 - 4. Helps us discover alternative/complementary meanings and points of view
 - 1. Stimulate curiosity about and greater appreciation for patient
 - 2. Increase empathy
 - 3. Encourage playful, imaginative, creative thinking about patient
 - 5. Can result in resolution and moving on
 - 6. Develop innovative strategies for patient interaction/management
- II. Point of view writing**
 - A. Definition**
 - 1. Writing from patient (family member's) point of view
 - 2. Describes key life event or doctor-patient encounter
 - B. Technique**
 - 1. Select patient on basis of perceived difficulty or heightened affect
 - 2. Commit 10 minutes of writing time
 - 3. Use first person singular form ("I") rather than 3rd person
 - 4. Can imagine you're talking to your doctor, a family member of friend, or simply describing a situation
 - 5. Draw on your personal knowledge of the patient and imagine what you don't know based on inferential knowledge
- III. Mindful Writing**
 - A. Definition**
 - 1. Combines centered, calm attitude with intention of compassion and loving-kindness toward patients
 - B. Technique**
 - 1. Centering through relaxation, breathing, prayer, meditation
 - 2. Select patient who has "stayed with" writer
 - 3. Commit 10 minutes of writing time
 - 4. Write from perspective of a "wise counselor"
 - 5. Use second person ("you") to self
- IV. Reflective Writing – Write It Thrice**
 - A. Definition**
 - 1. Writing three ever-deepening narratives of the same event
 - B. Technique**
 - 1. Choose a difficult/memorable patient

2. **1st writing** – describe event in as much detail as possible
3. **2nd writing** – stand back from event and begin to reflect
 - a. What was going on?
 - b. What were feelings of self and others
 - c. What was the meaning of the event described to self and others?
5. **3rd writing** – Try to deepen possible meaning and significance of event
 - a. Self-questioning
 - b. Views and perspectives of others
 - c. Relationship of event to past events and patterns

V. Poetry

- A. Reflect on patient, family member, colleague, memorable encounter**
- B. Use rhyme scheme, meter, or free verse**