NEWS BREAK

Article: How journaling can help maintain your mental health

Section: Active Aging, 22

Sunday’s News Break selects an article from Sunday, March 28, 2021 of The Seattle Times print replica for an in-depth reading of the news. Read the selected article and answer the attached study questions.

You are encouraged to modify this lesson to fit the needs of your students. For example, some teachers might use this as a take-home assignment and others might read and answer the questions in a small group or larger, class discussion.

*Please be sure to preview all NIE content before using it in your classroom to ensure it is appropriate for your students.

Standards:

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.1

• Refer to details and examples in a text when explaining what the text says explicitly and when drawing inferences from the text.

CCSS.ELA-Literacy.RI.4.2

• Determine the main idea of a text and explain how it is supported by key details; summarize the text.

Objectives:

Students will talk about journaling and the health benefits it provides. They’ll discuss why the stigma surrounding mental health issues have decreased recently. Students will talk about whether or not they enjoy time alone, and what they enjoy doing during “me time.” They’ll create a list of positive affirmations, what they’re grateful for and what makes them smile.
Pre-Reading Discussion:

• What do you think the article will be about, using only these pictures?
• Are there clues?
• What can you infer?

Vocabulary Building:

Read this sentence, what do you think the highlighted words mean using context clues? A context clue is a word or words that are hints and refers to the sources of information outside of words that readers may use to predict the identities and meanings of unknown words.

Creating a list of positive affirmations — such as things you like about yourself or achievements you are proud of — can boost your self-esteem.

Positive affirmations journals Guess:

Positive affirmations journals Definition:
Comprehension Questions:

1. Your mental and emotional well-being is just as important as staying in good what?
2. You might never miss an annual physical and always go to the doctor when you’re sick, but what do you do to take care of your _________ _______?
3. What things can impact your quality of life and cause depression, anxiety and sleep deprivation?
4. It’s essential to be aware of any changes in your ___________ and __________ state.
5. What is a great way to express and understand your emotions and be proactive about your mental health?
6. Research shows that writing down your thoughts and feelings has multiple what?
7. What do you need to start?
8. Data also shows that 20% of adults over 60 live with a mental or neurological disorder. Which two disorders are most common?
9. Recording happy times can bring you _____ and creating a historical account of your life is a gift you can give to your loved ones.
10. Plus, the physical act of holding a pen and filling pages with words activates different areas of your ________, exercises fine motor skills and engages your senses — hearing the pen scratch against the page, smelling fresh ink and more.

Discussion Questions (small/large groups), Journal Prompts or Essay Questions:

- What surprised (or stood out to) you in the article?
- At first I thought ____________, but now I think ___________?
- What things did you already know from prior experience?
- Do you journal? How often? Does it help your mood or mental state? Why or why not?

Fortunately, the stigma surrounding mental health issues has decreased as more people are willing to share their struggles with others. Additionally, mental disorders are treatable for people of all ages.

- Why do you think stigmas surrounding mental health have decreased recently?

Expressing your emotions and putting your thoughts and feelings on paper can help you purge negative emotions. Transferring fear or negative thoughts out of your head and onto a page can clear your mind and help you let them go. Ultimately, when anxiety, fear and negativity occupy space in your journal instead of your mind, you can find peace and perhaps even sleep better. Keeping a journal also relieves stress.
Do you agree or disagree with the above statement? Does writing help you relieve stress?

Setting aside some time and writing in a quiet place offers a break from obligations and pressures — and gives you some valuable “me time” to look forward to. It also allows you to organize your thoughts and reflect on an upsetting situation with a fresh perspective.

- When do you get “me time?” What do you tend to do?
- Do you enjoy time by yourself?
- Do you think it’s been more difficult to get “me time” during COVID? Why or why not?

Creating a list of positive affirmations — such as things you like about yourself or achievements you are proud of — can boost your self-esteem.

- Create a list of 10 positive affirmations about yourself.

“What are you grateful for today?” or “Make a list of 30 things that make you smile.” Setting a regular time each day to write can help you establish a routine. You should also be flexible and write when the mood strikes. Above all, once you have your book and pen in hand, just start writing — and the good fruits of your effort will follow.

- Write down 5 things you are grateful for.
- Write down 5 things that make you smile.
- Do you think you’ll try journaling, if you haven’t before reading this article? Why or why not?

News Break is posted to the Web on Monday. Please share this NIE News Break program with other teachers. To sign-up for the print replica for your class, please register on-line or call 206/652-6290 or toll-free 1-888/775-2655.

Copyright © 2021 The Seattle Times Company