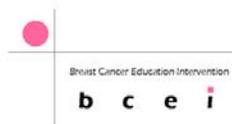




JOURNALING OR KEEPING A DIARY

Journaling is writing about your thoughts, feelings, and concerns. Writing and other forms of expressing yourself are good ways that women can help themselves as they heal after breast cancer. Many people find that writing their thoughts and feelings down in a journal helps them cope with the uncertainty they face, and explore the meaning of having breast cancer. People have questions about how to begin with journaling. Here are some tips to help you get started:

- **Get a notebook or journal.** Find one that you like. One that opens flat makes writing easier.
- **Choose a quiet, private place** where you will not be bothered by sounds, sights, or smells.
- **Write as often as you want** or feel the need to but try to write for 15 minutes at a time each day.
- **Keep your pen moving.** Keep writing and your mind will deliver what it wants to write. Some persons who journal enjoy drawing in their journals, so you may want colored pencils too.
- **Write down thoughts and feelings** of your journey with breast cancer. You may want to work out what you want to say to your doctors, your spouse, or how you will tell loved ones about your breast cancer. Anything you want to write about is fine.
- **Many people feel that writing thoughts on paper helps them** be more organized and focused. Some persons who journal report that writing down thoughts also helps their emotional well-being.
- **Whatever the topic,** you should explore your experience (what happened) and your feelings about it.
- **Don't worry** about grammar, spelling, or sentence structure.
- **Focus on** those issues in breast cancer that you are dealing with right now.
- **Really "let go"** about your very deepest feelings: What do you feel and why do you feel that way.



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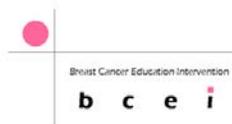
- **Keep in mind** that what you write is for your eyes only. You do not have to justify your thoughts to please someone else. Do not write thinking someone else will read it.
- **Don't use writing as a substitute** for action or to avoid things.

When Do You Need To Seek Help?

Journaling is a way of dealing with what is going on in your life. It is meant to be a pleasant and relaxing activity. However, if you are having anxiety and anxious thoughts while journaling, you may want to seek more help through a counselor or support group.

Useful Websites:

- <http://ezinearticles.com/?Benefits-of-Keeping-a-Journal-or-Diary&id=809063>
- <http://www.cancer.net/blog/2014-06/power-writing>



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