

## STRESS JOURNALING

Having a journal can help relieve stress through writing about irritations, which can guide you to work through issues. Journals can include what bothers you and why, things you would like to change or things that would work for you<sup>6</sup>. Journals can also include why these stressors bother you, how they make you feel, and how to respond<sup>3</sup>.

Here is a breakdown of a “thought record” journal<sup>4</sup>:

### **Step 1: The Situation**

Write about what triggered your stress: Who? What? Where? When?

### **Step 2: Interpretation**

Write down your thoughts, beliefs and assumptions about the situation.

### **Step 3: Challenging Evidence**

Reread what you have written. Ask yourself if you are engaging in a negative thinking pattern. Write down statements that challenge your negative thoughts. Ask yourself these questions:

- Have I had any experiences that show that this thought is not completely true all the time?
- Am I jumping to conclusions that aren't justified by the evidence?
- Were there strengths or positives in me or in the situation that I am overlooking?
- If my best friend or someone I love had this thought, what would I tell them?
- If my best friend or someone who loves me knew I was thinking this way, what would they say?
- What evidence would they point out to show me that my thoughts aren't completely true?
- What have I learned from past experiences that could help me now? What have I done before to feel better about this?
- Two years or two months from now, will I see this situation differently than I do today? Will I even remember it?
- Am I blaming myself or someone else for something that I or they don't have complete control over?

### **Step 4: A More Balanced Interpretation**

See if you can rewrite your thoughts about the event in a more balanced way. Try to stick to the facts.