

**Certificate in Integrative Palliative Care – 3**  
**Dr. Geeta Joshi**  
**Dr. Piyush Gupta**  
**Dr. Col. Yashavant Joshi**  
**International Institute of Distance Learning**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Kanpur**

**Week-10**  
**Lecture 79: Writing Therapy**

(Refer Slide Time: 00:15)

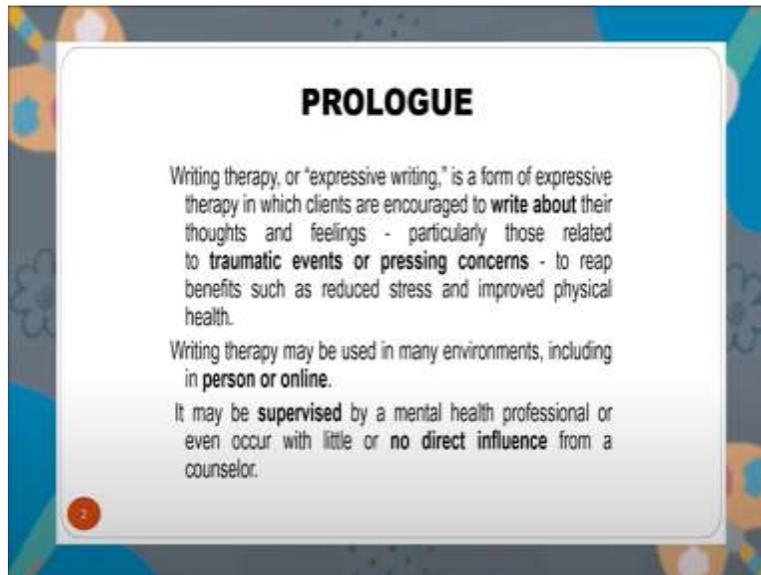
**WRITING THERAPY**



- Prof. Madhurima Pradhan
- Vice President, NAPCAIM, IIP
- Former Head, Department of Psychology, University of Lucknow
- Member, Cancer Aid Society, Ethics committee.

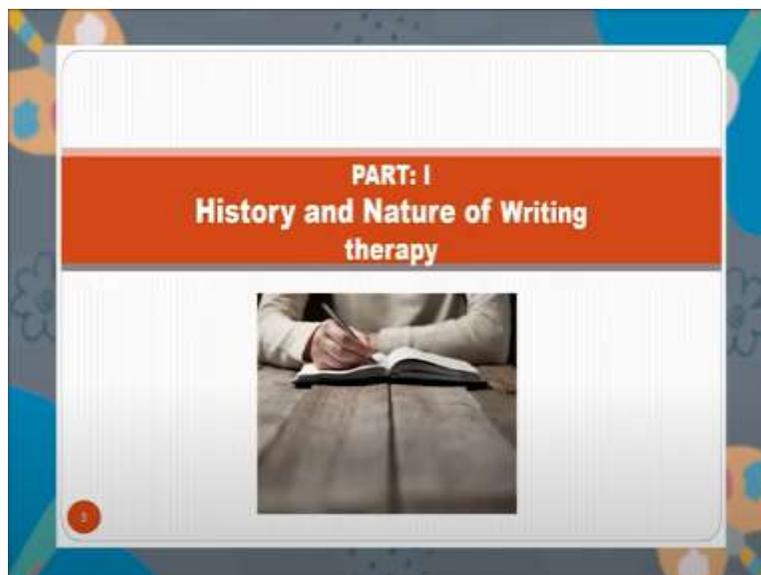
Hello students, the topic of today's session is writing therapy. As discussed earlier there the expressive art therapy is a multi-modal approach and we had already discussed about art therapy techniques and play therapy techniques and the technique of Writing is another approach which can be very fruitful for the mental and physical well-being of the person.

(Refer Slide Time: 00:45)



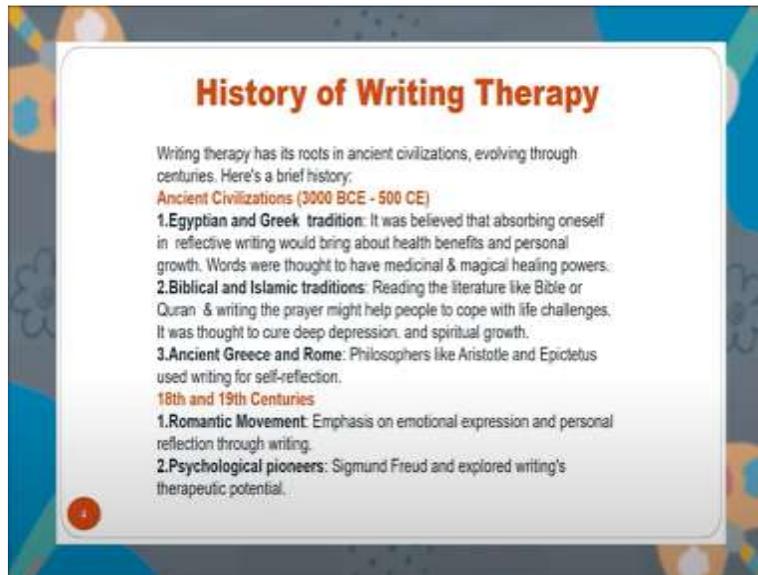
We can find in our own self there are many aspects which are unacknowledged by us. And sometimes we do not accept that these thoughts are our own especially when the people suffer from traumatic events they can find it difficult to cope up with the experiences of the trauma. So writing therapy can help us in this and it may be used in many environments. And across age groups, it can be used online, it can be used in offline sessions, it can be supervised by a person, a clinical therapist or a counselor or it can be conducted without any directed influence from the counselor.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:40)



So, part 1 of this presentation is concerned with history and nature of writing therapy.

(Refer Slide Time: 01:45)

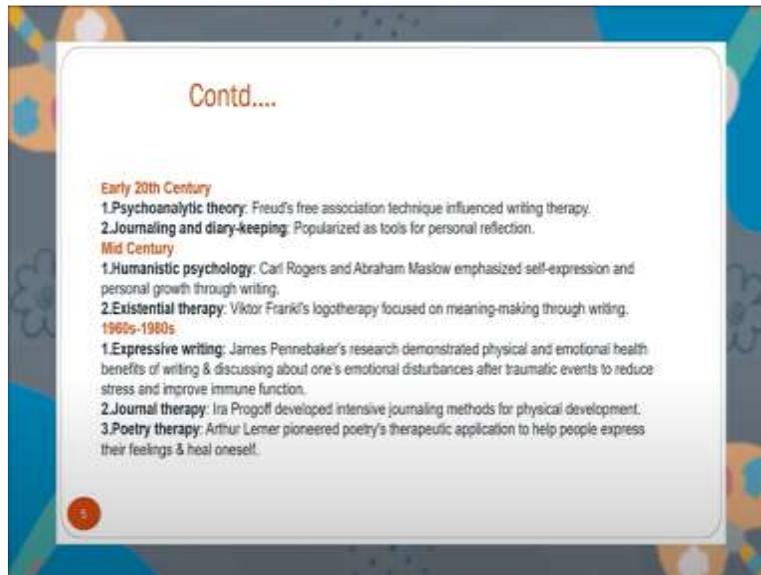


The writing therapy has its roots in ancient civilizations evolving through centuries and we seek the brief history in ancient civilization 3000 BCE to 500 CE. The Egyptian and Greek tradition believed that absorbing oneself in reflective writing would bring about health benefits to the person and the person can personally grow when he starts writing his thoughts into words. Because words were thought to have a medicinal and magical healing powers.

In biblical and Islamic traditions reading the literature like Bible or Quran and writing the prayer, might help people to cope with the life challenges. In ancient Greece and Rome, philosophers like Aristotle and Epictetus used writing for self-reflection. In 18th and 19th centuries, the Romantic movement emphasized on emotional expression and personal reflection through writing. The psychological pioneers were Sigmund Freud who explored writings as the therapeutic potential.

We earlier also talked about Sigmund Freud, when he emphasized that we have potential power in our subconscious mind, if we connect the conscious mind with subconscious mind, we can develop our creative potential.

(Refer Slide Time: 03:05)



In early 20th century, the psychoanalytic theory by Freud's free association technique influenced writing therapy. In free association technique the Freud asked the clients to describe their traumatic experiences without any constraint or without any limitation of the time and to explain the content of their dreams. So dream analysis were asked used by the Freud and they are their client to write down the pen down their dreams. and by the analysis of the dreams they used to understand the conflicts and the problems hidden in the subconscious mind.

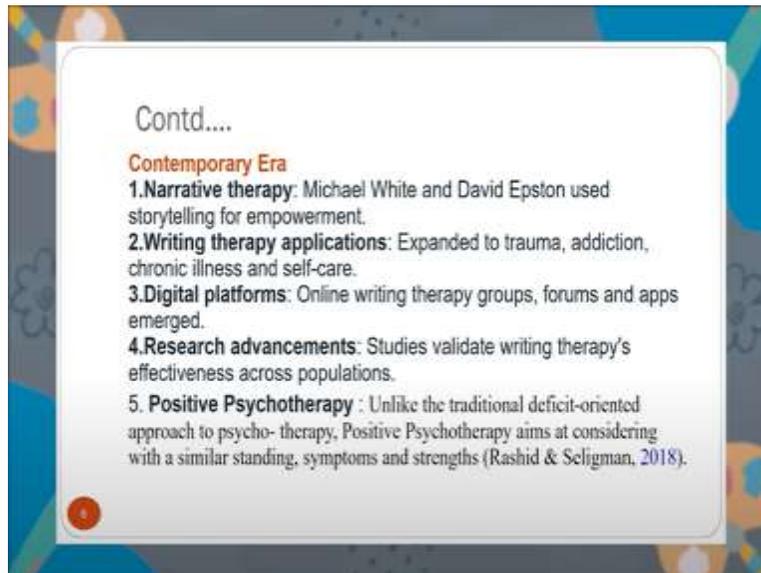
In this century also journaling and diary keeping also emerged were popularized as the tools for personal reflection. In mid-century, the humanistic psychology, the propounder of which was Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow, they emphasized the self-expression and personal growth can happen through writing. And specifically, they believed that each one of us is full of immense creative potential and if the person is given unconditional positive regard and an opportunity to express oneself, he or she can cover up. the negative emotions or the impact of traumatic situations. Existential therapy, the founder of which was Viktor Frankl.

He also focused on meaning making through writing. I would like to tell something about Viktor Frankl. He was the person who was kept in jail away from family for many times and he was tortured like anything and many of his fellow men were killed. But he is kept on writing and the meaning and purpose of his life and the purpose of his life was to write a book on meaning in life and it later was published will to meaning and the logotherapy was developed based on his writings. He emphasized that unless we have

a meaning in life we cannot survive and till we have a meaning whatever may be the circumstances but if we have a meaning in life and we are familiar with that meaning if we keep on writing our the meaning and goals of our life we can survive.

In 1960s and 1980s, the expressive writing was popularized by the work of James Pennybakers. He did many researches and published them in the journals and which emphasize the physical and emotional health benefits of writing and discussing about one's emotional disturbances after traumatic events to reduce stress and improve immune functions. Journal therapy by Progoff was developed and he emphasized that writing intensively about our own beliefs, our own thoughts and emotions can help enhancing the level of our well-being. Poetry therapy by Arthur Lerner was pioneered and it was found that poetry writing has a therapeutic impact in which the person expresses feelings and by writing a poetry the thoughts and the emotion the person can very well heal oneself.

(Refer Slide Time: 06:25)

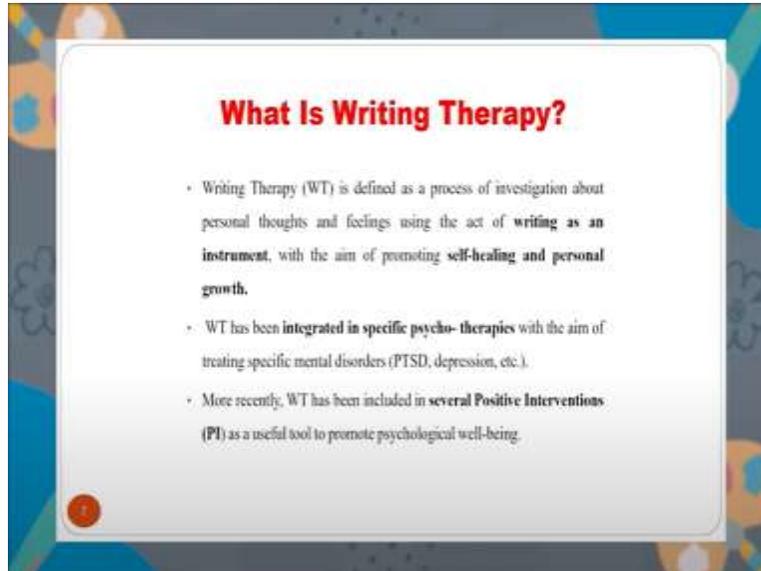


In the contemporary era The narrative therapy which was popularized by Michael White and David Epstone used storytelling for empowerment.

Writing therapy applications were expanded to many situations like trauma situations, addictions, chronic illness and self-care and recently the digital platforms are there to enhance our ability to write things and the online writing therapy groups, forums and apps are emerging and research advancement studies validate writing therapies effectiveness across populations. And lastly, I would like to add that the positive psychotherapy, which is a paradigm shift from clinical paradigm to strength based model. It emphasizes that we should not focus on traditional deficit oriented approach for

psychotherapy, rather we should encourage our clients to write about their strengths, their resources and by doing so they can heal themselves very fast and quickly.

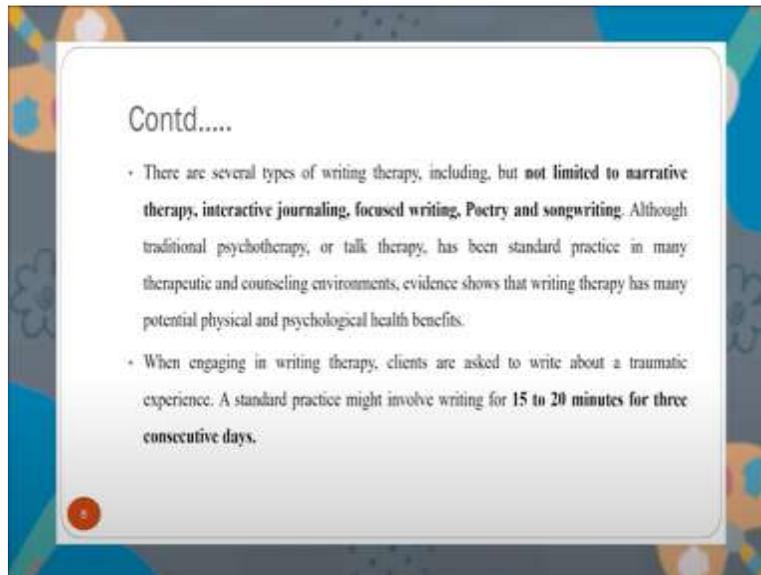
(Refer Slide Time: 07:35)



So writing therapy is defined as a process of investigation about personal thoughts and feelings using the act of writing as an instrument with the aim of promoting self-healing and personal growth. Writing therapy has been integrated in specific psychotherapies with the aim of treating specific mental disorders like post-traumatic stress disorder, depression and anxiety situations.

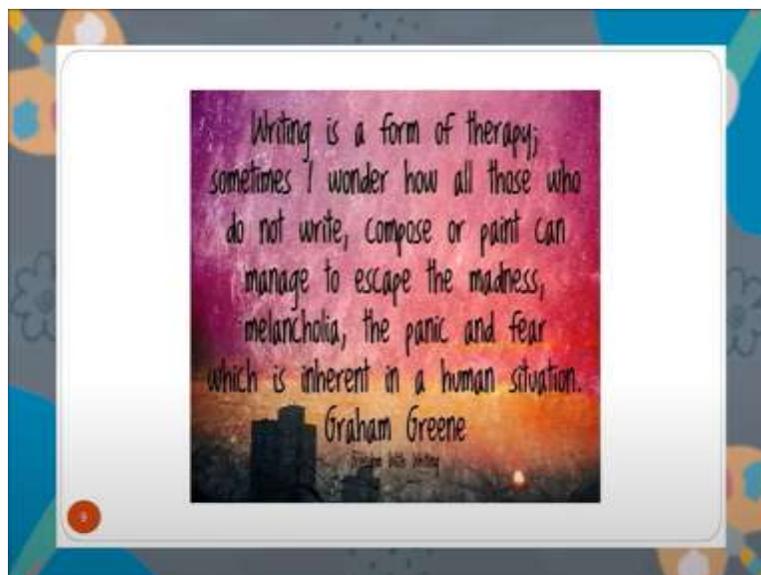
More recently, writing therapy has been included in several positive interventions as a useful tool to promote psychological well-being.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:10)



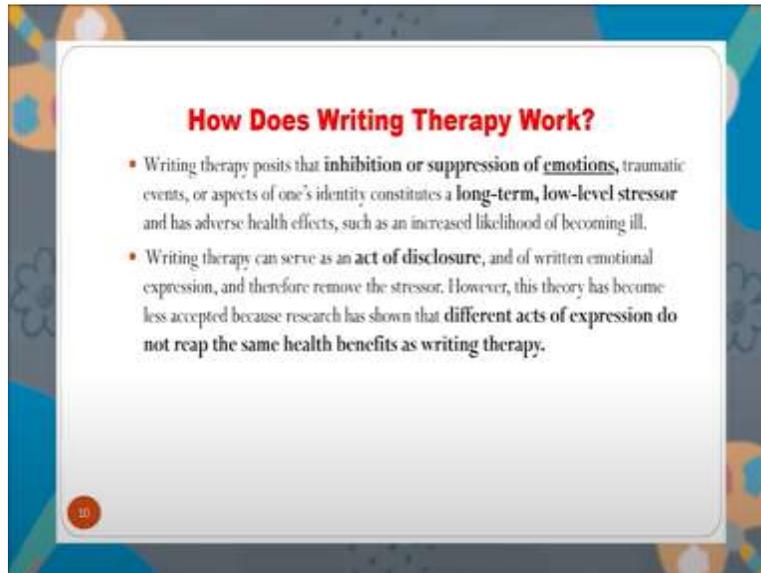
There are several types of writing therapy including but not limited to narrative therapy, interactive journaling, focused writing, poetry and songwriting. Although traditional psychotherapy or talk therapy has been standard practice in many therapeutic and counseling environments, evidence shows that writing therapy has many potential physical and psychological health benefits. When engaging in writing therapy, clients are asked to write about a traumatic experience. A standard practice might involve writing for 15 to 20 minutes for 3 consecutive days.

(Refer Slide Time: 08:45)



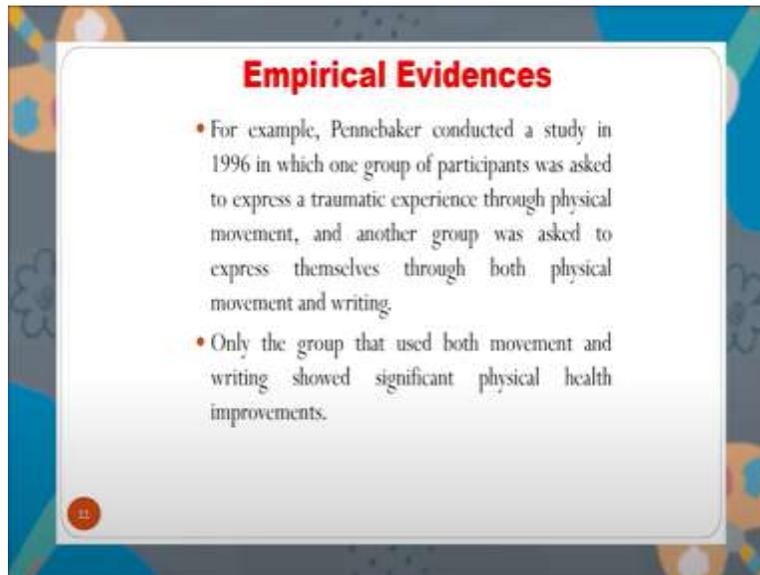
So, writing is a form of therapy and sometimes I wonder how all those who do not write, compose or paint can manage to escape the madness, melancholia, the panic and fear which is inherent in the human situation. This is a quote by Graham Greene who believed so much in the writing power potential of healing.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:05)



How does writing therapy work? Writing therapy poses that inhibition or suppression of emotions, traumatic events or aspects of one's identity constitutes a long-term low-level stressor and has adverse health effects such as an increased likelihood of becoming ill. And writing therapy can serve as an act of disclosure and of written emotional expression and therefore remove the stressor from the mind of the person. However, this theory has become less accepted because research has shown that different acts of expression do not reap the same health benefits as writing therapy.

(Refer Slide Time: 09:45)



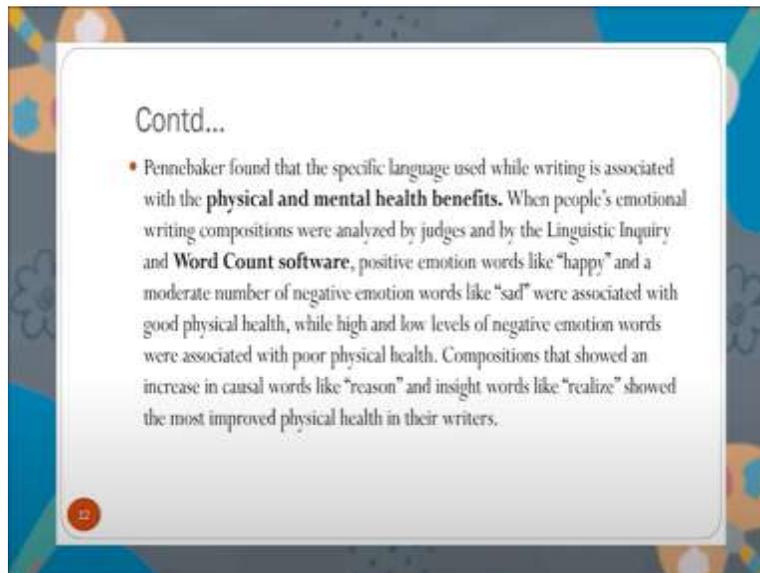
**Empirical Evidences**

- For example, Pennebaker conducted a study in 1996 in which one group of participants was asked to express a traumatic experience through physical movement, and another group was asked to express themselves through both physical movement and writing.
- Only the group that used both movement and writing showed significant physical health improvements.

11

There are empirical evidences. Penny Baker conducted a study in 1996 in which one group of participants was asked to express a traumatic experience through physical movement and the another group was asked to express themselves through both physical movement and writing. And only the group that used both movement and writing showed significant physical health improvements in their condition.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:15)



**Contd...**

- Pennebaker found that the specific language used while writing is associated with the **physical and mental health benefits**. When people's emotional writing compositions were analyzed by judges and by the Linguistic Inquiry and **Word Count software**, positive emotion words like "happy" and a moderate number of negative emotion words like "sad" were associated with good physical health, while high and low levels of negative emotion words were associated with poor physical health. Compositions that showed an increase in causal words like "reason" and insight words like "realize" showed the most improved physical health in their writers.

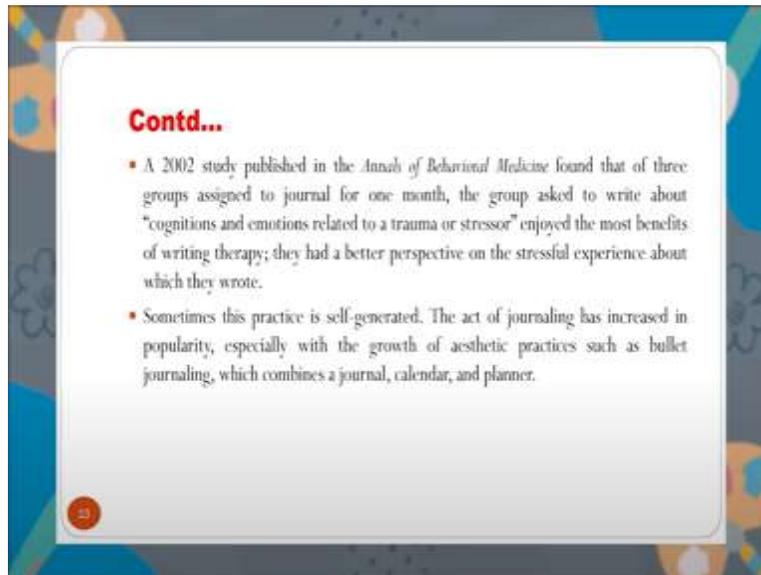
12

Pennybaker also found that the specific language used while writing is associated with the physical and mental health benefits. When the word count software was used, It was found that the positive emotion words like happy and a moderate number of negative

emotion words like sad were associated with good physical health while high and low levels of negative emotion words were associated with poor physical health.

So, composition that showed an increase in causal words like reason and inside words like realize showed the most improved physical health in their writers.

(Refer Slide Time: 10:50)



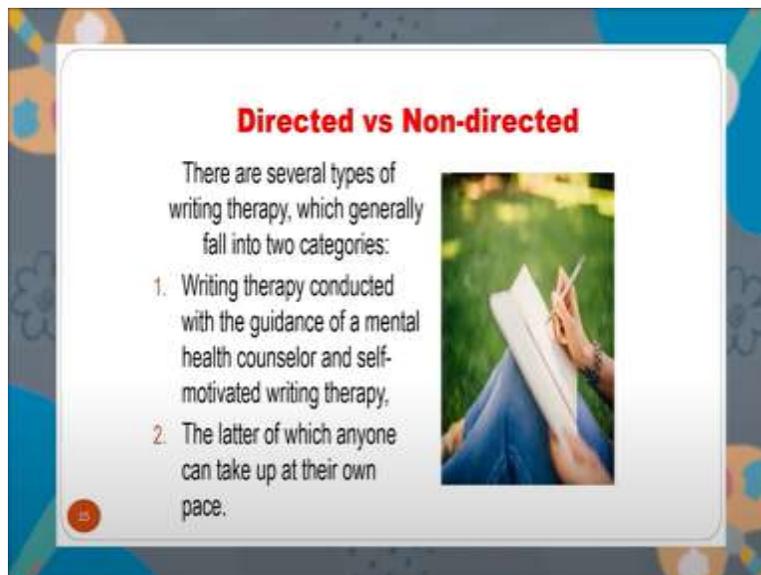
A 2002 study published in the *Annals of Behavioral Medicine* found that of three groups assigned to journal for one month, the group asked to write about cognitions and emotions related to trauma or stressor and they enjoyed the most benefits of writing therapy. They had a better perspective on the stressful experience about which they wrote. Sometimes this practice is self-generated. The act of journaling has increased in popularity, especially with the growth of aesthetic practices such as bullet journaling, which combines a journal, calendar and a planner.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:25)



Types of writing therapy. The second part, writing therapy can be directed or non-directed.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:30)



And writing therapy it conducted with the guidance of a mental health counselor and a self-motivated writing therapy can be there and the later of which anyone can take up at their own pace. It is a choice of the person whether they will write freely or they will take a counselor or therapist to give them certain prompts for writing.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:55)

**Types of Writing Therapy**

There are several types of writing therapy, which generally fall into two categories:

1. **Traditional applications as expressive writing:**
  - Narrative writing
  - Journaling
  - Guided autobiography
  - Meaning Centered Writings (Logotherapy)
  - Writings on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT).
2. **Writing techniques from a positive psychology perspective:**
  - Gratitude letters & Gratitude Journal
  - Forgiveness letters
  - Guided autobiography
  - Use of fairytales
  - Writing about best possible self
  - Write three good things

18

The methods or the types of writing therapy can be divided into two categories.

The traditional application of expressive writing and the positive psychology perspective writing. The traditional applications involves narrative writing, journaling, guided autobiography, meaning centered writings which is maybe called logotherapy, writings on acceptance and commitment therapy. The positive psychotherapy techniques may include gratitude letters and gratitude journals, forgiveness letters, guided autobiography, use of fairy tales, writing about best possible self and write three good things.

(Refer Slide Time: 12:55)

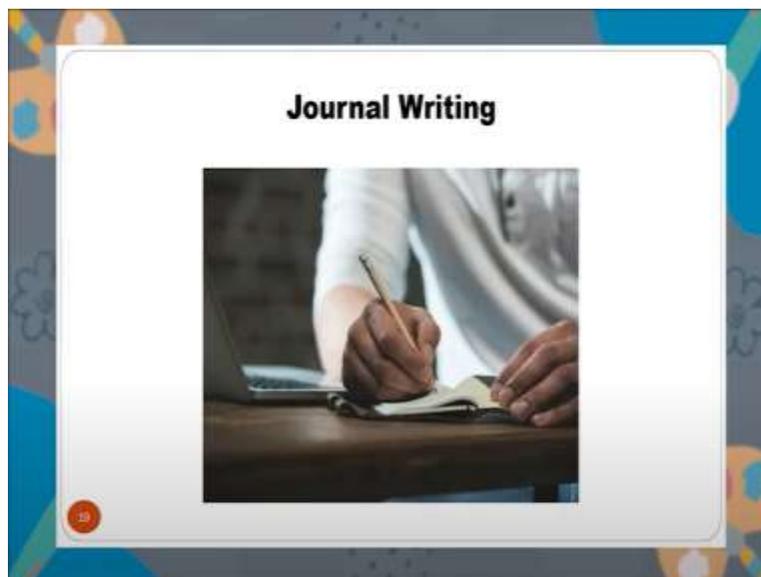
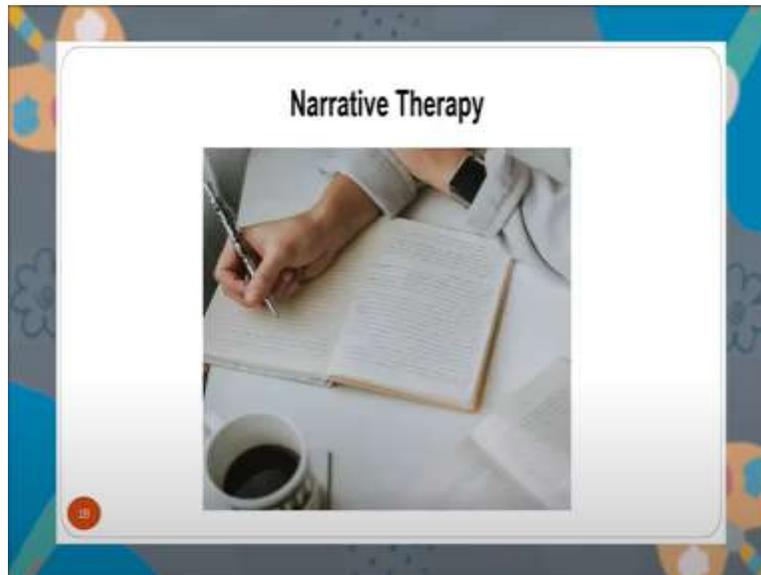
**Narrative Writing**

- A counselor or mental health professional might use writing as therapy with clients who find it difficult to verbalize their thoughts or emotions.
- **Narrative Therapy**, a form of writing therapy in which clients and therapists can work together. Narrative therapy involves the client and mental health professional "reauthoring" a traumatic or problematic story from the client's life.
- This method helps the client recontextualize their experiences by removing the assumptions and context they have assigned to it to see it from a more objective perspective.

19

When we talk about narrative writing, we can say that our life is a narrative and each one of us live a life which has one own narration. So, whenever we feel that how is life is going, what we are having in life, so we have our own personal narratives which emphasize, which impacts our physical and mental health.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:40)

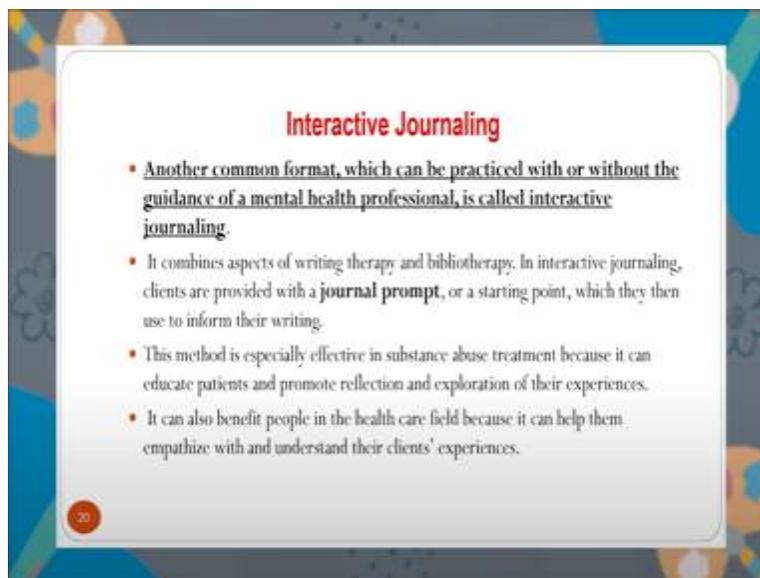


So narrative therapy is a form of writing therapy in which clients and therapists can work together and it involves the client and the mental health professional re-authoring a traumatic or problematic story from the client's life. So the self-talk which the client uses

about his personal narrative is worked upon. And the therapist with the CBT perspective cognitive behavioral therapy perspective or positive psychotherapy perspective can try to change that narrative which is not functional which is not good for the mental health of the person. So, this method has the client to recontextualize their experiences by removing the assumptions and context they have assigned to it to see it from a more objective perspective. So narrative therapy, journal writing, journal is a technique in which the person is asked to write a journal regularly.

The emotions that the person feels it can be twice a week or every day the person can write depends on its mental or physical condition.

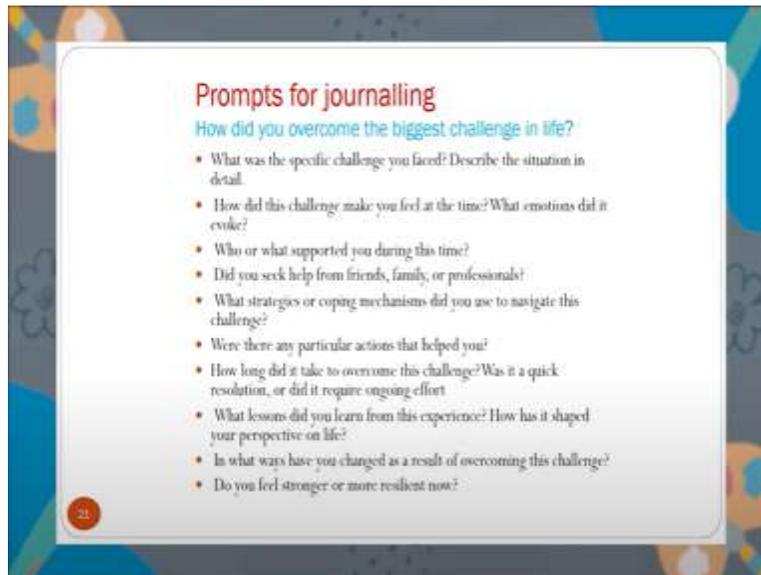
(Refer Slide Time: 14:00)



There can be another form of journaling that is interactive journaling. In this another common format which can be practiced with or without the guidance of a mental health professional is called interactive journaling. It combines the aspects of writing therapy and bibliotherapy. In interactive journaling clients are provided with the journal prompts or starting points which they can use for their writing.

And this method is especially effective in substance abuse treatment because it can educate patients and prompts reflection and exploration of their experiences. It can also benefit people in the healthcare field because it can help them empathize with and understand their clients experiences.

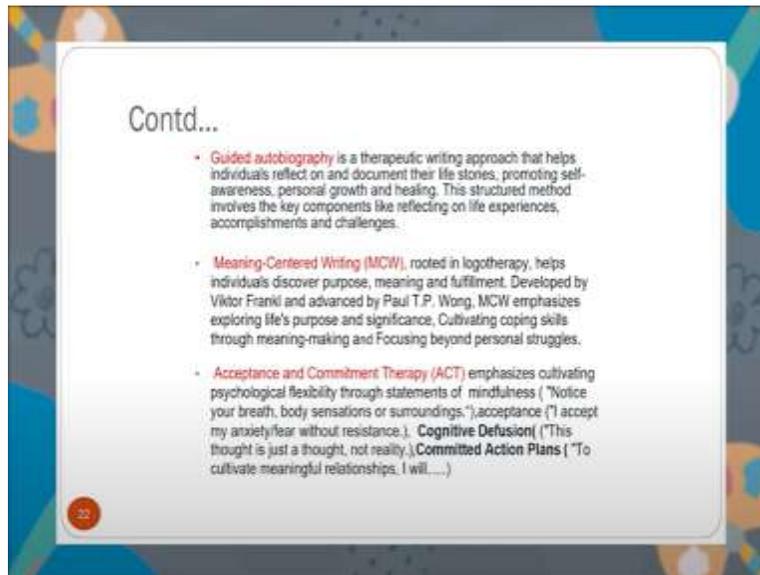
(Refer Slide Time: 14:45)



There are few prompts for journaling. How did you overcome the biggest challenge in your life? What was the specific challenge you faced? Describe the situation in detail. How did this challenge make you feel at the time? What emotions did it invoke? Who or what supported you during this time? Did you seek help from friends, family or professionals? What strategies or coping mechanism did you use to navigate this challenge? Were there any particular actions that helped you? How long did it take to overcome this challenge? Was it a quick resolution or did it require ongoing effort? What lessons did you learn from this experience? In what ways have you changed as a result of overcoming this challenge? Do you feel stronger or more resilient now? So, this is a total journey of a person which has had a biggest challenge in life.

I want to overcome those challenges with this from the person can write his story or her story and find ways to cope with that challenge and become stronger and more resilient in future life to come.

(Refer Slide Time: 15:50)



The another method can be the guided autobiography, which is also a therapeutic writing approach. It helps individuals to reflect on and document their life stories, promoting their awareness, personal growth and healing. This structured method involves the key components like reflecting on life experiences, accomplishments and challenges. Meaning centered writing therapy which is rooted in the logotherapy of Viktor Frankl.

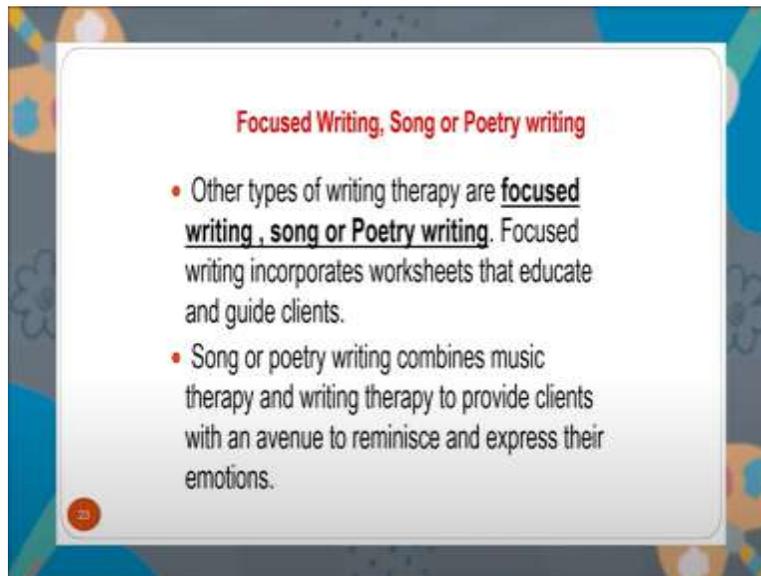
In this technique the person is encouraged to write the meaning and purpose of life and to develop the coping skills if the goals which are desired are not achieved and how the person can find meaning in the challenges of life. In acceptance and commitment therapy the narratives are which encouraged within the client they are emphasizes that psychological flexibility through the certain statements which promote mindfulness like notice your breath, body sensations or surroundings and to accept the situation because the main problem in the mental health issues is that the person does not accept the situation. At the moment we accept the situation we are more open, we are more mindful to bring changes in our pattern of thought and the behavioral system. So it makes the person more resilient and the most important thing in this technique is promoting cognitive diffusion in the client. By cognitive diffusion I mean that if someone is facing a struggle or a negative emotion they can be diluted, diffused with the help of the therapist by writing certain narratives.

For example, the client can be encouraged that this was just a thought, it is not a reality, you are thinking like this, but it may not be right. So, by such writing such a statement the person can be able to change the narratives and can develop the committed action plans. If the person accepts the situation, the next step is to make an action plan and to

work on it. For the action plan for a person who is having relationship issues can be I will cultivate my coping skills, I will enhance my coping skills for improving my relationships and I will do this, this, this thing. So, the person can commit, I will do such things to improve my situation.

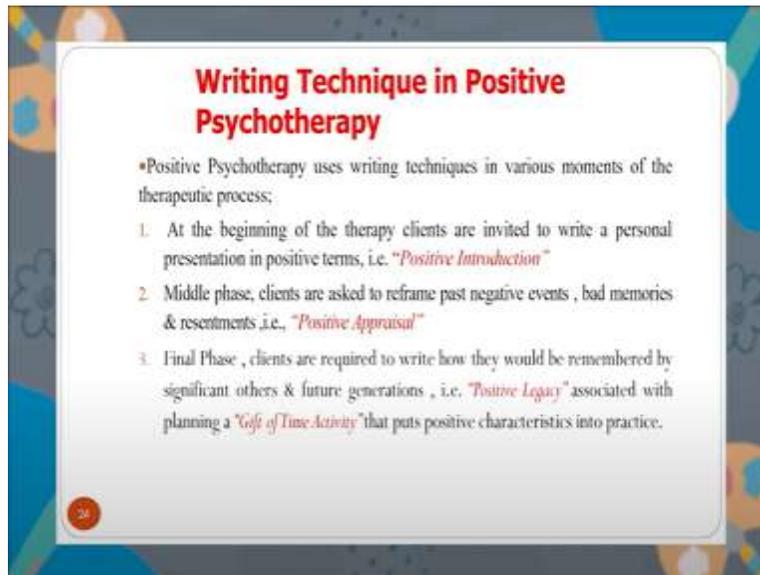
The moment the person commits, he start working on that thing. The starting point is acceptance of the situation, cognitive diffusion of negative thoughts and making a committed action plan to move further in life.

(Refer Slide Time: 18:35)



Focus writing, song or poetry writing can be another technique. And in focus writing certain worksheets are given to educate and guide the clients and the song or poetry writing can be combined with music therapy and writing therapy to provide clients with an avenues to remember their past experiences, their positive experiences and express their emotions.

(Refer Slide Time: 19:00)



Positive psychotherapy as I discussed is a new paradigm which is used in counseling and psychotherapy.

And it is based on the belief that each one of us is full of potential and strength. And instead of talking about the deficits, the negative symptoms of the person, we should talk about the strengths of the person because each one of us has certain signature strengths. So, the techniques which are used have certain phases. At the beginning of the therapy, clients are invited to write a personal presentation in positive terms. The client is asked to give a positive introduction of the self.

So, instead of talking about the negative symptoms, anxiety symptoms, depression symptoms, the client is asked to write a positive introduction of the self. It such a relationship which is based on positivity and positive introduction helps the client and the therapist to develop platform of rapport in which both can work together to improve upon. In the middle phase, the clients are asked to reframe their past negative events, bad memories and resentments. That is the positive appraisal of the situation. Whatever may be the situation, the client is encouraged to change the narrative and say that instead of having that much problems that challenges have given me an opportunity to learn new things.

Because the situation can be perceived from the positive perspective. And the final phase in which the clients are required to write how they would be remembered by significant others and future generations. This is the positive legacy associated with the planning a gift of time activity. And, this phase is the final phase in which the positive

characteristics and positive strength of the persons are encouraged and he is prompted to remember that life is limited, time is limited. So, how the person likes to be remembered by significant others and future generations.

So, time is a precious thing. How he or she would like to use it? They would like to use in the negative things or they would like to do certain activities, certain positive things which may be remembered by the future generations.

(Refer Slide Time: 21:15)

Use	Theoretical model	Techniques	Goal
Gratitude: Depression, anxiety	Positive psychology	-Gratitude letters -Gratitude journal -Good versus bad memories	-To strengthen relationships -To enhance well-being
Forgiveness: Clients who express feeling of anger or bitterness	Positive psychology	Forgiveness letters	-To promote emotional regulation -To gain positive attitude towards others
Wisdom: Posttraumatic embitterment disorder	Positive psychology; Narrative Therapy	-Graded autobiography -Use of fairytales	-To gain self-awareness and self-acceptance -To integrate life experiences -To promote different perspectives
Hope: Post-traumatic stress disorder patients, chronic illnesses	Positive psychology	-Writing about best possible selves -Sharing several three good things	-To provide positive emotions -To enlarge perspectives

So there are certain approaches which are used in a positive interventions basically these positive approaches, writing approaches gratitude writing, forgiveness writing, letters wisdom inculcation exercises and hope inculcation exercises can be done and gratitude exercise can be especially used for the people who have depression and anxiety and by writing a gratitude letter maintaining a gratitude journal, writing the good and bad memories can help the person to strengthen relationships and to enhance well-being. In the complexity of life, in the busy schedule of life, we just forget to give thanks to others for their good days or small things. So, by writing a gratitude letter or gratitude journal, the person can be more grounded and his anxiety can be reduced, depression can be reduced. Usually people have a relationship issues or problems due to their ability not to forgive others when someone has transgressed our boundaries we just feel anger and bitterness for that person and by writing the forgiveness letters by forgiving others and writing them the letter that you have forgiven the person and it can help you to heal the wound of being transgressed and it can promote emotional regulation and to develop positive attitude towards others and the wisdom is very important in our life because all of us have information lots of information available in the books in the website or so.

But that material that information is not sufficient to sail a good and happy life because the what to do with that information. We have to have a vivek in Hindi we use the term vivek which means ki the wisdom to know the difference what is right and what is wrong for you. So the knowledge is equal for each one of us but if you are suffering from a trauma or a certain disorders and you are not able to forgive others, you are not able to use the knowledge which you have achieved for the benefit of others. So, it means that you have to work on developing the wisdom of sailing through the challenges of life. So guided autobiography, use of fairy tales can help to spark self-awareness and self-acceptance to integrate life experiences into life to promote different perspective in life.

Inculcating hope is an important positive psychotherapy approach in which the clients are encouraged to write their life goals their best possible self will help them to be in connect with their own strengths and what can be done in a good way in their life to for inculcating their goals and for writing best possible self, the person can develop the pathways to achieve those goals. And not only pathways but to get motivation from moving on those pathways. Because for hope there are three things are important having a meaningful and purposeful goal, the roots to achieve those goals and find motivation to move on those pathways. So, hope therapy works with the writing methods in which the person is motivated to write about best possible self, to write three good things that happened in a particular day, to maintain a blessing journal and which can help them to inculcate positive emotions and to enlarge a perspective of their own life.

(Refer Slide Time: 24:55)



And next I would like to mention that spiritual growth is very important for a person.

By spirituality I mean sense of connectedness one's own self with other life forms and to the life as a whole to have a belief that there is a divine power and we can connect with that power to solve our own problems of life to be responsible in one's life to have a purpose in one's own life and to understand that we are here on this earth for a brief period of time and in this time we can do many things and we are the trustee of that divine power so to facilitate the spiritual growth of the person because spiritual growth is a journey And anyone can move on this journey at any stage of life. So our Indian tradition specifically believes that transformation and transcendence is possible for any person at any stage of life. To facilitate this the writing of completing the sentences can help for the spiritual growth of the person. I have written few sentences which I usually use in my therapy sessions for spiritual growth of the person. I feel responsible for the person has to feel and I feel connected with the purpose of my life is to after death I would like to be remembered as, life is a stage where I can be mindful about I am becoming dash dash I pray to God by saying to me God's image in my mind is this.

So, by completing this sentence that client unconsciously reflects his real self and it can be a good opportunity for the therapist or the counselor to help them to heal oneself and grow in the future journey of life.

(Refer Slide Time: 26:50)



The last part of this session part three is concerned with benefits of writing therapy.

(Refer Slide Time: 26:55)

### Potential Benefits of Writing Therapy

Researchers have found that expressive, or therapeutic writing, can have numerous physical and psychological health benefits, some of which include:

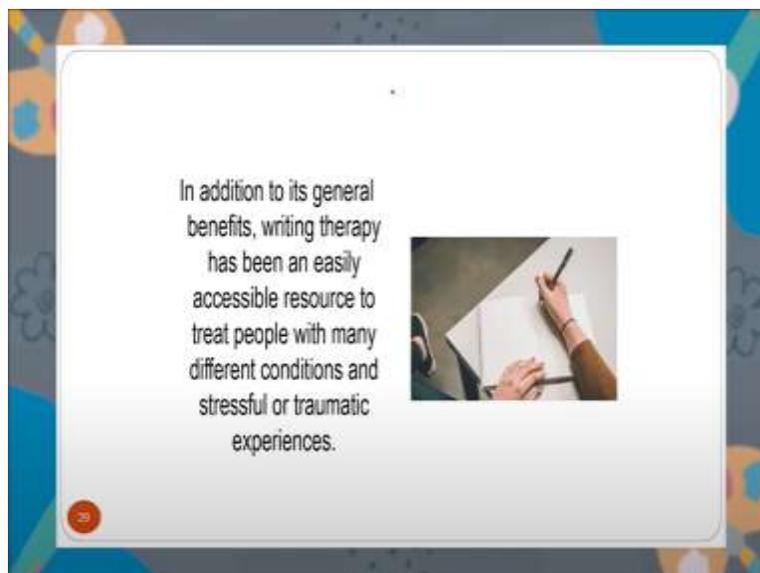
- Better Immune Function
- Fewer Doctor Visits
- Less Stress
- Improved Grades in School
- Reduced Emotional and Physical Distress
- Decreased Depression Symptoms
- Lower Blood Pressure
- Improved Liver Function
- Fewer Missed Days of Work
- Strengthened Memory



There are certain potential benefits of writing therapy and it has been proved by researchers that expressive or therapeutic writing can have numerous physical and psychological health benefits and some of which include better immune function, fewer doctors visit, less stress in life, improved grades in school, reduced emotional and physical distress, decreased depressive symptoms, lower blood pressure, improved liver function, fewer missed days of work, strengthened memory.

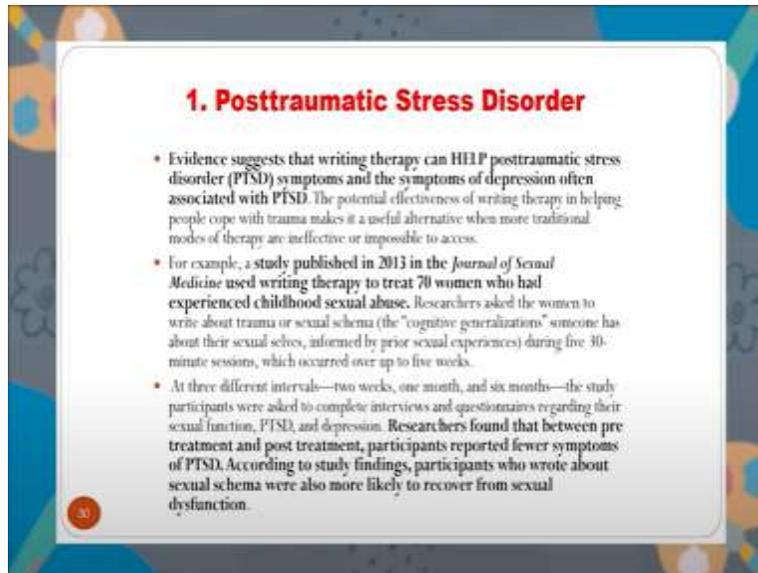
(Refer Slide Time: 27:25)

In addition to its general benefits, writing therapy has been an easily accessible resource to treat people with many different conditions and stressful or traumatic experiences.



In addition to its general benefits, writing therapy has been an easily accessible resource to treat people with many different conditions and stressful or traumatic experiences.

(Refer Slide Time: 27:35)



**1. Posttraumatic Stress Disorder**

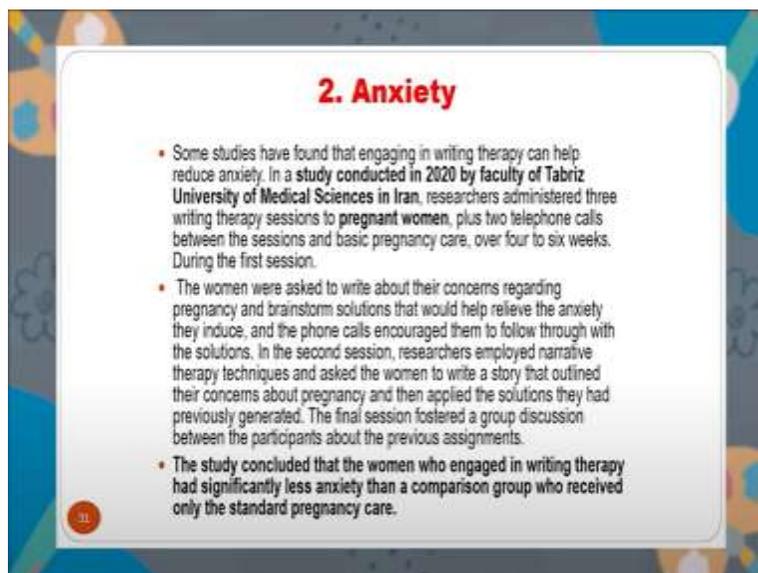
- Evidence suggests that writing therapy can help posttraumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms and the symptoms of depression often associated with PTSD. The potential effectiveness of writing therapy in helping people cope with trauma makes it a useful alternative when more traditional modes of therapy are ineffective or impossible to access.
- For example, a study published in 2013 in the *Journal of Sexual Medicine* used writing therapy to treat 70 women who had experienced childhood sexual abuse. Researchers asked the women to write about trauma or sexual schema (the "cognitive generalizations" someone has about their sexual selves, informed by prior sexual experiences) during five 30-minute sessions, which occurred over up to five weeks.
- At three different intervals—two weeks, one month, and six months—the study participants were asked to complete interviews and questionnaires regarding their sexual function, PTSD, and depression. Researchers found that between pre-treatment and post-treatment, participants reported fewer symptoms of PTSD. According to study findings, participants who wrote about sexual schema were also more likely to recover from sexual dysfunction.

30

There are numerous researches which I have a few of them I have quoted here.

That writing therapy has been found to be useful for healing the person from post-traumatic stress disorders and there are many studies which have been published in *Journal of Sexual Medicine*. It has been helpful for healing the childhood sexual abuses and post-traumatic stress disorders.

(Refer Slide Time: 28:00)



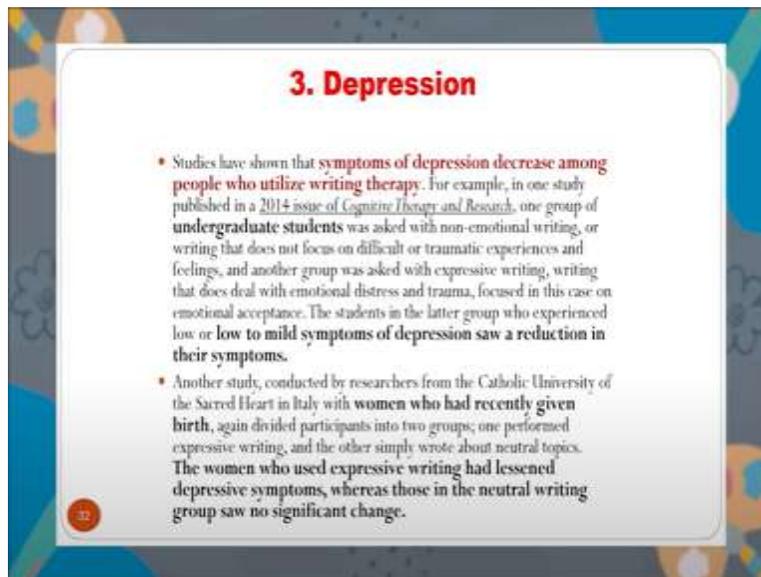
**2. Anxiety**

- Some studies have found that engaging in writing therapy can help reduce anxiety. In a study conducted in 2020 by faculty of Tabriz University of Medical Sciences in Iran, researchers administered three writing therapy sessions to pregnant women, plus two telephone calls between the sessions and basic pregnancy care, over four to six weeks. During the first session:
- The women were asked to write about their concerns regarding pregnancy and brainstorm solutions that would help relieve the anxiety they induce, and the phone calls encouraged them to follow through with the solutions. In the second session, researchers employed narrative therapy techniques and asked the women to write a story that outlined their concerns about pregnancy and then applied the solutions they had previously generated. The final session fostered a group discussion between the participants about the previous assignments.
- The study concluded that the women who engaged in writing therapy had significantly less anxiety than a comparison group who received only the standard pregnancy care.

31

Anxiety situations in which the control group studies have been done on pregnant women from different women from different background and it has been found that the women who engaged in writing had significantly less anxiety than the comparative group who received the standard pregnancy care. In pregnancy period in for the pregnant women also it has been proved by a study that writing therapy can help.

(Refer Slide Time: 28:30)



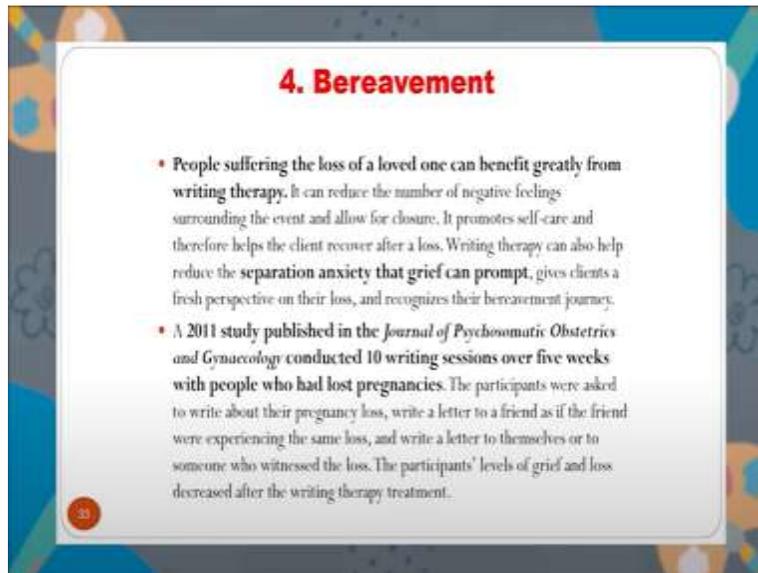
**3. Depression**

- Studies have shown that **symptoms of depression decrease among people who utilize writing therapy**. For example, in one study published in a 2014 issue of *Cognitive Therapy and Research*, one group of **undergraduate students** was asked with non-emotional writing, or writing that does not focus on difficult or traumatic experiences and feelings, and another group was asked with expressive writing, writing that does deal with emotional distress and trauma, focused in this case on emotional acceptance. The students in the latter group who experienced low or low to mild symptoms of depression saw a reduction in their symptoms.
- Another study, conducted by researchers from the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Italy with **women who had recently given birth**, again divided participants into two groups; one performed expressive writing, and the other simply wrote about neutral topics. **The women who used expressive writing had lessened depressive symptoms, whereas those in the neutral writing group saw no significant change.**

Again for the depressive patients undergraduate students it has been found that the students who were asked to write about their traumatic experiences had experienced low to mild symptoms of depression and saw reduction in their symptoms of depression.

So, in another study conducted by researchers from the Catholic University of Sacred Heart in Italy, the woman who had recently given birth again divided participant into two groups. One performed expressive writing and the other simply wrote about neutral topics and the woman who used expressive writing had lessened depressive symptoms whereas those in the neutral writing groups saw no significant change.

(Refer Slide Time: 29:15)



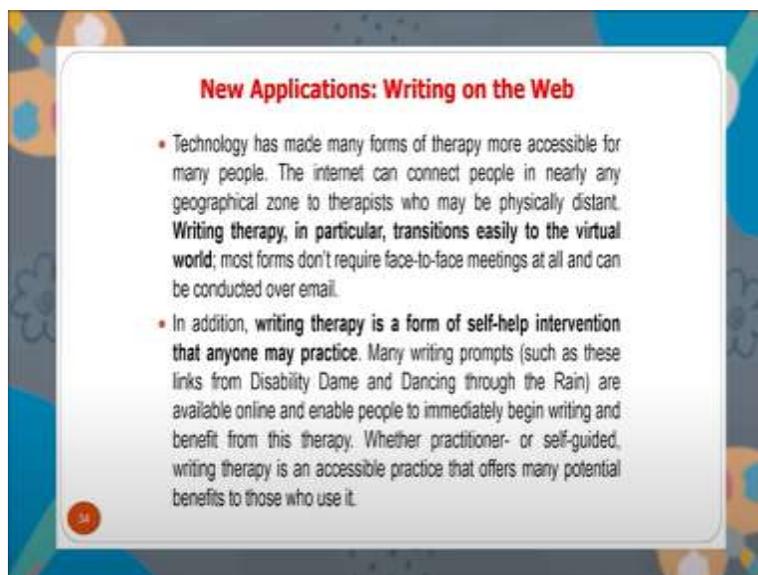
**4. Bereavement**

- People suffering the loss of a loved one can benefit greatly from **writing therapy**. It can reduce the number of negative feelings surrounding the event and allow for closure. It promotes self-care and therefore helps the client recover after a loss. Writing therapy can also help reduce the **separation anxiety that grief can prompt**, gives clients a fresh perspective on their loss, and recognizes their bereavement journey.
- A 2011 study published in the *Journal of Psychosomatic Obstetrics and Gynecology* conducted 10 writing sessions over five weeks with people who had lost pregnancies. The participants were asked to write about their pregnancy loss, write a letter to a friend as if the friend were experiencing the same loss, and write a letter to themselves or to someone who witnessed the loss. The participants' levels of grief and loss decreased after the writing therapy treatment.

33

People suffering from the loss of or bereavement, separation anxiety or grief can get benefit from the writing therapy and it can be used in the supervision of a psychotherapist or a counsellor in which he can give certain prompts of writing. In another study in 2011 which was published in Assam journal, 10 writing sessions were found to be suitable, found to be sufficient, expanded over the 5 weeks period for the women who had lost their pregnancies.

(Refer Slide Time: 29:50)



**New Applications: Writing on the Web**

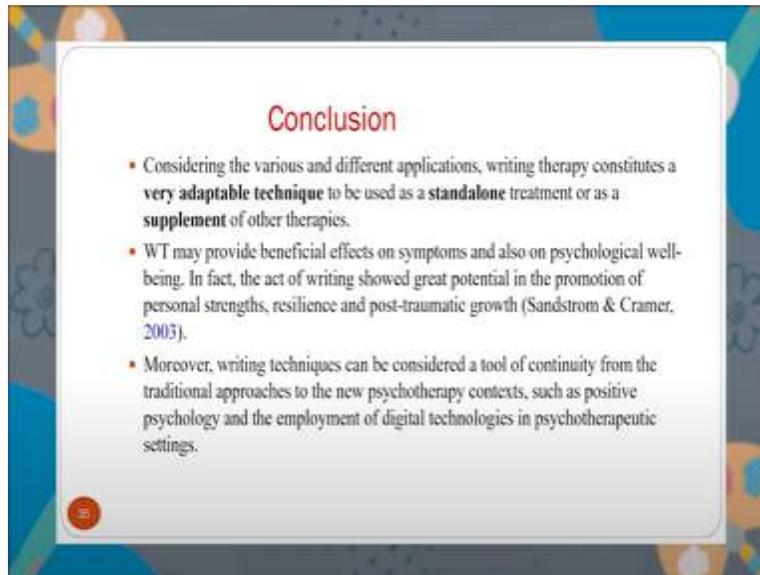
- Technology has made many forms of therapy more accessible for many people. The internet can connect people in nearly any geographical zone to therapists who may be physically distant. **Writing therapy, in particular, transitions easily to the virtual world**; most forms don't require face-to-face meetings at all and can be conducted over email.
- In addition, **writing therapy is a form of self-help intervention that anyone may practice**. Many writing prompts (such as these links from Disability Dame and Dancing through the Rain) are available online and enable people to immediately begin writing and benefit from this therapy. Whether practitioner- or self-guided, writing therapy is an accessible practice that offers many potential benefits to those who use it.

34

There is a new application of writing therapy that is the writing on the web.

So, the technology has helped us out to extend this therapy to the people who are not easily accessible to us. So, writing on a website or writing a blog on Twitter or Instagram can help a person to express their emotion. So, there are many virtual platforms which can be used and they can be used as a self-help intervention technique which the person can use at his or her own convenience.

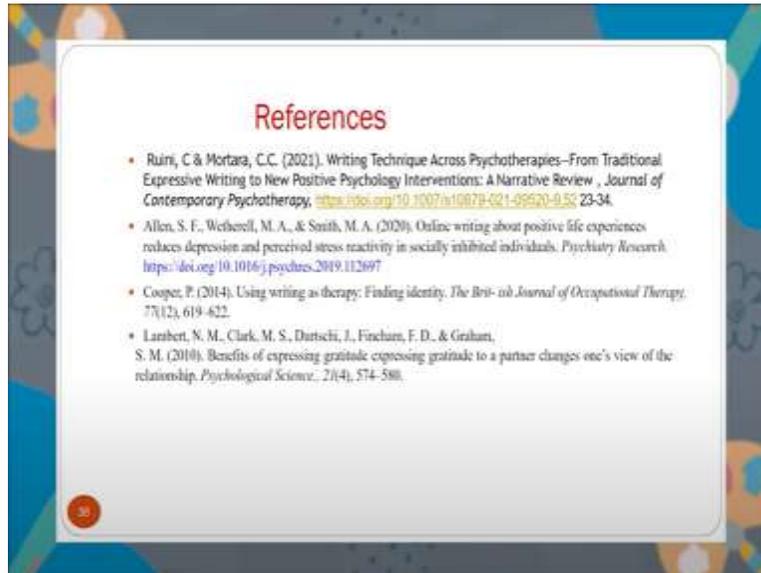
(Refer Slide Time: 30:25)



So, concluding the session I may say that considering a various and different applications writing therapy constitutes a very adaptable technique to be used as a standalone type treatment or a supplement of other therapies. Writing therapy may provide beneficial effects on symptoms and also on psychological well-being.

In fact, the act of writing showed greater potential in the promotion of personal strengths, resilience and post-traumatic growth. And moreover, writing techniques can be considered a tool of continuity from the traditional approaches to the new psychotherapy context, such as positive psychology and the employment of digital technologies in psychotherapeutic settings.

(Refer Slide Time: 31:05)



There are certain references which can be used for good journals and the books and many books on positive psychotherapy, positive psychology is available and which can help you to use this therapy not only for others, but for your own self benefit and self growth. Thank you very much.