

A writing space: scribing the soul in supervision

Jeannie Wright

“Write something every day”,
she said

Even if it's only a line.

It will protect you.”

...How then should it defend us?

Unless by strengthening
our fierce and obstinate centres.’

Muse (for E.T.) by Elaine Feinstein



Writing as a healing space...

‘...where our soul can speak and unfold.’

bell hooks (1999:5)

Pen, key-board, crayon....



This writing is for your eyes only

...until (and if) you decide to share it.

- Only you will judge this writing so gag the inner critic – as far as possible.

You can't write the wrong thing.

- Forget school rules!

Write in whatever language you choose.

Write a 6 minute splurge

Write, doodle or draw for 6 minutes, without stopping.

Spelling and grammar don't matter, nor does repetition.

This writing is for your eyes only.

Breathe until you gain a sense of quiet

Close your eyes if that helps reduce distraction.

Take a moment to create a safe space for yourself.

Reflective writing in counselling and psychotherapy supervision

Talk to the person next to you for 5 minutes each way about what that process of writing was like.

No need to mention the **content** of the writing if you choose not to.



What are your associations with soul – what does it mean in your first language and in your culture?







Hearing the inaudible

'Like a mindfulness meditation, a Quaker meeting full of silent waiting and wondering, a star-filled clear night sky, the writing gifted me transcendence from the ordinary. It let me hear what had been inaudible.'

Morag Cunningham in Wright (2018) p, 81

Pen, key-board, crayon....



Complete the poetry-stems

Soul is the colour...

It sounds like ...

It feels like...

It tastes like...

It smells like ...

It makes you feel like ...

Re-read what you've written

Again, turn to the person next to you, or behind or in front, and talk through the process of this short writing activity.

What was it like?

5 mins each way

Writing taps tacit knowledge

The ritual you can create through a writing for reflective practice activity is a kind of creative introspection.

The reflective gap, the detachment from the experience that the writing affords is important.

...

Writing as discovery

'I realised after re-reading the writing, how often recently guilt crops up.

Seeing it laid out and bare, lined up for me to return to...I am now aware of a pattern that I only knew tacitly before.'

Pen, key-board, crayon....



Scribing the soul in supervision

When I am challenged

When I feel burnt out, bored, stifled

When I'm lacking boundaries

When I do not know what to do next?

Some possibilities

6 mins write – free flow

Write a list of what you want to say in supervision but can't – get under the censors.

Write a letter to your soul ...Then write the reply – dialogue with your soul

The new supervisor

What do I want?

Haven't a clue.

Daft question.

I want you to listen to me

With everything you've got:

Ears, eyes, soul and heart.

Can you do that for 20 minutes – or even more?

And not get in my way - can you? (Wright, 2018)

The precision of poetry, the passion of science

'Science describes accurately from outside, poetry describes accurately from inside. Science explicates, poetry implicates. Both celebrate what they describe.'

- Ursula K. le Guin

WRITING CURES

An Introductory handbook of writing
in counselling and therapy



Edited by Gillie Bolton, Stephanie Howlett,
Colin Lago and Jeannie K. Wright

Scribing the soul is creative

Like any other expressive art, writing helps you step aside, move away from the everyday path.

It combines richly with other expressive arts e.g dance and movement (Panhofer et al, 2011)

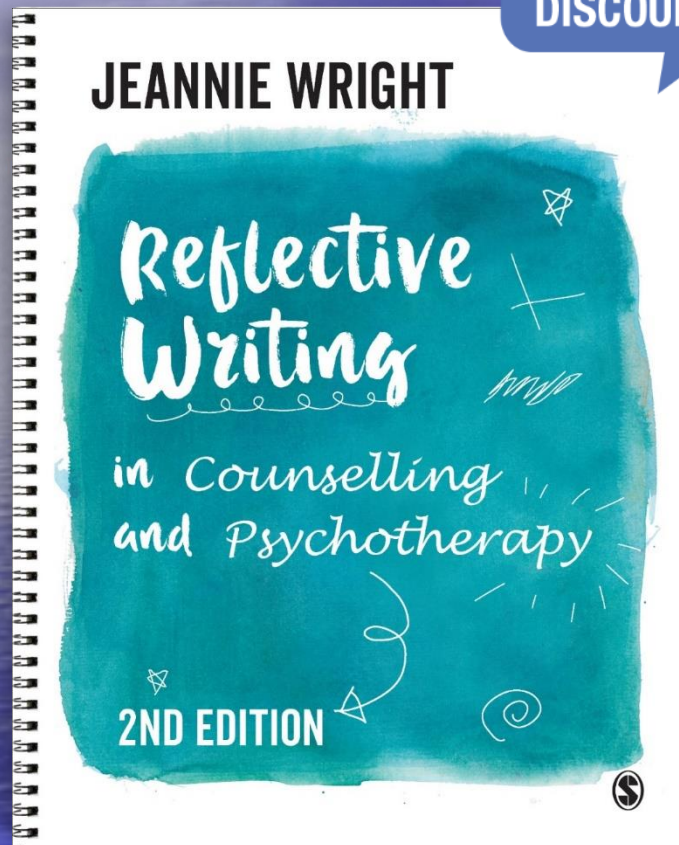
It's a kind of deep listening to yourself.

How creative does writing have to be in order to be therapeutic?

Williamson, C & Wright J.K. (2018) *Journal of Poetry Therapy*, 31(2): 113 – 123.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/ihyhAW7ccA8FSahJbjNU/full>

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BACP 2018 Ethical framework for the counselling professions

Supervision is a specialised form of professional mentoring provided for practitioners responsible for undertaking challenging work with people. Supervision is provided to ensure standards, enhance quality, stimulate creativity and support the sustainability and resilience of the work being undertaken.

Scribing the soul: safe guards

Expressive and reflective writing can expose the 'unspoken' and needs emotional and ethical care.

One risk in capturing the internal 'self-talk' on screen or on paper is that it is no longer private.

Safe guard your writing!

Writing Well: acrostic

Write without self-criticism

Respond to our words from your feelings

Ignore grammar, spelling, punctuation, and doing it right

Take the words gently in your hands and do not crush them with criticism

Invite the words to nourish and refresh you

No need to read or share if you do not wish to

Go where your words lead, but only as far as you wish to go

Wise words are not necessarily complicated or difficult, they are often simple and straightforward

Excellence is not required, there is always someone who writes better, but they do not write your words

Listen with your ears and from your heart

Let the words remain confidential to us, and do not scatter them thoughtlessly.

Gibbons, (2018)

What scribing the soul in supervision brings

- More silence
- More self-care and protection
- More clarity
- More stepping off the literal and straight-line path
- More creativity
- More play

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