

Therapeutic Writing – Fictional Characters

This sheet gives some ideas for creating fictional characters in ways that could be beneficial for your wellbeing.

Creating a Character from a Picture: Find a photograph or picture of a total stranger – you might find one on the internet or in a magazine. Make sure you don't know (and don't find out) anything about the person – not even their name. Now write about them as if they were someone you know. Give them a name, write about who they live with, what they do, whether they have pets, and about their hobbies and interests. You might go on to write about them in action (doing a hobby perhaps).



Creating a Character from a Questionnaire: One way to create a fictional character is by answering a list of questions about them, such as:

- What's their name?
- How old are they?
- What's their appearance like (hair, eyes, build, height, etc.)?
- What kind of clothes do they wear (tidy/untidy, footwear, colours, type of clothes)?
- What's their voice like (quiet/loud, with/without an accent)?
- What kind of personality do they have (outgoing, shy, friendly, suspicious, etc.)?
- What do they like doing best (hobbies, sports, music)?
- Who are their family and friends?
- Do they have any enemies?
- Do they have pets (kinds of animal, names)?
- Where do they live? (house, cottage, flat, cave, hole in a tree, town, country, etc.)?
- What is their life's ambition?
- What do they want right now?
- What problem do they have?
- What is their deepest secret?
- What frightens them?
- What have they got in their pocket?

A supportive Friend: Create an imaginary friend – someone who is enormously supportive to you. Write a letter to the imaginary person, perhaps asking for their advice about something, or thanking them for being so supportive to you. Finally write another letter: a caring and supportive reply from your imaginary friend back to you.

Creating a Character Inspired by an Object:

Choose an object that appeals to you, but not something that has ever belonged to you or to anyone you know. You might find something suitable in a charity shop, car boot sale or museum. The sorts of objects you could use include: a piece of fabric, an item of clothing, an instrument, an ornament, or a tool. Write about the person who might own the object. You could write about them wearing the clothing or using the object.



Dialogue: Create a new character who is just the sort of person you would want to meet. Write down the conversation you might have with them if you met them. Or write an imaginary dialogue between you and a real person who you've never met but would like to meet – someone from history or from the present day.

Further Reading

1. Words for Wellbeing blog: <http://trioross.wordpress.com/>
2. Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/home.php#!/WordsForWellbeing?fref=ts>
3. Therapeutic Writing handouts: Writing for Wellbeing, Mindful Writing, Journals and Diaries, Freewriting, Reflective Writing.
4. Email Carol at writing.year@cumbria.nhs.uk for copies of handouts and to enquire about ordering the Words for Wellbeing book (£9.50 including P&P)

***** You may photocopy this sheet provided you do not alter it in any way *****