

Journaling with CBT & Mind-Body Awareness for Chronic Illness

Living with chronic illness often means managing both physical symptoms and the emotional toll they bring. **Our thoughts, feelings, and body sensations are deeply connected.** When you pause to notice them with mindfulness and then gently challenge unhelpful thought patterns through CBT, you create more space for compassion, balance, and healing.

Journaling is a way to slow down, listen inwardly, and bring these practices together.

Integrated Journaling Prompts

1. *When I notice discomfort or pain in my body, what thoughts come up with it? How might I respond with a kinder or more balanced perspective?*
2. *What physical sensations do I feel right now (tension, heaviness, ease, warmth)? What emotions or thoughts are connected to those sensations?*
3. *A common thought I have about my illness is _____. What happens in my body when I believe this thought? What shifts if I reframe it in a gentler way?*
4. *When I take three mindful breaths, what changes in my body and in my thinking?*
5. *What is one moment of relief, comfort, or connection I noticed in my body today? How can I carry that into my thoughts when challenges arise?*
6. *When I'm critical of myself because of my illness, what sensations show up in my body (tight chest, heavy shoulders, fatigue)? How might I reframe that thought with compassion and notice if my body softens?*
7. *What is one thought about my illness that feels heavy right now? If I imagine holding it with gentleness instead of judgment, what shifts inside me?*
8. *What boundary or choice could I make this week that both respects my body's needs and supports a healthier mindset?*
9. *What message of gratitude could I offer my body today, even in its challenges? How does it feel to write or say that aloud?*
10. *If I viewed my body as an ally instead of an enemy, what new thought or perspective would I want to practice?*

✨ **Practice Tip:** Before writing, pause for a minute of mindfulness. Place a hand on your heart or stomach, notice your breath, and ask yourself: *What is my body telling me? What is my mind telling me?* Let your journaling flow from that place of connection