



## The Benefits of Journaling and How to Start

When life takes an unexpected turn, writing can be a beneficial form of release and reflection. Regular journal writing or drawing can be as therapeutic as it is creative. You may spill your feelings onto the page or process a difficult choice. Remember, it's not how the words read on the page but how you feel after you write them.

The main idea behind journaling is learning how to open up about yourself and the issues and situations in your life. Once you begin, you will observe that the process of expressing your feelings will make you feel better.

Journaling can...

- Help you know yourself
- Help in the healing process
- Improve communication skills
- Clarify your thoughts, feelings and behavior
- Facilitate decision making
- Assist personal growth
- Ease problem solving
- Offer new perspectives
- Help you speak your truth
- Release pent-up thoughts and emotions
- Allow freedom of expression
- Clear the mind
- Bring things together
- Be empowering
- Reduce stress
- Capture your life story

In this toolkit, NESAC has provided you with a journal and pen. There are really no rules to keeping a journal, only suggestions... Find a safe and quiet place to journal. Date your entries. Some find it beneficial to journal at the same time each day. You could write daily or weekly. Whatever feels best for you. Use a centering ritual (cup of tea, burning a candle, meditation, soothing music).

Journaling is about writing. Put your pen to paper and write (or draw). Put down whatever comes into your head. You can write about things unrelated to your loss. Here are some questions that might get you started:

- What was the best part of my day today?
- What is bothering me?
- What memories do I want to record?
- What are my hopes/dreams for the future?
- What frightens me?
- What comforts me?

....A journal can be anything you want it to be or need it to be.