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## **AN EVALUATION OF COLLEGE AND LOW-INCOME YOUTH WRITING TOGETHER: SELF-DISCOVERY AND CULTURAL CONNECTION**

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Although the health and healing effects of writing have been documented in the literature, most of the studies have focused primarily on individuals writing alone. This formative evaluation is a component of an intervention reported elsewhere. The evaluation describes the experience of low-income youth and college students ( $n = 7$ ) writing in a group during a 10-week workshop. The results revealed the development of protective processes of self-esteem, self-efficacy, coping strategies, social support, and cultural connections. In the weekly 2-hr writing sessions, using the Amherst Writers and Artists method, participants were encouraged to write their stories in their own voices in response to prompts, followed by reading aloud and positive feedback. At the end of the 10 weeks participants were interviewed about their experience within the group and outside the group. Analysis of interviews revealed two themes that emerged from the experience of writing together: connection to self through feelings, reflection, and behaviors; and connection to others through learning and empathy. The results suggest that writing in a group using a specific approach facilitated emotional catharsis, increased self knowledge, coping strategies, and understanding and appreciating of others.

Writing has been practiced for thousands of years as a mode of communication, yet the healing effects of writing have only recently been documented. Empirical research has demonstrated that individually focused writing has a positive effect on overall health (Greenberg & Stone, 1992; Murray & Segal, 1994; Pennebaker, Colder, & Sharp, 1990; Suedfeld & Pennebaker, 1997; Smyth, Stone, Hurewitz, & Kaell, 1999). The majority

Received 17 May 2002; accepted 13 July 2002.

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of studies on the health benefits of writing have been modeled after Pennebaker's paradigm in which an individual writes about a trauma over a prescribed period of time.

Journal writing has psychological benefits of increasing self-awareness, emotional release, mood enhancement, reflecting on problems, and developing solutions (Riordan, 1996; Torem, 1993; Smith, Holcroft, Rebeck, Thompson, & Werkowitch, 2000). The healing potential of poetry (Hedberg, 1997; Lerner, 1997; Mazza, Magaz, & Scaturro, 1987), writing as an adjunct to group therapy (L'Abate, 1991; Steffen, 1997; Wenz & McWhirter, 1990), and personal essay (Allen, 2000; MacCurdy, 2000) have been reported primarily as clinical cases or educational strategies.

Schneider (1993) developed the Amherst Writers and Artists (AWA) method of writing in a group. In this qualitative, formative evaluation study, the purpose was to document the subjects' ( $n = 7$ ) own experience with a writing group workshop without imposing an *a priori* structure. Although the AWA method is widely used in a variety of settings, there have been only anecdotal reports with one previous study addressing the content of the writing (Chandler, 1999). The AWA workshop method offers a novel approach to intervening in the cycle of poverty with reports indicating that the outcomes of the group writing have resulted in improving the lives of low-income women, immigrants, incarcerated men and women, and sexual abuse victims. Originally, Schneider (1993) developed the method of writing in a group for low-income women "to strengthen self esteem, find their voice and then go back to school." Rutter (2000) suggests that self esteem, self efficacy, coping strategies, and social support are processes that protect adolescents from health risky behaviors. The AWA method could be used as an intervention to develop protective processes. The problem is the AWA method has not been scientifically investigated. It is critical to document the outcomes of the AWA workshop to develop an evidence base.

The research questions for this study are: How have workshop participants experienced the components of the process of the group writing during and after the group? And secondarily, does writing in a group go beyond healing and affect self esteem, self-efficacy, coping, and social support? The current study documents the experience of college students and low-income teens during the group and outside the group following a 10-week writing workshop facilitated by a leader trained in the AWA method. The workshop is a component of a larger project to develop AWA group leaders from among the college and low-income participants with the goal of moving them into the community to co-lead creative writing groups with underserved youth.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Historically, the act of writing has been focused on the outcome, such as a book or paper, a poem or letter. In teaching writing, though the product may be the goal, instruction is focused on the writing process. Sorrell (1994) recognized that there is a complex process between thinking and writing. When thoughts are written down, the thoughts gain clarity and previously unstated ideas can be reworked into new meanings. Brown and Stephens (1995) observed that writing offers students the opportunity for both cognitive and affective responses to the subject matter. The writing process can promote reflection, new connections, and potentially personal transformation. Only recently has the writing process been identified as a potential agent of health. The process of writing has been documented as therapeutic in several different forms including open-ended writing, focused writing, guided writing, and programmed writing which have the potential to explore new psychological issues, modify existing symptoms, or serve as a release for grief, anger, and depression (L'Abate, 1991).

Open-ended narrative writing can facilitate the process of moving from "wounded to wholeness" through the perspective gained on their lives by observing, finding meaning, and placing challenges in a larger context (DeSalvo, 1999). Personal essay writing allows students to discover their values, ethics, and underlying assumptions—"personal essay begins with the individual but ends with the universal, a process which itself creates connections that can heal" (MacCurdy, 2000, p. 197). Personal essays can help authors achieve a new understanding of others, sort out the meaning of experience, and be released by the words (Allen, 2000).

Several studies have shown that writing focused on trauma over a prescribed period of time resulted in increased immune function (Pennebaker, Kiecolt-Glaser, & Glaser, 1988), higher hepatitis B antibodies (Petrie, Booth, Pennebaker, Davison, & Thomas, 1995), lower blood pressure, and less absenteeism (Francis & Pennebaker, 1992). Incoming college students who wrote about the stresses of adjusting to college, combined with plans to cope with the stresses, had fewer health-related visits to the school clinic, improved mood, and better college adjustment than students who wrote about their feelings and thoughts without developing and initiating coping plans (Cameron & Nicholls, 1998). A 4-day writing intervention led to a significant reduction in disease-related symptoms of asthma and arthritis (Smyth et al., 1999). A meta-analysis of 13 studies on the effects of written expression (Smyth, 1998) revealed that health outcomes were moderated by type of population and dose of the writing task.

In a clinical population, guided writing through daily journal entries supported depressed patients and their families to overcome emotional reactions to adverse situations (Smith et al., 2000). Guided diary writing promoted self-mastery and empowerment in psychotherapy patients by aiding them to understand internal conflicts and accept feelings (Torem, 1993). Riordan (1996) found that writing helps therapy patients review the past and develop new insights and encourages problem solving and planning for the future. For adolescents, "the diary serves both as an arena for role playing" and to inhibit "premature action (e.g., sexual acting out)" (Litowitz & Gundlach, 1987, p.84). Poetry has been used in many settings as a therapeutic tool to facilitate self-expression and foster self-control (Mazza et al., 1987). Poetry therapy helps "the psyche/soul to reflect the simplest to the most complex feeling within a person. Poetry is word pictures. The image is the language of dream and, like dreams, and art, poetry opens the unconscious to healing" (Lerner, 1997, p. 94).

Programmed writing is when there are specific lessons with questions to be addressed such as Progoff's journal workshop approach (1975). Progoff (1975) describes the intensive journal as an instrument which "progressively draws each person's life towards wholeness at its own tempo" (p. 6).

Experts recognize, though, that using written or oral language alone does not lead to reflective abstract thought (Scribner & Cole, 1978). A classic study of knowledge development in women (Belenky, Clinchy, Goldberger, & Tarule, 1986) concluded that for reflection to occur, oral and written forms of language must pass back and forth between persons who both speak and listen. Writing, reading aloud, and listening thus allow individuals to share, expand, and reflect on each other's experience. Such interchanges theoretically lead to ways of knowing that enable individuals to enter into the social and intellectual life of "community." The researchers concluded that without these interchanges, individuals remain isolated from others, and, even more important, without tools for symbolizing, representing, and sharing their experiences, individuals remain isolated from themselves. Vygotsky (1962, 1978) explained that exterior dialogues are a necessary precursor to inner speech and an awareness of one's own thought processes. Writing can put words to thoughts bringing internal hidden ideas out onto the page so the internal dialogue can be recognized, reflected on, examined, and understood. Writing can provide a neutral way to solve problems, capture feelings, exercise power, and know one's own voice (Atwell, 1987). Pipher (1994) argued that "knowing one's own voice" is a critical part of the process of learning about oneself. Writing thoughts and feelings can strengthen one's voice and sense of self. The results of a clinical report on writing in a group indicated that the combination of creating and sharing writing improved self actualizing behaviors and self-acceptance (Wenz & McWhirter, 1990).

The AWA method is a structured approach to writing in a group that consists of asking participants to tell their own stories in their own voices within a timed writing period. Following the individual writing, participants are invited to read their writing aloud while others listen and comment on what they like and what they remember. There is no criticism of the writing. The results of a study using the AWA method of writing in a group of youth at-risk ( $n = 11$ ) indicated the approach provides a safe structure to express their values, memories, and feelings (Chandler, 1999). Writing, reading, and getting positive feedback on the writing afforded participants the opportunity to reflect on their experience, express individual responses, and hear the testimony of others, which led to increased self-esteem and self-efficacy (Chandler, 1999). A preliminary study ( $n = 51$ ) that used the AWA method for data collection reported an increase in resilience scores of at-risk youth (Hunter & Chandler, 1998). The investigators concluded that writing in a group with positive feedback facilitated trust and a sense of community among participants that affected resilience. The process of personal reflection, authentic expression, and listening to the stories of others provided the comfort of discovering that participants were not alone and enabled them to feel more in control of their lives which are important components of protective processes for youth.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

The present study was designed to explore participant views of the AWA group writing method, after the 10-week workshop was completed. A primary goal for the transition from childhood to adulthood is to develop a positive sense of self. During adolescent development the quest for individual identity, self knowledge, self-confidence, group affiliation, autonomy, and pride in accomplishments can be achieved through experiences that enhance or threaten health. Rutter (2000) suggests that to strengthen protection to risk behaviors teens need to develop protective processes of self esteem, self efficacy, coping strategies, and social support. Although this study is a qualitative evaluation, with the knowledge that the AWA group writing is intended to empower participants to develop skills that will support their growth and development, data were analyzed with protective processes as potential coding categories.

## **METHOD**

### ***Design***

This formative evaluation study was designed to document the experience of adolescents with the AWA method in a 10-week writing workshop. An

AWA-trained facilitator led the workshop with college students and low-income adolescents. The evaluation study was conducted following approval by the university IRB. Each participant voluntarily signed a consent form.

### *Sample and Setting*

The sample included youth ( $n = 7$ ) between 18 and 21 years old who participated in a 10-week writing workshop. Three participants were recruited from Voices from the 'Hood ('Hood), a writing group whose members lived and wrote in a low-income housing setting that had been meeting for 3 years. Three university nursing students volunteered to participate after hearing a presentation about the writing program and a graduate student also joined the group. All but one of the participants, from both the 'Hood and the University, were of minority status.

### *Data Collection and Analysis*

Following the completion of the 10-week session, data were collected during semistructured 60–90 min interviews addressing 2 questions: What is the experience of writing in a group using the AWA method? Does participation in the group affect your experience outside the group?

The investigator took notes during and after each interview. Participants signed a consent form prior to being interviewed in a place of their choice. Specific questions were: "Would you describe the experience of writing in a group?" "Have you ever done anything like this before?" "What did you think it would be like?" These questions were followed by a second set of questions that focused on every step of the AWA method: writing, reading, listening, and giving and receiving feedback. Questions asked were "What was it like to write in a group?" "What was it like to read in a group?" etc. The final open-ended question addressed whether participation in the group affected their life outside the group; if so, the question was followed by asking for details about behaviors, opinions, and feelings.

Data analysis began with several readings of the investigator's notes from each of the interviews and memos, which are brief insights and reactions jotted down during the interview, to maintain a sense of wholeness. Each interview was analyzed separately and compared for similarities and differences between individuals and the two subgroups (college students and 'Hood members). Significant statements that pertained to the research questions were extracted, themes were developed from the interpretation of each statement, and related themes were grouped into categories (Colaizzi, 1978). To increase data sensitivity and interview focus, data were analyzed after each interview to provide more focused

questions and directed listening in the next interview. Confirmability as a measure of scientific rigor was determined by audibility, credibility, and fittingness (Lincoln & Guba, 1981). Audibility, referring to the ability of other researchers to follow the decision path, was determined through a thorough review of the literature, bracketing prior to data collection, and the use of an evaluation journal throughout data collection and analysis. Credibility was established by having participants review the typed interview. To address fittingness, or how the categories appropriately represented the data, an external expert reader reviewed a sample of text, themes, categories, and conclusions, and data were compared to the results of previous studies.

## **RESULTS**

Two themes, developed from meanings extracted from the interview statements, are presented below with exemplars from the college students and 'Hood members. The two major themes from writing in a group were: connection to self through feelings, reflection, and behavior; connection to others through learning and empathy.

### ***Theme 1: Connection to Self Through Feelings, Reflection and Behavior***

#### *Feelings*

Emotions were experienced through writing and reading aloud. After writing a story about her father, one college participant observed, "I got so much out, I had no idea I was so angry with him." Participants stated that reading aloud brought the emotions in their writing to the surface. The emotions expressed by the narrator were often unanticipated. After the first few sessions, one student commented, "When I listened to the 'Hood, their writing was deep, the emotions were scary." After watching others respond with tears to the story being read, a student stated, "I can write, but I was terrified to read."

A veteran 'Hood member observed, "It's a safe place . . . you put yourself out there when you read, no one will put you down. Reading brings on emotions." Another 'Hood member reflected, "You don't know you are going to cry until you read." Both new students and veteran 'Hood members had similar responses to reading their stories.

#### *Reflection*

Group participants commented on how the AWA writing process helped them solve problems. "[By] un-cluttering my thinking I was able to look

past the surface of issues,” a student said. “Listening [to others’ stories] helps me write and read and think of a way of coping,” a student observed. Another student stated, “Writing helps you think about yourself, who you are, what you are. Helps make changes if you need to.” One student commented, “In three years of therapy I hadn’t said more than ten minutes about my mom, but I wrote a lot about her.” A student smiled with satisfaction when she stated, “We are in a circle where everyone throws their problems in and leaves them there.” A ‘Hood member commented, “I loved it! I’d ask questions about college, they’d ask about my life style. I did not feel judged.” Through listening to themselves through writing and hearing others through reading, participants developed new ways of coping.

### *Behavior*

By witnessing the experience of others, participants gained confidence in their own abilities and developed new perspectives that led to trying new behaviors. One college student observed, “Hearing what they went through made me feel I could manage. It [their stories] gives me strength.” Another student validated these observations: “I felt the tension come out of my body and go into the words on the page.” In response to the effect the writing group had outside the group, a student said, “Their writing opened my mind, I learned how to speak up (outside of the group) . . . I’d be the first to read in my English class.” One student proudly announced, “I stood up to a teacher’s evaluation because here (in the group) no one said you were wrong. They all listened. I saw [‘Hood member] model standing up for herself and ask questions, so I tried it.” A student commented, “Before (writing in the group) I was in my room, so worried about studying, I got so depressed. Now I want to do different things. I exercise, finally went to the crafts center, met with Dean for lunch. I’m a little more outgoing.” New coping strategies were being tried. Another student summed up how the process facilitated self-discovery and behavioral change: “It’s supposed to help writing. It helped my behavior, my thinking. I am more confident now.” Self esteem was being affected.

Both ‘Hood members and students developed different perspectives and learned new skills from each other. “By listening to their stories I learned new vocabulary words,” one ‘Hood member remarked. The AWA method, which includes no criticism and no comments directed at the writer, provided a sense of safety. A ‘Hood member commented, “You don’t worry about fixing bad parts [of writing] but you know the good stuff you can build on.” A veteran ‘Hood participant reported, “Writing in the group gives me security. It always did. When I was a DSS [Division of Social Services] kid, I’d move from house to house. Your clothes and stuffed animals would get stolen but writing was mine. It’s a place I



can always go. It's a security I left DSS with." Another 'Hood participant observed, "They [college students] are so stressed and so tense, they are not so different from me. I could go to college." One 'Hood member commented on self-esteem: "Writing helps me deal with a lot of situations. Before I started writing I thought of myself as nothing. Through writing I learned to accept myself as I am." Through writing together participants reported trying new, health oriented behaviors.

### ***Theme 2: Connection to Others Through Learning and Empathy***

Prior to writing, both experienced 'Hood members and the college students who were new to the AWA writing method were concerned about being evaluated by each other. A student observed, "I care what others think and they'll think I am a nut." "I am not a good writer. I was worried people would criticize me," another student stated, " but now I feel comfortable writing papers and express myself verbally more than usual." "I am worried about not being good enough. I am worried my writing will reveal a deficient background," a 'Hood member said. Once participants started writing and reading aloud together, following the tenet of no criticism, their fears of being judged were diminished and they could listen to each other. Being in a group was an important part of their experience.

#### *Learning*

Hearing each other's stories developed a relational connection that afforded participants insight into each other's lives. The process of writing and reading in a group provided a new, intimate connection for these disparate groups of college students and low income young adults to learn about the intricacies of each other's lives. A student remarked, "Three or four weeks into it there was [an] attitude, some mentioned social class. They may think because we have money we are better than them. That's when the leader stepped in and had the group do a stress relief exercise." A college student admitted, "I did it [joined the workshop] because I wanted to see what it was like in their environment. I wanted to see if they are like me." And later, "I saw there was a reason for their attitude, it makes me step back. I wish the whole nursing class could be in this group to break through stereotypes. Through writing we learn about them." Listening to others read opened up another level of awareness. One student admitted that "it feels like you are not going through this alone when you hear others." Another college student stated what one might have thought would be said by a 'Hood member: " From hearing their stories I learned about different writing styles," and "I am

not articulate, but we are teaching each other.” Attentively listening to the details of each other’s stories also created new connections among the college students and low-income ‘Hood members. One college student observed, “We come from different cultures and classes, but when we write that is not true.” Learning from the relational connection, which was developed through the group process, went both ways.

A ‘Hood member commented, “I’d ask questions about college; they’d ask me about my lifestyle and I did not feel judged.” As the group progressed a ‘Hood member said, “Later on we were all getting closer, trusting more. People would question without analysis of our background.” They learned about each other’s lives. On observing the college students, a ‘Hood member remarked, “They’d come in stressed and leave laughing.” Through writing together participants developed a deeper level of social support.

### *Empathy*

After hearing ‘Hood members read, one student reflected, “By listening to others’ stories I learned how they thought. It helped me change my perspective [about their life].” When the nursing students wrote about feeling stressed and worried about money, their stories offered the ‘Hood members a different view of college. One ‘Hood member commented, “Every time I’d question, they always took time to answer. I’d see them have a debate over questions. Then they would have questions and we’d answer them. Hearing the girls talk about school made me want to be an RN.” The ‘Hood members’ writing about overcoming difficult life issues through courage and strength offered a different perspective for the college students. Through listening to each other’s stories participants learned about each other’s lives and developed different perspectives of each other. As the group progressed, trust between the two groups developed. As one ‘Hood member succinctly said, “You write, you build trust, you have feelings.” Another ‘Hood member observed that “writing groups are like family—they are holding you up that day. Because there is no criticism you are not going to fall down.” Hearing each other’s stories enabled participants to appreciate similarities between different socioeconomic, ethnic, and racial categories and the workshop method enabled participants to respect differences.

## **DISCUSSION**

The evaluation of writing in a group with a specific approach to the group process produced two major findings: 1) participants were enabled to connect to a part of the self in which feelings, reflections, and behavior could be changed; and 2) reading and receiving feedback in a group

facilitated connection to others through learning and empathy. Participants reported an increase in self-knowledge through emotional catharsis, through reflection on their own writing, and through the writing of other members in the group. By listening to each others' stories, participants developed different perspectives on their own lives and each other's which for some resulted in trying new coping strategies. Connecting to others by learning about different lives and empathizing with the experience of their situation occurred through reading, listening, and providing feedback. Being in a group, writing with others, and hearing other's stories was an essential part of the process.

The structure of the AWA method offered an opportunity for stories to be shared, whereas feedback on the strengths of the narrative provided a vehicle for supportive relationships to develop. Relational support developed through writing, and reading stories aloud strengthened the outcome of self-discovery. Connecting to self through relationships with others has been documented by relational theorists as essential to self-development (Miller, 1991; Jordan, 1991; Surrey, 1991). One of the tenets of relational theory is that self-development depends on having an interest in and paying attention to another person (Surrey, 1991). Surrey asserts that the "expectation of interaction and relationship as a process of mutual sensitivity and mutual responsibility provides the stimulus for empowerment and self-knowledge" (p. 59). In this study participants' reported self-knowledge was facilitated through group interaction.

The potential of writing and reading aloud in a group to encourage cognitive, affective, and behavioral changes has been documented in the literature. Warnock (2000) observed that "writing and reading, by expanding our experience and repertoire of strategies, can provide additional possibilities from which we may choose to live and act effectively in specific contexts" (p. 51). The findings of the current study reflect Allen's (2000) observation that when a writer of personal essays becomes conscious of a problem, at once defining and transcending the situation, he or she "acts upon the world and in doing so produces a changed world and a changed sense of self in the world" (p. 281).

In reading aloud to share one's writing, the AWA method adds to writing what has been reported in the literature as the benefits of storytelling. Hearing feedback on the writing provided participants an opportunity to reflect on their situation and validate their experience. In the current study, listening to others' stories provided inspiration to try new behaviors. Heiney (1995) reports that when telling stories, "Catharsis may occur vicariously as feelings of despair, anger and anxiety are released through the characters of the story" (p. 899). Sharing stories, in Banks-Wallace's (1998) study, resulted in women validating themselves and

their reality. Banks-Wallace reported that the stories participants shared “provided insights into factors that constrained their choices or enabled them to move further along their journey” (p. 21).

Participants in this study came from different racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic backgrounds. The participants reported creating relationships by listening to each other’s written stories, which helped them gain a deeper understanding of each other’s culture and socioeconomic realities. Listening to the stories of others modeling different attitudes and behaviors changed perceptions and deepened understanding of differences. Through the group process they developed respectful relationships with each other, allowing reciprocal learning and empathy to take place. As trust developed between individuals, this group of young adults went beyond self-improvement and gained insight into the motives and constraints of those who were different from them. The college students learned from the ‘Hood members and the ‘Hood members learned from the college students.

Attentive listening and supportive feedback without criticism created a sense of respect and trust among participants. When the environment felt safe, participants were open to hearing each other’s voices. Schneider (1993), the originator of the AWA method, stated, “Perhaps the most revolutionary aspect of the workshop is the absolute insistence that there be a safe place in which to experiment, explore and journey into dangerous internal terrain of ones writing. The safe place depends on knowing there is no criticism” (p. 138). The safety the method provides leaves the writer free to create. Schneider (1993) observes that “people writing together in a supportive group not only dramatically improve in craft and in confidence, they also create bonds of profound understanding” (p. 137). As a student–participant reported, “We are all teaching each other, when we write we can relate to each other. It feels like you are not going through this alone when you hear what others have been through.”

All participants were on the cusp of late adolescence and young adulthood, a time when identity is still being formed, roles are being tried out, and lifestyles considered. This stage of development offers a unique window of opportunity to influence their values, beliefs, and behaviors. In addition, considering that during adolescence individual choice is paramount, the AWA method with the instructions to write whatever participants want in response to an exercise or write what was on their mind, may be particularly suited for this age.

In this evaluation participants reported an effect on self-esteem, self-efficacy, coping, and support. Will writing influence these protective processes over time? Will these process affect health risk behaviors? Can writing facilitate going beyond relational support to connecting to others to promote understanding? These are the questions for the next study.

## **FUTURE RESEARCH**

The next step in developing an evidenced-based writing intervention is to test whether the AWA method can produce similar results of coping and connection by comparing groups with different doses of the writing to each other and a control group. A larger sample using the AWA method over a longer period of time would provide further evidence so the writing group could be recommended to a broader population. Future research should address the potential for the writing group method to facilitate esteem, efficacy, supportive relationships, and task accomplishment over time to enhance the development of protective processes from risk behaviors.

## **IMPLICATIONS**

Writing in a group with reading aloud and positive feedback intensifies the emotional release offered by writing alone, facilitates the development of coping strategies, creates a network of social support and, with these diverse participants, adds the benefit of understanding and relating to the lives of others. These are the processes that are described as protecting adolescents from negative risks to their health. A larger, longitudinal study is needed to test these outcomes. The trust and understanding that developed among adolescents of different socioeconomic and ethnic backgrounds writing together has implications for future interventions aimed at promoting understanding difference and recognizing similarities.

Commenting on a report that journal writing reduced symptoms of asthma and arthritis, Spiegel (1999) wrote, "Were the authors to provide similar outcome evidence about a new drug, it likely would be in widespread use in a short time" (p. 1329). Yet, like medication, writing and reading stories aloud have the potential to relieve stress, while writing in a group has the added benefit of helping people solve problems and create new understandings of self and others. Given the accumulating evidence that writing by oneself and in groups with a specific method can promote physical and mental health, it would be appropriate to add writing to the list of nursing treatment options.

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