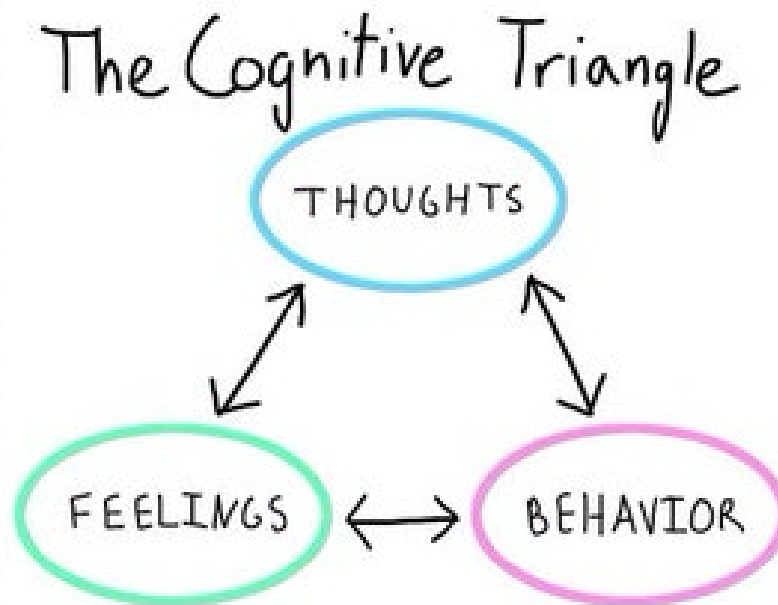


# JOURNALING EXERCISE



## *Journaling of Thoughts, Feelings, and Behavior*

### **Self-Awareness is the Goal**

One of the best ways to maintain awareness of what you are experiencing is a targeted journaling exercise. Using the Cognitive Therapy Triangle of thoughts, feelings and behavior, stop 3 times a day to write about your experience. In your journal or notebook write the date at the top of the page, then write the time of day. It is best to choose three times each day, such as 11:00am, 4:00pm and 9:00pm.

### **Writing Should Include Specific Details**

Three times a day stop and ask yourself, "For the past 4-5 hours, what have I been thinking, feeling and doing?" Be specific with detailed examples. One or two-word answers will not be as helpful as descriptions and specific details. For example...



- *"I've been thinking about how I have no one to talk to about my concerns."*
- *"I've been feeling anxious and worry that with my sadness I will never feel joy again."*
- *"I've been unwilling to leave the house and find myself drinking alcohol and watching television."*

### **With Time You Will Begin to See Patterns**

Don't worry if you miss a time or even a day. Pick up your journal and resume as soon as you can. Journal faithfully for at least three weeks and you will begin to notice patterns repeating themselves. Pay attention to these and speak with a trusted friend about what you are noticing.

### **Grief Writing Prompts**

- Write down a list of people you can turn to for support, either in person or virtually.
- One feeling I've felt coming up a lot lately is...
- Write about where you feel your grief in your body. Where does your grief stay?
- Where does your mind go when you let it wander?
- What is one thing you could try to make today easier on yourself?
- I need more of...
- I need less of...
- What is something that makes you feel taken care of?
- Do you feel comfortable asking for help? Why or why not?
- I feel most connected to my loved one when...
- What is a way you can celebrate your loved one's memory? Can you plant something, cook something, watch something, volunteer something?
- One thing I wish I could do over with them is...
- If I could forgive them for something, it would be...
- If I could forgive myself for something, it would be...
- Write about a time you got along well with your loved one.
- Write about a time you had difficulty getting along with your loved one.
- If you could tell your loved one about your day, what would you tell them?
- How did your loved one make you feel?
- Write a mantra you can return to when you feel overwhelmed by grief.
- What is something you wish your support system would understand?
- What is something you wish your support system could help with.
- What songs make you think of them?
- Make a photo collage in your journal with some of your favorite pictures of them.
- Is there anyone else I know going through this right now? How can we support each other?

