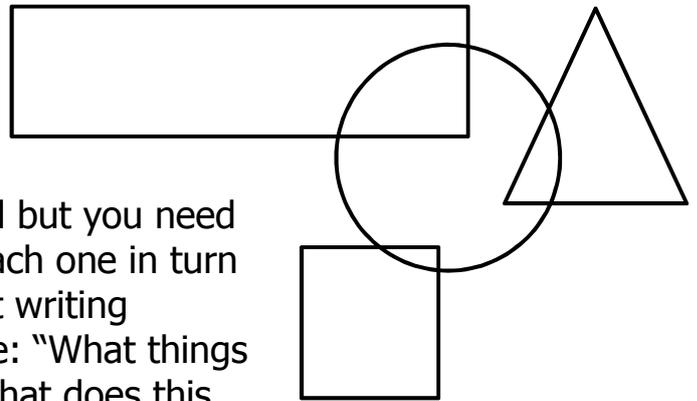


Therapeutic Writing – Random Input and Metaphor

This sheet gives some ideas for getting writing inspiration from random words, pictures, things, etc. It's not about doing a particular kind of writing such as freewriting, it's about getting inspiration from random things and freeing up your imagination and your writing. There is no right or wrong way to do any of these ideas – just write what you feel like writing and let your imagination go where it wants.

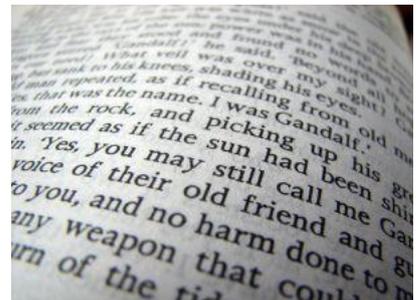
Random words: open a dictionary, another kind of book or a magazine and pick a word at random. Think about the word for a few seconds and then do some freewriting – write whatever comes into your head for 5 minutes without stopping to think and without worrying about spelling, punctuation, grammar or handwriting.

Shapes: on a sheet of plain paper draw a circle, a square, a rectangle and a triangle (I've drawn them linked but you need to draw them separately). Now use each one in turn as writing inspiration. Before you start writing you might ask yourself something like: "What things do I know that are this shape?" or "What does this shape mean for me and my life right now?"



Random objects: choose 3 objects at random and write a story connecting them. Or ask a friend to pass you an object (they choose) then use it as inspiration for writing. Or look outside and write about whatever catches your eye – a rucksack on the back of a passer by, a lorry across the street, an interestingly shaped cloud, a street sign.

Random sentences: open a book at a random page and write down the first sentence you see and use that sentence as inspiration for writing. Or use only the start of the sentence and continue writing from there. Or turn on the radio and write down the first sentence or fragment of a sentence you hear and start writing.



If you were a place, what place would you be? Write in first person, present tense, for example, you could start with: "I am Spain and I am hot and sultry". Are you a house, a town, somewhere rural, an island, a country? Are you a real place or imagined? What's the weather like in your place? Do people live there? Are there plants? Animals?

Random pictures: find a magazine with plenty of pictures. Open it at random and use any picture you see as inspiration for writing. Or, if you have access to the Internet, search for the word "picture" on Google Images and use one of the pictures that come up as writing inspiration.



You could write about what you see in the picture, or imagine you are in the picture and write in the first person about being there, or write a short story inspired by the picture.

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 ****