



MENTAL HEALTH PEER SERVICES OF GREATER FORT WORTH

ISSUE 4: Writings by Peers

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WHO WE ARE:

[Mental Health Peer Services of Greater Fort Worth](#) is a Peer Run organization--we are controlled, governed, and operated 100% by mental health consumers or 'Peers.' Peers guide our agency, and we use this agency for our own mental health. We call it "MHPS" (pronounce it like 'mips').

Check out our website:

mhpsogfw.org

OUR MISSION: To empower people with lived experience of mental health challenges to achieve recovery.



CHECK IT OUT

[How Does Creative Writing Support Mental Health?](#)

[Journaling for Emotional Wellness](#)

[Poetry for Mental Health](#)

IN THIS ISSUE: THE BENEFITS OF CREATIVE WRITING ON OUR OWN MENTAL HEALTH

It doesn't matter what you call it when you write down your innermost thoughts and feelings — 'therapeutic journaling,' 'expressive writing,' 'emotional expression'— there's something cathartic and helpful to the soul when we view our pain on paper. Maybe the benefit comes from the thought: "If I can write it, I can survive it!" This statement is more than a mere thought though. There are numerous research studies that have shown dramatic results from the use of creative writing in managing mental health issues. One of the most popular researchers in this area of study is Dr. James Pennebaker, a social psychologist and Professor Emeritus at the University of Texas at Austin. His research in the '80's revealed long-term mental and physical health benefits from consistent writing about past hurtful experiences and trauma. He found that even short writing sessions of 15 minutes a day for 4 consecutive days benefited study participants in the long run. (It should be noted that the process of writing itself can, initially, be quite stressful as the writer must 'recall and relive' the triggering experience. What Pennebaker found, however, was that, over time, the writers' immune systems became stronger, their depression and anxiety was reduced, and their overall general health improved.) You can hear Dr. Pennebaker talk about his work in an interview on this podcast "[Expressive writing can help your mental health.](#)"

What follows in this issue are some pieces of creative writing that have been submitted to MHPS specially for this newsletter. Our hope is that, through these works, you may find your own creative voice, one that can lead you to a deeper healing.

Susan Bragg, Executive Director

FROM A PEER:

"I write because I refuse to let the darkness win."



JOIN A SUPPORT GROUP

- ~Visit our website [MHPS](#)
- ~Click on 'Info/Contact' tab
- ~Complete the [Information Sheet for Group](#) and select the desired group or groups
- ~You will be contacted by a peer from MHPS with additional information for one of our online groups

HELP SPREAD THE WORD

- ~ Do you have contact with a business or agency that would benefit from a presentation on mental health?
- ~ Are you a member of a club or civic organization that would like more information on current mental health issues?

Call MHPS at 817-500-8660 to arrange a presentation

Dear Depression

Kay P Hart

Dear Depression, Why Do You Come?
With Force and Might, Like a Mack Truck Run
Into My Life, You Crash and Burn
Leaving Me Shattered, with No Return
You Weigh Me Down, like Concrete Shoes
Making it Hard for Me to Choose
To Get Up and Fight, or Stay in Bed
Eyes Swollen from the Tears I Shed
Oh Depression, You Make My Life
A Constant Battle, Filled with Strife
You Turn My Thoughts into a Mess
And Leave Me Feeling So Much Less
Why Must You Stay for Such Long Hours?
Bringing Your Darkness, Like Dying Flowers
My Mind Races, with Disturbing Thoughts
And You Just Sit, as If You're Sought
Dear Depression, Can't You See?
The Damage You Inflict on Me
But Still You Come, Without a Care
A Constant Presence, that's Hard to Bear
I Wish I Could just Make You Leave
But You're Like a Shadow, I Can't Deceive
So, I'll Keep Fighting, Day by Day
Hoping that You'll Eventually Stray
But Until Then, Dear Depression
I'll Write to You, in This Confession
Hoping that One Day, You'll Understand

FROM A PEER: "I just love Mental Health Peer Services!"

For My Daughter Leaving Home

Anonymous

The phrase 'time flies' couldn't be more true than when it comes to our children. One day they are so tiny and frail like a baby bird, then it's time to leave the nest. All of the birthdays celebrated so excitedly, now...feels like dread. Remembering when they got their first tooth, took their first step, and entered their first day of school. 'Now,' it all seems like a blur. 'Now,' I wish I could turn back time and do it all over again...but in slow motion.

Watching children grow is much like teaching a child how to ride a bike for the very first time. We watch them wobble from child to teenager, and then adulthood with the same feelings of despair as waiting for the thud of a fall, sprinting to catch up in case they need saving. Watching, as they get further and further. Excited for their journey, also afraid, knowing the secrets of this cold, cruel world, but hoping you did your best in shaping them into the wonderful person you know them to be, with enough strength in their wings to make it.

Depression Salad

Ryan Gerard

I got off the #2 and walked the rest of the way home. Saw all kinds of stuff on the street, but don't worry about me...I always know how to stay out of trouble. Years of being 'out there' taught me something. Add that to childhood and years of drug addiction and you really learn something. I probably learned more from 5 years in a bar district than you could learn from Harvard, Princeton, or Yale. By the time I got home I was exhausted; that was a long walk.

I made a depression salad. The ingredients? Lettuce, tomato, onion, therapy, psych meds, peer support, and positive coping skills. I use a dressing of balsamic, olive oil, and French mustard. I'm trying to eat healthy.

See, in the early days (late 90s, early 2000s) there was no mention of mental health. It wasn't talked about; it wasn't in the wind. The circles I ran in only talked about dope and whatever was considered cool at the time. I had never heard of a treatment center or mental health services. I didn't know what a 12-step program was. I was completely in the dark.

It would take a tremendous crash before I learned that I had bipolar disorder. I was ashamed at first. Now I don't care who knows. But it's been a process. I didn't always eat a depression salad. I used to eat junk.

I called some peer specialists across the country to process how I felt. I wrote in my journal. I cleaned the kitchen and tried to unclutter my mind. I consistently forgave my parents for being tortured souls and not treating me well. "They did the best they could," I thought.

After looking out the window and seeing the kids playing outside, I thought of my life and had a brief moment of acceptance. I never had kids and I never got married. My life was a series of messes that took years to clean up. I never had money and usually I was homeless. Now I'm stable and the bills are paid. How did this happen? I guess recovery is real and treatment works.

Glad I didn't give up 5 minutes before the miracle.

The End

Your Stories

Susan Bragg

They say that your stories
make you who you are.
Then what do they make me?

After so many years and so many faces,
Listening to your stories of crime,
You gave me your pain
Not to reduce it but to share
The sorrow,
The victims,
Their hurt,
Their trauma,
Their Deaths.

How can I make sense of so much
Dying of body and soul?
Is there no purpose to what you've suffered?
Is it up to me to help you find a purpose?

Triumph over tragedy will never be enough to
Erase what happened.
No such thing as closure with crime.
But living after loss is more than mere survival
When you can say,
I will endure the rock that life has thrown!
I am not defeated!
I will live on!
I am a victim no more!
I am the Victor!

A Little Peace of Mind

Kay P Hart

In Times of Trouble, When Words Fail,
And Our World Seems to Crumble and Pale,
There's a Powerful Force, That We Can Seek,
To Soothe Our Souls and Bring Us Peace.
When Our Hearts are Heavy, and Minds in Despair,
And We're Drowning in Our Own Despair,
Music is There to Lift Us High,
And Carry Us Away, to a Different Sky.
For When the Chaos Seems Out of Control,
And We're Lost in a Deep, Dark Hole,
Music is The Light, That Guides Our Way,
And Gives Us Strength, to Face Another Day.
It's a Great Escape, From the Harsh Realities,
A Sanctuary, From All the Hostilities,
Where We Can Let Go, of All Our Fears,
And Find Solace, In the Melody That We Hear.
With Each Note, and Every Beat,
We Find Our Own Personal Retreat,
A Place Where We Can Just Be,
And Let Our Souls Fly, Wild and Free.
So, When Everything Seems Out of Hand,
And We Can't Seem to Understand,
Remember That Music Is a Great Escape,
A Refuge, In Which We Can Find Our Grace.
For When Words Fail, and The World is Bleak,
Music is There, to Help Us Speak,
To Heal Our Wounds, and Calm Our Mind,
For with Music, We'll Always Find,
A Little Peace of Mind.

YOUR STORY IS IMPORTANT TO US!

**If you would like to share your writings
with peers in future issues, email us at:
mhpsogfw@gmail.com**

When Life Knocks You Down

Kay P Hart

When Life Knocks you Down,
And you Feel like you Can't Go On,
Just Remember This Truth,
You are Stronger Than you Know.
If you Fall Twenty Times,
Just Get Back Up Twenty-one,
Keep Fighting for your Dreams,
And Don't Let the Darkness Win.
Your Days May Seem Gloomy,
And Filled with Shades of Grey,
But that Doesn't Mean,
Your Day Has to End that Way.
All you Need is a Change,
A Shift In your Mindset,
And If you Find yourself Struggling,
Just Call a Friend, Don't Forget.
They'll Make you Laugh,
And Bring Back your Smile,
For We All Need Someone,
To Walk with Us Through Life's Trials.
It's Okay to Ask for Help,
To Not Be Strong All On Your Own,
For We as Humans Need Each Other,
To Thrive and to Grow.
So When your Day Feels Heavy,
And you Can't Seem to Cope,
Remember, It's Okay,
To Reach Out for Some Hope.
We All Have Down Days,
But We Don't Have to Stay There,
With a Little Help and Support,
We Can Rise Above the Despair.
And If you Feel like you Can't Go On,
Just Remember This Simple Rule,
You Can Always Call for Help,
For We are All In this Together, As One.

