

# Mental health \$ motivation

Psychology



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Dr. Mauro Ferrari President and CEO The Methodist Hospital System 6565 Fannin St. Houston, TX 77030 USA Dear Dr. Mauro Ferrari: As a social psychologist for many years, I have been involved in many investigations and studies pertaining to the psychological health and well-being of humans and the significant factors that contribute to them. In a recent study, Pennebaker and Chung (2007) found out that there is a strong and convincing correlation between expressive writing and meaning making to psychological and mental health outcomes. I thought that if we could apply the basic principles of expressive and meaning-making to patients who undergo medical treatment, there is a great chance that it would be easier for them to recuperate and totally recover.

Basically, patients undergo varying degrees of physical and emotional stress. These stressors could have been drawn out from different issues such as the kind of care they receive, security, their chances to recover, and sometimes, financial burdens, especially to those who do not have health insurance. Expressive writing and meaning making, owing to its revealing, confessing, and disclosing nature, presents a very strong potential to accelerate the healing and recovery process of patients undergoing medical treatment. Pennebaker and Chung (2007) affirm about the positive effects of confession and disclosure on health-related outcomes. Expressive writing and meaning making caused the reduction of disease-related consultations to medical professionals such as medical doctors due to enhanced physical condition (Pennebaker & Beall, 1986). It has also been found out that those patients who indulged in expressive writing activities have better physiological activity, decreased negative mood conditions, and developed individual strength and hope for the future (Pennebaker & Chung, 2007).

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In order to widen the expressive writing and meaning making model to clinical applications, having a close reference to the conventional procedures will aid in the amount of results that is going to be obtained. While there is no direct proof, I personally suggest that more planned expressive writing and meaning making model strategies is far more helpful and advantageous than a merely writing a memoir or a journal. Furthermore, it appears that integrating the emotional and cognitive mechanisms such as individual sentiments and opinions of the experience is likewise beneficial. To give you an initial list of highly effective ways to carry out expressive writing and meaning making models in your hospital, please consider the following suggestions:

1. The expressive writing and meaning making activity should be conducted in an exclusive, secluded setting that is free from all forms of disturbances;
2. It should run in several sessions and should take several days to complete;
3. It is better to allow the patient to choose what experience/s he or she wishes to write about; and
4. Refrain from giving personal responses or opinion about the patient's work.

It is my ardent hope that you consider this method, and eventually implement it in your hospital.

Sincerely,

[Name of Student]

Houston Institute of Social Psychology

#### References

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