



# A Program For The Practice Of Writing Therapy From A Clinical Perspective

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## ARTICLE INFO

## ABSTRACT

In non-Arab societies, there is a lot of scientific evidences confirming the effectiveness of many methods of expressive therapy ‘ such as: art therapy, poetry therapy, dance therapy, reading therapy, music therapy, drawing therapy, and writing therapy. On the contrary, in Arab societies there is little evidence that shows the effectiveness of these expressive therapies, despite the use, since ancient times, of many forms of expressive arts as a therapeutic power to relieve stress and pain, and to reach happiness and positivity in many stages of human development.

Among the most important expressive arts that have empirical evidence of their therapeutic effectiveness with many groups is the treatment of writing, and why not writing has a clear importance in changing and improving the human lifestyle. Writing is one of the preventive methods against depression, and it has an important role in transferring knowledge and information, and thus developing the cognitive component for a person's lifestyle, writing is a form of expression of feelings, and it is an outlet for a person to distance himself from anxiety and fear. And so on, Writing is a form of communication and understanding.

Based on the above, we can Introduce a program for practicing writing therapy in Arab families and societies, generally through the following axes:

First: the foundations upon which the program is based.

Second: Program Objects

Third: Program stages

Fourth: the program tools

Fifth: Written exercises.

**Keywords:** Writing Therapy-Clinical Perspective-Domestic violence

## Introduction:

In non-Arab societies, there is a lot of scientific evidences confirming the effectiveness of many methods of expressive therapy ‘ such as: art therapy, poetry therapy, dance therapy, reading therapy, music therapy, drawing therapy, and writing therapy. On the contrary, in Arab societies there is little evidence that shows the effectiveness of these expressive therapies, despite the use, since ancient times, of many forms of expressive arts as a therapeutic power to relieve stress and pain, and to reach happiness and positivity in many stages of human development.

Among the most important expressive arts that have empirical evidence of their therapeutic effectiveness with many groups is the treatment of writing, and why not writing has a clear importance in changing and improving the human lifestyle. Writing is one of the preventive methods against depression, and it has an important role in transferring knowledge and information, and thus developing the cognitive component for a person's lifestyle, writing is a form of expression of feelings, and it is an outlet for a person to distance himself from anxiety and fear. And so on, Writing is a form of communication and understanding.

Writing therapy, like other therapeutic modalities of expressive therapies, is based on the assumptions underlying CBT, especially with regard to emphasise:

- Self - Instructional Training.
- Stress Inoculation Training.

- Homework. 10.53555/kuey.v30i4.1537
- Cognitive restructuring

Some assert that the American psychologist James Pennebaker, a professor at the University of Texas In 1986, discovered a method for treating psychological stress, which is writing therapy. Since that date, there is a lot of empirical evidences on the effectiveness of writing therapy in improving various aspects of a person's lifestyle, such as: emotional discharge, problem solving, self-confidence, self-development, Ahmed bin Abd al-Rahman al-Arfaj presented in his book, entitled Therapeutic Writing, an enumeration of many different models and multiple segments of women and men who were treated by writing. The paper and pen were the most powerful means of healing in many societies .Based on the above, we can Introduce a program for practicing writing therapy in Arab families and societies, generally through the following axes:

### **First: the foundations upon which the program is based.**

It is based on the foundations and principles of cognitive - behavioral therapy, expressive therapies in general and writing therapy in particular in terms of the method and techniques for each stage of professional intervention. These foundations can be identified in the following points:

- 1- Theoretical assumptions of writing therapy, the most important points of which can be summarized as follows:
  - a) The term writing therapy refers to writing notes (journaling), as other types of writing were not familiar or used for treatment, and once research discovered the benefits of writing as a therapy In the mid-1980s, researchers, publishers, and therapists began to introduce various terms related to therapeutic writing, including:

therapeutic writing	
writing for therapy	
writing for healing	
Writing for self-development	
Writing journal for therapy	

Writing therapy	
Writing cure	
Writing therapist	

- b) Getting thoughts and feelings out of their repressive state and then writing them down on paper, has amazing energy in relieving anxiety and removing the side effects of negative thinking.
  - c) The body cannot be separated from the mind or the soul; they are all interconnected to the extent that any psychological impact will affect the body and the mind.
  - d) Loosening in writing instead of speaking is more beneficial because it achieves more goals It requires greater depth of thinking and achieves a more moderate psychological balance, and frequently it is hard to express verbally a topic.
  - e) Writing therapy is superior to other modes of therapy in several aspects. Ex: save money, the possibility to exercise it in any time and in any place, that there are cases where the patient cannot express verbally due to his poor ability to speak.
- 2- Objects of the program will be Completed Explained completely (later)
- 3- results of The previous studies \_ and researches , which Include :
  - Soul Mugerwa, John D. Holden (2012) ( writing therapy '2 new tool for general practice, British journal of general practice, 62 ) 605)
  - Arnold APVan Emmerik , Albert Reyntjes , Jan Kamphuish ( 2013) writing therapy for posttraumatic stress: a meta-analysis, psychotherapy and psychosomatics , 82 (2)
  - Maryam Montazeri & others (2020) the effect of writing therapy on anxiety in, pregnant women, randomized controlled trial, iran journal of psychiatry and behavior, 14 (2).
  - Hanyu Li (2023), A study on the Mechanism of college students, writing therapy to Guide Rumination, Academic Journal of Humanities & Social Science, 6 (1).

### **Second: Program Objects:**

The researcher chose these objects for the current program , and there are other programs can be presented and have other objects, and the objects are as follows :

#### **1- general object**

Reduce post-traumatic stress disorder among women who are victims of domestic violence.

Post-traumatic stress disorder PTSD

#### **2- subsidiary objects**

The overall object can be achieved through the following sub-objects:

- a) Reducing aggressive behaviors associated with post- traumatic stress disorder Women victims of domestic violence.
- b) Reducing feelings of guilt and self-blame.
- c) Controlling the emotion associated with remembering the event Traumatization, organizing thoughts and emotions, and expressing them in a safe way.
- d) Effective skills to deal with the traumatic event

### **Third. Program stages**

The stages of the program can be put forward as follows:

#### **The first stage: the self-confrontation stage:**

At this stage, the self is confronted and the most painful memories associated with describing the trauma related to domestic violence are written, and this type of confrontation carries in itself a therapeutic effect for women who are victims of domestic violence. At this stage, each woman has the ability to write and hold a pen and she is ready to write and say, "I hear what is inside me." It is okay for this stage to include more time in thinking, planning, and enriching knowledge by reading many topics about domestic violence and post-traumatic stress disorder.

#### **The second stage: the stage of restructuring perception and awareness:**

At this stage, the matter is not limited to simply describing the events in letters, but rather it is necessary to take advantage of the experience and provide advice to women who are victims of domestic violence, as each woman begins to gather ideas and respond to the call of feelings, to put them into phrases and lines that she finds important, and spent enough time to get them out on paper, and these ideas crowded and crumbled, announcing its readiness to be embodied on the white papers. The important thing is that concepts, feelings and ideas, about what the woman was exposed to in terms of the shocking situation of domestic violence, should have been formed.

#### **Third stage: Serious work:**

Where writing at this stage turns into an integrated project, that has a sufficient amount of time and attention, and it has a map and destinies. This stage is the most serious and beneficial stage for treatment and recovery, and it is characterized by the emergence of violent conflict with negative feelings, or what can be called resistance to change. The suspended lady needs this patience and endurance to write Feelings and thoughts before and after the traumatic situation of domestic violence.

#### **Fourth stage: Diving into the depths:**

At this stage woman backs to what she wrote and thinks again to make it clear to her that the behaviors, thoughts and feelings are contrary to reality, which she described as negative feelings, thoughts and behaviors. At this stage, she has many questions about the reborn thoughts and if she could express the thoughts, feelings and behaviors associated with the traumatic situation through what she wrote.

#### **Fifth stage: Format:**

At this stage, it is given the complete, organized, and coordinated form, and we leave the stage of writing anything and in any form to start giving creativity and controlling writing logically and arranging thoughts, feelings, and behaviors to reach a realistic formulation about the shocking situation.

#### **Sixth stage: Perfection in performance:**

At this stage, complete control over the written content and style is done, and it is deleted, added, modified, and clarified that The family abused woman loved writing and was interested in clarifying her lifestyle that she dealt with, which shows post-traumatic stress disorder, which is represented in domestic violence, so that the woman is able to present a written narrative that explains the media, negative and positive feelings and thoughts from the traumatic situation of domestic violence .

On the other hand, multiple types of therapeutic writing can be used, including random writing, expressive writing, memoirs or notebooks, narrative or nonfiction writing, poetry writing, song writing, dialogue or script writing, satirical or comic writing, and writing creative

#### **Fourth, the program tools:**

- 1- individual interviews
- 2- group interviews
- 3- A guide to observe the behavior of women.
- 4- The scale of irrational thoughts among women.
- 5- Women's sentiment scale.
- 6- Using many exercises related to writing, especially expressive writing, dialogue or scenario writing, and narrative or story writing.

- 7- The use of many books, poems and stories that help to achieve the general object of the program and the sub-objects as well.  
 8- Writing self-reports.

### **Fifth: Written exercises: <sup>(1)</sup>**

#### **exercise (1)**

#### **Documenting a Writing Session Make writing a ritual and a sacred habit**

This page documents the writing session, and can be used as a cover page for what you will write it in session. The cover page and documenting the session will make you feel more self-confident and interested in writing. They will also organize your work and the outputs of your sessions and make you take Things seriously and carefully.

Writing location: .....

Writing time: .....

Writing topic: .....

Aims and objectives of writing in this session: .....

Sources and texts that I read to prepare for this session: .....

Greeting phrase .....

Foreword : .....

#### **exercise (2)**

#### **Exercise for beginners - stimulating thinking**

Random writing that does not stem from deep thought is not helpful. Therefore, you need to stimulate your thinking in order to start effective therapeutic writing.

Look at the list of the most important events that occurred with you during the previous months or old events that still affect you. Circle the appropriate expression about the extent of the event's impact on you. Then answer the questions listed below.

The event that affected you	The effect of the event			When did it happen?		
	basic	middle	Intense	old	Last month	current month
Death of a close family member						
Violence or physical assault						
Divorce or separation broke marital life						
Separation and severance of intimacy						
Serious family problem with husband or children						
Serious problem with a relative, neighbor or friend						
Been harassed, disrespected or marginalized						
Loss of job or position						
Long-term unemployment and job search for more than a month						
Legal problems and courts						
Illness or injury of someone close to you						

(1) The preparation of this part was based on the following references:

- Al-Arfaj, Ahmed Abdel-Rahman (2023) Therapeutic Writing, Riyadh, library distribution drag. \_
- sheela Raja , translation , Al-Sabwa, Muhammad Naguib Ahmed (2019) Scientific evidence Integrative treatment of psychological trauma and post-traumatic stress disorder , Cairo, Anglo-Egyptian Bookshop.
- Mobile, Example (2017) Writing Therapy , Dammam, Arabic Prose.

<b>You fall into a disease, injury or accident</b>						
<b>Financial problems, debts and claims</b>						
<b>Another kind of problems?</b>						
<b>How does this event affect your feelings and thinking? Express it only in words, grieve, great sadness -pain - frustration. Y A S - shyness .... etc.)</b>						
<b>Replace negative feelings with positive ones. Express that only with words and phrases. I learned great lessons - ordeal and passing - life experiences - patience and fortitude to carry and persevere - achieving success - building the future).</b>						

**exercise (3)****Goal planning**

1- My first goal is:

Object achievement date:

In order to achieve the object I need the following:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Obstacles and problems that stand in the way of achieving the object and how to prepare for and overcome them:

The entire object is achieved when:

**Exercise (4)****Goals table**

<b>The field</b>	<b>The objects desired to achieve positive change</b>	<b>The area or areas that need to be developed</b>	<b>Evaluate your current performance</b>
<b>The husband</b>			
<b>Sons</b>			
<b>Work/school</b>			
<b>Mental state</b>			
<b>Health and body</b>			
<b>Mind and memory health</b>			

**Exercise (5)****Post-workout disorders among women victims of domestic violence**

1. Choose a topic that worries you a lot or causes you suffering.
2. Write about the same topic for four consecutive days, that every session doesn't take less than 15 minute session.
3. After you're done, compare your writing and look at the changes and developments that have occurred on the content of your writing.

This exercise proves that writing about a topic over several sessions leads to more elaborate and in-depth content, and has a long-term impact. So writing one session may not be enough to fully recover, and sessions must be repeated

**exercise (6)****Expressive writing and expressing feelings I feel . . .... when ....**

I feel happy when .....

I feel angry when .....  
 I feel elated and excited when .....  
 I feel sad when .....  
 I am amazed and astonished when .....  
 I feel afraid when .....  
 I get frustrated when .....  
 I feel optimistic and hopeful when .....  
 I feel calm when .....

### exercise (7)

#### Review responses and feedback resulting from trauma

#### Review: Common Reactions to Trauma

#### Write about the following topics:

##### - Symptoms of repeat experiences:

- Overlapping memories, perceptions of trauma, and traumatic memories
- Nightmares in general and those associated with domestic violence in particular
- Feeling intense anguish and distress when remembering the trauma of domestic violence

##### - Increased physiological arousal

- hypervigilance
- Exaggerated panic, nervousness.
- stress, anger
- Sleep disorders.
- Decreased focus and attention.

##### - Avoid remembering traumatic events.

- Efforts to suppress thoughts and feelings related to trauma and violence.
- Avoid talking about trauma and any related topic, and the captive neck in general.
- Avoid activities, places, or people that trigger traumatic memories, whether inside or outside the home.

##### - Loss of sensation or emotional numbness

- Lack of interest and decreased participation in important activities at the family level.
- Feeling isolated and disconnected.
- Absence of emotional sensation and restriction of the extent of feelings.
- Feeling of a lack of hope and a sense of a future life.

##### - Other problems associated with these symptoms:

- Exaggeration of the risks in the surrounding environment.
- trustless.
- Low mental image of the wife about family life.
- Lack of intimacy with problems in social relationships.
- impulsiveness
- Abuse of alcohol or drugs.
- Depression.
- Feelings of guilt or shame.
- Feeling of inadequacy.

### exercise (8)

#### Practical application model of emotional anesthesia

#### Emotional Numbing Worksheet

- 1- What are the emotions that overwhelm you without you feeling them?  
.....
- 2- Why do you think it can be avoided? How did you learn to get over it?  
.....
- 3- What fears do you encounter when feeling sad?  
.....
- 4- What can happen if you feel happy?  
.....
- 5- What are you afraid of fear itself?  
.....
- 6- What emotions do you always like to feel?  
.....
- 7- How emotional numbness affects your social, intimate, and professional relationships and scholastic?  
.....



**Exercise (9)****Cognitive therapy****Recovery Thinking**

- 1- Each of you identify the negative thinking patterns that he has with identifying statements that Denote it like:
  - I don't care about anything .
  - All people are fools.
  - No one can be trusted.
  - Each person seeks only what he wants
  - All situations have risks
  - a bad person .
  - Civilians cannot be trusted.
- 2- You should write the impact of these negative patterns on your life and your relationship with others?
- 3- What negative thoughts relate to that?
  - I am a useless person.
  - I could n't learn anything .
  - I destroy anything
  - If others knew the true nature of my character, they would reject me.
- 4- How do these thoughts affect your behavior and emotions?
- 5- How can you rethink these negative thoughts and make them more real? Ex: Negative thought: I can't do anything.

The realist idea is, " Like any human being, I can get a lot done, and I fall into some dangers."

**Exercise (10)****Bad experience I had**

- Describe a predicament, problem, or traumatic experience you had:  
.....  
.....  
.....
- How did you manage to get out of that problem or predicament?  
.....  
.....  
.....
- What lessons and skills did you learn from that experience?  
.....  
.....  
.....
- How did that experience affect you? How did you contribute to your present and future?  
.....  
.....  
.....

**References**

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2. Al-Owaibil' Manal (2017) Writing Therapy, Dammam, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Dar Athar Publishing and Distribution.
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