



**Diversity of Our Mental Health Stories:
Writing Tips and Recommendations**
Outrun the Stigma Story Sharing Contest



Diversity of Our Mental Health Stories is a story sharing contest promoted by Outrun the Stigma Youth and Community Empowerment Team to collect diverse mental stories from our Chapter communities. This document includes information on ideas for potential writing topics, writing tips, resources, and more.

1. POTENTIAL TOPICS

When sharing a mental health story or opinion piece, it is important to have a focused, coherent narrative in mind. While you may have many areas you are interested in writing on or discussing, it is helpful to focus on one specific area or narrative while writing. Start off by writing down what aspects of your story or experiences you would like to share. Do you have a specific message in mind? A particular life event you would like to focus on? Certain lessons you would like to share? Brainstorm a list of potential topics and select the one you would like to discuss in this piece – you can always use this list as a jumping off spot to write more stories and essays about your experiences!

Having trouble coming up with ideas? Read through this list of potential topics to help inspire you:

A. The Relationship between Physical and Mental Health

- How do you think mental and physical health are linked?
- What are some ways that your physical health impacts your mental health? Vice versa?
- What are some coping skills you use to help your physical and mental health?
- What can our society do better to address the link between physical and mental health?

B. Mental Health Education

- What is mental health and why is it important to raise awareness about it?
- Information on a specific topic in mental health and talk in depth – written to an audience that may not have a great deal of knowledge about these conditions (e.g. eating disorders, mood disorders, etc.)

C. Personal Experiences with Mental Health

- Why is mental health important to YOU?
- What are your own experiences with mental health? Are they personal experiences, the experiences of family members, a friend, or community member?
 - What part of these experiences would you like to share?

D. Your Relationship to Outrun the Stigma

- How are you connected with Outrun the Stigma? Are you a participant, observer, committee member, community member, etc.?
- How has Outrun the Stigma impacted your own mental health journey?
- What lessons and skills have you learned through being involved with Outrun the Stigma
- How has mental health activism impacted you personally?
- Why is Outrun the Stigma important? How do you think it is addressing mental health awareness?

Still looking for ideas? Check out these resources on finding a topic when writing about mental health.

Topics For Essay On Mental Health –

<https://customessayorder.com/blog/topics-for-essay-on-mental-health>

100 Great Psychology Research Paper Topics -

<https://owlcation.com/humanities/Easy-Essay-Topics-in-Psychology>

2. WRITING TIPS

Writing about your own experiences with mental health, recovery, and perspectives on mental health can sometimes be overwhelming. Trying to decide where to start, what to say, and how to say it can seem difficult tasks; however, crafting a clear and coherent narrative can have a huge impact on your story. As you are writing your piece, remember to share information that is necessary to provide context or understanding for the reader, but to not get bogged down in extraneous details. Read through these prompt questions to help you determine what should be included in your story:

- Who are you, beyond your mental illness?
- Tell us about your experience with recovery and mental wellness.
- How have you supported a loved one in their mental health journey?
- How do you practice self-care for mental wellness?
- How have you overcome the stigma surrounding mental health and illness?
- How might you use your experiences to help someone else with their mental illness?
- What have you learned about yourself during your mental health journey?

3. EDITING

One of the most important parts of writing is editing! Make sure to allocate plenty of time for you to edit your story before submission. Editing is important not just for catching spelling and grammar mistakes, but also to ensure your story is clear, coherent, concise, and impactful. Make sure to read through your story several times after you have finished writing, and see if a trusted friend or family member could read through it as well. Shift around sections, cut unnecessary sections, and make sure the language used reflects the tone you would like to use.

Here are some additional resources on editing and writing:

8 Writing Tips I Wish I Knew Before I Started Blogging

<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/8-essential-writing-tips>

4. SOURCES AND RESOURCES

When writing about a topic like mental health, it is especially important to ensure you have correct facts and statistics. If you are looking for information on mental health facts or statistics, be sure to source them from a reliable organization and to double-check them when editing. Some great resources for information on mental health can be found below:

Canadian Mental Health Association – <https://cmha.ca/>

Mental Health Commission of Canada - <https://mentalhealthcommission.ca/English>

World Health Organization - http://www.who.int/mental_health/en/

Statistics Canada - <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/82-624-x/2013001/article/11855-eng.htm>

Need some additional help or input? Email our team at stories@outrunthestigma.ca for advice, input and more.

Thank you for participating, and good luck!