

# Keeping a Journal

*"I want to write, but more that I want to bring out all kinds of things that lie buried in my heart."*- Anne Frank

Consider keeping a personal journal during these difficult times. A journal provides a safe place to reflect on what has happened and helps you begin the healing process. Research shows that writing not only helps release pent-up feelings but, also relieves stress and boosts the body's immune system.

## Some basic guidelines that can help you get started are:

- Use any type of notebook with blank or lined pages and find a pen or pencil you enjoy using. Some prefer a computer keyboard.
- Write for 5-15 minutes a day and whenever you are feeling the urge.
- Choose a location that is comfortable and private, a lighted candle and background music may help set the mood to write.
- Do not be concerned with sentence structure, grammar, or making sense. You are not being judged.
- Feel free to make your journal entries in the form of a letter addressed to your loved one, or to yourself.
- You might prefer to make lists on your journal pages- list of your emotions, memories, plans, ideas and so on.
- Another option is to choose a feeling you've experienced recently and describe it fully. For instance, you could compare the feeling to a taste, smell, a picture, piece of music or physical sensation. (I feel tense like a rope, or I feel calm like the still waters of a mountain lake) you can also depict or illustrate a feeling with markers or crayons.
- Sometimes you may want to write about a specific topic such as:
  - A description of your loved one and your relationship
  - Your thoughts and feelings about how and why they died
  - What you wish you would have said or done
  - What you are glad you said or did



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