

EXPRESSIVE WRITING, RELATIONSHIPS, AND HEALTH

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ABSTRACT

The role of expressive writing in social functioning is investigated; results extend findings regarding benefits of writing about personally significant topics (Pennebaker & Beall, 1986; King, 2001; Niederhoffer & Pennebaker, 2002). Couples ($N = 93$) in romantic relationships wrote about falling in love, trauma, or a control. Implications for health, well-being, and relationship quality were assessed. Writing about love or trauma led to enhanced interactions with partners for one week following, assessed with experience sampling methodology. Writing about love, and having less critical interactions, each led to enhanced life satisfaction 2.5 months later. This effect for interaction quality reduced the direct effect of the love condition on satisfaction. Having lower pretest love scores, in the love condition, marginally predicted break-ups.