

This article was downloaded by: [BACP]

On: 19 February 2012, At: 01:11

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



Counselling and Psychotherapy Research: Linking research with practice

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/rcpr20>

Dialogical journal writing as 'self-therapy': 'I matter'

Jeannie K. Wright^a

^a School of Arts, Development and Health Education, Massey University College of Education, Te Kupenga o Te Matauranga, Palmerston North, Aotearoa, New Zealand

Available online: 13 Jul 2009

To cite this article: Jeannie K. Wright (2009): Dialogical journal writing as 'self-therapy': 'I matter', *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research: Linking research with practice*, 9:4, 234-240

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14733140903008430>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Full terms and conditions of use: <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden.

The publisher does not give any warranty express or implied or make any representation that the contents will be complete or accurate or up to date. The accuracy of any instructions, formulae, and drug doses should be independently verified with primary sources. The publisher shall not be liable for any loss, actions, claims, proceedings, demand, or costs or damages whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with or arising out of the use of this material.

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Dialogical journal writing as ‘self-therapy’: ‘I matter’

JEANNIE K. WRIGHT*

School of Arts, Development and Health Education, Massey University College of Education, Te Kupenga o Te Maturanga, Palmerston North, Aotearoa/New Zealand

Abstract

Aim: This case study of one woman’s (Jane’s) experience of dialogical journal writing presents a way of finding a ‘compassionate image’ for self-therapy. Various theoretical analyses are indicated with Mindfulness-based conceptualisations at the forefront. **Methodology:** Based on three recorded interviews, the narrative inquiry took place over a year. Methodologically, this paper is also one contribution to an ongoing debate about different research approaches in therapeutic writing research. **Participants:** This study took place in Aotearoa New Zealand, where both Jane and I are migrants. **Discussion:** This account draws on a report of self-directed writing for well-being, seen as an alternative to counselling or medication for depression and anxiety. It focuses on how a particular style of writing evolved and how the motivation to write continues.

Keywords: *Anxiety, compassionate image, journal writing as therapy, narrative inquiry, self-help*

Introduction

... I feel, I feel quite unhappy I would have to say at a deep level if I don’t do it. I actually ... I feel I’m back to that kind of hmm where I don’t really matter, I’m there to make other people OK inside. (Jane: Interview 1)

In this paper, Jane (not her real name) is interviewed about her use of dialogical journal writing between different parts of ‘herself’. Jane’s style and use of dialogical journal writing is different from general journaling (Adams, 1990). Diary keeping and journal writing as a form of reflection have been widely used for centuries. The growth of the ‘therapy industry’ in the 20th century (McLeod, 2003), however has, arguably, over-shadowed the therapeutic possibilities and potential for self-dialogue in journal writing. Certainly in a counselling and psychotherapeutic context, the field of journal writing in general, and dialogical writing in particular, is under-researched (Wright, 2004). One aim of this paper is to suggest ways in which this lack might be remedied.

‘Therapy culture’ (Furedi, 2004) and its turn towards individualised ‘cures’ for socially constructed problems (McLeod, 2006) has long been challenged by some of its most distinguished researchers and teachers (Feltham, 1999). One of the aims of this study is to exemplify how a particular form of writing works as self therapy. Journalling clearly has a place as an adjunct to a counselling relationship (Thompson,

2004). In this study, I have deliberately chosen to focus on people (including myself) who have used writing as a stand-alone therapy, rather than in conjunction with face-to-face therapeutic work of any orientation. The italicised text represents extracts from my journals:

I’m standing smiling at a party, still only a year on from coming to work in Aotearoa/New Zealand, not knowing anyone except the person I came with. I start talking to a woman who’s at the same table and once we’re eating, she asks me what I teach. She talks about how she saw a counsellor for a while, in her mid-forties, and has written in a journal every day since – in the morning. ‘If I don’t she says, ‘I feel things differently during waking hours. Ask Tom, my husband, ask the kids.

I admit to my research and personal interest in writing as therapy. Jane and I agree to meet to talk about how the dialogues developed and her motivation to keep the journal writing going. This chance meeting is how the opportunity for three separate conversations with Jane about her use of writing came about over the course of a year.

Background

I haven’t been to counselling since I did the journals. I haven’t been back. (Jane: Interview 1)

*Email: j.wright@massey.ac.nz

This study will focus on Jane's particular combination of self-directed reading and dialogical writing to maintain her 'wellness'. It deals with dialogic writing *through* a piece of dialogic writing. Although there is a wealth of research on the 'emotional writing paradigm' or the 'written disclosure paradigm', including some useful meta-analyses (Pennebaker & Chung, 2007; Sloan & Marx, 2004; Smyth, 1998), studies have mostly been carried out in laboratory settings. Yet, so far from replicated controlled trials, few conclusions have been drawn about why expressive writing results in measurable psychological and physiological benefits, although, 'one of the powers of expressive writing is that it brings about changes in people's social lives' (Pennebaker & Chung, 2007, p. 36).

In addition, Jane's writing was not predominantly about the most disturbing emotional events in her life, disclosed elsewhere or not, and therefore the 'Pennebaker paradigm' may not be the most appropriate way to theorise this case study. Recent large-scale studies have taken place in more naturalistic settings but again, the medical model persists with the researcher/therapist, who is at the centre of the research design, prescribing various kinds of 'emotional disclosure writing homework' (Graf, Gaudiano, & Geller, 2008). The imbalance of control and potential for dependency in conventional therapeutic relationships is exactly what Jane seeks to avoid in her use of dialogical writing. More naturalistic studies have been called for, written from the point of view of the 'self therapist' writer (Bolton & Wright, 2004).

Currently there is a dearth of 'case study' research on journal/writing as stand-alone therapy, as well as within a counselling and psychotherapy relationship (Thompson, 2004). Whilst not denying the need for medical interventions or a therapeutic relationship for some circumstances at certain times, Jane has been able to avoid the need for medication and counselling,

I can very quickly get into those old patterns and I suspect they'll always be with me. But they aren't as draining on me. I think ... I feel ... I find the world less draining now. (Jane: Interview 3)

We have some things in common, which makes me both intrigued and anxious about starting the research. Jane emigrated to Aotearoa/New Zealand with her family from the UK when she was 8 years old, and dates her diary writing from that time. I too have kept diaries from an early age, and have also experienced migration from the UK, though in my fifties rather than as a child. We have both used writing in a range of ways to enable us to cope with the sometimes competing and often contradictory (Greer, 1999) demands of 'career' and family, in a social context which expects us as individual women to cope with our own and others' emotional demands, to succeed in all spheres and above all to avoid vulnerability (hooks, 1999). I asked Jane at our first interview if she would like to co-author the

article. She declined, mostly because of wanting to maintain her anonymity.

Researcher reflections

Extracts from my research journal after meeting Jane:

Wow! ... Extraordinary ... synchronicity and, she has found a way to 'mother', nurture herself – a 'compassionate image' in writing.

The theoretical possibilities for understanding how Jane was using her journal writing were tumbling around in kaleidoscopic patterns in my mind as I glimpsed the complexity of the possible choices for representation. The parallels between 'the compassionate image' (Gilbert, 2005), and Jane's discovery of dialogical writing was particularly strong:

The reference to Paul Gilbert's work reflects my interest in 'de-shaming' through writing as a form of self-therapy and in mindfulness, but Jane's own points of connection with the acceptance and commitment therapeutic literature must also be acknowledged.

The literature on writing as creative 'self help' is vast and barely features in this account. Jane's development of a style of writing is accessing the power of her unconscious and creative ability (Cameron, 1992; DeSalvo, 1999; Progoff, 1975); it is also building a dialogue with a 'voice' with qualities of wisdom and understanding, total acceptance, and warmth, recognisable as 'person-centred' qualities (Rogers, 1993), in addition to those of the 'self-soothing compassionate image' in Gilbert's work (Gilbert, 2005), and in the mindfulness literature.

As an integrative therapist, alongside the 'forces' representing traditional psychotherapeutic interpretation, psychodynamic, cognitive behavioural and humanistic, post-modern approaches were also clearly apparent in Jane's way of 'externalising' the difficulties in her life.

More possible illumination might come about through some of the literature on self, women, and biographical writing (Cavarero, 2000; Hunt & Sampson, 2006). These are possibilities for future studies; the focal point in Jane's experience which resonates with mine is the use of journal writing to create a 'compassionate image' to counter-act anxiety:

The surface similarities in our lives, Jane and mine, are fascinating as well as anxiety provoking: We are both migrants, have worked in isolated places, have a tendency to self-sufficiency, faced adversity and found a way of using writing to cope emotionally. I am not a great organiser, however. We both describe ourselves as 'worriers'.

Feminist researchers' concepts of 'reciprocity' (Oakley, 1999), and narrative inquiry's emphasis on reflexivity

(Etherington, 2004), sat on my shoulder. It was crucial to foreground Jane's own words, yet also be able to maintain some use of theoretical lenses which would illuminate how Jane's writing works in practice.

Jane is not and has never been my client, yet I am constantly aware of how her writing could be positioned within the research/practice literature, within the psychological therapies. If she saw different members of what Faye Weldon calls therapism, she would be 'treated differently' too. Would poetry get a look in, for example, as rare members of the psychological therapy industry suggest it might? (J. Gilbert, 1995)

Both my 'research diary' written at the time of the interviews, Jane's writing, and the composing of this paper are forms of 'writing as inquiry' (Richardson, 2000; Richardson & St Pierre, 2005). It is not within the scope of this piece to do justice to the impact on qualitative research, and my development as researcher, that Richardson's work has had (Richardson, 1990). Certainly the 'doubts' that have accompanied this writing and the sense of not claiming a universal or general 'right' or 'privileged form of authoritative knowledge' (Richardson & St Pierre, 2005, p. 961) have been sufficiently countered by Richardson's outlining of Creative Analytical writing Processes.

Narrative inquiry and ethical issues

Susan Chase's description of narrative inquiry fits the aims and some of the scope of this study. It is an 'amalgam of interdisciplinary lenses, diverse disciplinary approaches, and both traditional and innovative methods – all revolving around an interest in biographical particulars as narrated by the one who lives them' (Chase, 2005, p. 651). Narrative inquiry has recently 'flourished' in some disciplines (Josselson, Lieblich, & McAdams, 2002; Pinnegar & Gary Daynes, 2007), and remained marginal in others (Speedy, 2008). In this study, listening to Jane's story of how writing played a major part in different stages of her life and is still central to her sense of well being ('*I matter*'), I was choosing to reconstruct her experience in relationship to me, 'the other' and to a social milieu (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000). We discussed co-authorship, which Jane was not interested in. In addition to the assumptions of 'power sharing' of narrative inquiry, I was influenced in this work by feminist research ethics and assumptions (Fine, 1992; Lather, 2007). Jane was interested in 'being researched', and in having an opportunity to talk about something of great importance to her, which she usually 'keeps to herself'.

The questions that interested me were about how Jane had developed her style of journal writing, and how she had maintained her motivation. In some of our conversations 'biographical particulars' were bound to emerge and would be an essential part of her story, but would need to be carefully managed so

as to maintain Jane's privacy. We agreed at the outset that the content of her therapeutic writing would not be the focus of our conversations. I suggested that our three meetings (audiotaped sessions lasting between one and one and a half hours) focussed rather on the process of the therapeutic writing. I sent examples of some questions I might ask to Jane in an information sheet which was part of the ethical approval required by the university where I work. We also agreed that the consent form Jane signed would be a starting point only and that we would observe 'process ethics' (Bond, 2004). Jane has read this paper and agreed to those extracts of her writing represented here.

Writing as inquiry

Jane: How the writing evolved

At our first agreed meeting in Autumn (February will never feel right as early Autumn for me), we talk over a cup of coffee. Jane shows me one of her early diaries, and talks about one, a small red book, dating from the year her family emigrated to New Zealand, 'that's incredibly precious to me':

Where we lived in England, you know, life was very orderly. We had extended family and so on, here parents were very busy ... and I was very much thrown on my own resources. ... when I see these lists, I feel, I feel sort of quite sad, I'm doing these things like, you know, 'clean shoes, tidy room, write letters' ... I think it represents the way I began to cope emotionally in life, which is to be very, very organised. (Jane: Interview 1)

Jane is a very successful professional woman in her early fifties. She is married to Tom and they have two children, both born in New Zealand. In our first interview, Jane describes in the extract above how list and diary writing started after she emigrated from the UK as a child. She continues to reflect on other diaries, kept during her teenage years and during backpacking and travelling alone in South East Asia, as 'writing sensory impressions alongside what I did'.

The journal was myself and my self-sufficiency ... I was very, very self-contained.

In her early twenties, Jane worked in South East Asia for a couple of years, on a government contract with a high level of responsibility and isolation. The journal writing there was a way of coping with difficult adjustments:

Those journals are very much based on kind of culture shock and trying to cope. That was the first time I think that I went back to what I did at age 8 which was kind of use the journals a little bit to cope.

The combination of being out of her cultural safety zone together with a tried and tested way of managing social and emotional isolation by using expressive and reflective writing, re-emerged during the years in South East Asia:

As if when I was 8, I didn't have anyone really to talk to ... I had a few European friends, but I'm very private and I suppose in some way I guess partly until well into my forties, I kind of thought I was the best expert on me. I also thought it wasn't very safe to talk about how I felt. I wasn't at all sure I would be understood.

I felt I could have written these words myself. A crisis for Jane came when she was back in New Zealand, in a demanding job and her children were growing up:

At that time though I had been through a period where I found it so hard to cope emotionally with teenagers and all my other stuff came back, all my other issues. ... I think I was actually very pre-occupied with my own emotional state and they were my landscapes.

Previously, geographical distance had created isolation but this particular episode happened at home:

You know it didn't matter where I was. You know, how I felt was kind of the reverse of what had happened earlier where I could tune out of feelings when I travelled. Feelings now were here in my world, this is my world; there was no escape, my world was my feelings and they were very troubling.

Jane went to counselling and took anti-depressants for a three month period. Ironically, the GP needed persuading to prescribe, seeing Jane's 'coping' exterior and not her vulnerability. The counselling was valuable but:

I found the counselling incredibly painful ... it's wonderful counselling 'cause it's very open and I think this is excellent in revealing all sorts of stuff to me which in a way, thinking about my life, I hadn't understood.

The limitations of both medication and therapy became apparent to her, especially the dependence on the counselling relationship and on 'how much the counsellor was able to pull out of me ...'.

There was also the fear of the therapy never coming to an end, 'am I going to become Woody Allan?'.

Finding different sources of information about counselling, including books on Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, became integrated into journal writing. Some of Jane's earlier tendencies in the face of adversity show up again, 'I must keep reading, I must keep reading'.

In the library, Jane came across the book which led to changes in the way she wrote, a book by John Pollard on self parenting, which is now out of print.

How Jane writes the dialogues

At first Jane tended to write in descriptive ways, about a favourite teacher or a person she admired and would like to emulate. Gradually, from that novice stage a dialogical form of writing has developed, very much using a maternal, nurturing 'compassionate image' to coach and encourage (Gilbert, 2005).

Preferred time/place/materials

In the morning, before getting up, using pencil and the covered notebooks Jane brought to show me at our first meeting, the writing starts, perhaps with a question from the left hand side of the page, the accepting, non-judgemental voice, or with a statement of how things are on the right hand side of the page:

Well, I'm sitting up in bed and I've probably done the first, the kind of opening routine I do which say, how are you? Then, how did you sleep? How was yesterday? – possibly following up something like that, How did it go? Or how did you feel with that?

Jane links the preference for writing with pencil to her early experience of school in Aotearoa/New Zealand as an easy place to be compared to a home disrupted by migration.

I asked about the 'imagined or implicit reader' (Hunt, 2004) when she is writing. Jane is clear that there is no sense of 'external reader', and that apart from her children and Tom, her husband, and our conversations, she has not talked to anyone about the journal writing. The implicit reader is a part of herself (Hermans & Dimaggio, 2004), not a nagging 'inner critic' or any kind of judgemental voice, but an affirming voice which asks questions like: 'What do you think would help?'.

Motivating herself to write

Jane's response to life's stresses is to find privacy and affirmation in the journal writing. She reacts against the 'consumerist' idea of 'me time', linking it with women's magazines and a certain 'competitive self-indulgence' she rejects. The writing, on the other hand, is not open to public scrutiny and is not part of a consumerist urge:

It's a reflex, it's a complete reflex. It's as much of a reflex as drinking a glass of water for me ...

'I think it's a huge commitment to myself. I feel I've let myself down or discounted myself if I don't do it. I feel its like, I mean its interesting Jeannie because I kind of think I should exercise, I'm not really into exercise. You know so I look at all the 30 minutes exercise a day and I think I should do that and

I think well how am I going, when am I going to do that? I'm certainly not, it could never, and physical exercise could never replace this. You know this is absolutely fundamental. And I think its motivation. I think it's so for me and also hugely enjoyable. I actually feel different after I've done it. And I feel something to say it would be like ... I think if I hadn't done it would be like coming out not having cleaned my teeth, it would worry me all day, kind of I wouldn't feel quite right.

How journal writing benefits Jane and discussion

By comparing her form of journal writing with other ways of maintaining well being, Jane is clear about one central benefit:

And um I've also in my late teens another routine I once had, just as a point of comparison, was um meditating ... I found that quite transforming in the sense that I began to cope a lot better emotionally with things.

Externally the change may not have been so evident, but it was a big change for me. I did do that, I did feel very committed for about 20 minutes in the morning 20 minutes in the afternoon. I still do meditate sometimes and I find that very helpful but there's never been the drive that the journals have for that. It's an absolute must ... I feel, I feel quite unhappy I would have to say at a deep level if I don't do it. I actually I feel I'm back to that kind of um where I don't really matter. I'm there to make other people okay inside.

Like Marion Milner, whose early record of keeping a journal for seven years in order to explore the kinds of experience that made her happy (Milner, 1952), Jane understands how she has been encouraged to be 'good' and 'unselfish' to a point where what she feels, wants or needs does not matter. Milner has become a model for creative writing for personal development (Bolton, 1999; Hunt & Sampson, 1998), but Jane's writing, using the dialogical form, is less dependent on re-reading.

Like the analyst Karen Horney, who even earlier than Milner was investigating the feasibility of self therapy (Horney, 1942), Jane benefits from being both writer and audience, both the observer and the observed. Horney observed: 'Life itself is the most effective help for our development' (p. 8). I asked Jane about re-reading her journals, as some pioneers and practitioners of journal therapy have suggested (Progoff, 1975; Thompson, 2004):

I think when I re-read I feel slightly nervous that I may be influenced by those earlier voices and you know, but I just ... I haven't re-read much but I do re-read when I think, oh, what how did we, particularly for how we finish things or how we start things ... I'll check back. If I do re-read, this is interesting just

thinking about it, I only read the parent's voice not the child's voice. (Jane: Interview 3)

Some of the metaphors Jane uses to describe the subsequent dialogue writing/journal writing include describing the journal as an 'anchor', especially when she is working away from home, for example, and feeling alone. Metaphors of food are central in describing the writing:

'...as a delicious treat like chocolate', 'quite delicious ... like a wonderful food or something'. 'So I think for me it would be like, giving up the journal would be like giving up chocolate and coffee and everything that is delicious and rich and passionate in life. Everything that makes me feel passionate, involved, happy. You know I really feel there is no substitute for it.

In our second conversation she adds:

It's like ... A journey back to myself, and it's a kind of emotional process.

We discuss how the Acceptance and Commitment Therapy Jane has read (Hayes, Strosahl, & Wilson, 1999) deals with ways of not becoming emotionally engaged in thoughts or feelings. Jane's view is that such techniques can sometimes leave those feelings unresolved. The image of the Chinese finger trap outlined as Skill 2 in Hayes et al. (1999), resonates with Jane's experience of attempting to win a tug of war with the unending emotional demands of others. It is useless to pull away, the trap only tightens. It is counter-intuitive to push the finger into the trap, but only that way of going further into the trap releases the finger. The journal writing, for Jane, is a way of going into the finger trap, having to focus on herself: 'sit with myself'.

She reports that she then finds the emotional turmoil she can experience reduced. Jane's journaling could be situated within the tradition of journal writing as a strategy for survival. Most famously, Anne Frank's diary, for example also took a dialogical form (Frank, 1947). Surviving the transitions and upheavals of migration has certainly been a central theme of my personal journals over the last three years (Wright, 2009). Unlike Jane, dialogical writing is not the way I tend to go: I'm less systematic, less disciplined, but equally sure that writing is a 'magic instrument' for me (Cixous & Calle-Gruber, 1994/1997, p. 89).

I'm actually very proud of the journaling process. I feel quite good about it, I think it's a big, it's a big thing for me, a huge thing in my life, it's really important you know.

Self therapy, as exemplified in Jane's story, pushes the boundaries of 'self help'. The sceptics of therapy culture (Furedi, 2004) may still point out that indivi-

dualistic introspection is not reconnecting with community, yet, in Jane's view, such thinking assumes that, 'community always has a positive valence'. Jane's style of self help is very much about self-reliance. By rejecting any therapeutic convention of working with another in favour of working alone, Jane chooses to connect with herself, 'to get the best part of myself' in the journal writing, for which there is no substitute. She is *not* socially isolated and could choose to talk about some of the tensions and difficulties she experiences to family and friends:

I love talking to my husband. My husband is fantastic and will listen, empathise, understands the importance of listening to me. Having said that I think I always feel quite difficult – I'm burdening him emotionally for a lot of things. But I can do it myself in my journals.

Conclusion and suggestions for further research

Jane is using her creativity and imagination to converse with a compassionate image. She writes to herself in a voice which is never critical, never taking on the imperative, judging, negative role. There is more than affirmation in her writing, however. Jane has found a way to develop writing dialogues so that the maternal strength others find in her is for her – for herself. Others say they feel better for having spent time with her, but running out of emotional resources and 'of your own essence' has been Jane's experience at work and at home. The journal writing is about seeking happiness; functioning better in the world is a side effect.

Case studies of journal writing, accounts of focus groups, and more examples of writing as inquiry and of narrative studies would be immensely valuable in this under-researched field. Some questions I hope to prioritise are:

- How are forms of therapeutic writing explained by and linked to the various theoretical approaches in counselling and psychotherapy?
- How are practices of journal writing, (auto)biographical writing and autoethnography developing in different disciplines and in different parts of the world?
- What have we learned and how can we connect across the divide between the 'evidence base' for writing developed by the positivist/empirical scientists and those more inclined towards narrative and arts-based research?

All therapy aims to develop the client's capacity for self-therapy (Duncan, Miller, & Sparks, 2004). Elsewhere it has been suggested that, like the more traditional expressive therapies, such as dance and movement, art and drama therapy, creative and reflective writing of this kind offers an arguably more

egalitarian alternative to conventional therapeutic relationship (Wright, 2003) and to more structured self-help.

Jane and I discussed how she might decide one day to burn the journals, but not just yet. In Jane's words:

We will always be doing this. Will they be in the coffin with me?

Acknowledgements

With thanks to Jane for her generosity and to anonymous reviewers.

Biographical note

Jeannie K. Wright now lives and works in the central North Island of Aotearoa/New Zealand. Writing a journal on scraps of paper, sometimes the backs of advertising flyers, was a survival tool during the upheaval and isolation of migration. It still is.

References

- Adams, K. (1990). *Journal to the self: Twenty two paths to personal growth*. New York: Warner Books.
- Bolton, G. (1999). *The therapeutic potential of creative writing: Writing myself*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Bolton, G., & Wright, J. K. (2004). Conclusions and looking forward. In G. Bolton, S. Howlett, C. Lago & J. K. Wright (Eds.), *Writing cures: An introductory handbook of writing in counselling and psychotherapy* (pp. 228–231). Hove: Brunner-Routledge.
- Bond, T. (2004). *Ethical guidelines for researching in counselling and psychotherapy*. Rugby: British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.
- Cameron, J. (1992). *The artist's way: A spiritual path to higher creativity*. New York: Tarcher/Putnam.
- Cavarero, A. (2000). *Relating narratives: Storytelling and selfhood* (P. A. Kottman, Trans.). London and New York: Routledge.
- Chase, S.E. (2005). Narrative inquiry: Multiple lenses, approaches, voices. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of qualitative research* (3rd edn, pp. 651–679). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Cixous, H., & Calle-Gruber, M. (1994/1997). *Rootprints: Memory and life writing*. London: Routledge.
- Clandinin, D.J., & Connelly, P.M. (2000). *Narrative inquiry: Experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- DeSalvo, L. (1999). *Writing as a way of healing*. London: The Women's Press.
- Duncan, B.L., Miller, S.D., & Sparks, J.A. (2004). *The heroic client*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass/Wiley.
- Etherington, K. (2004). *Becoming a reflexive researcher: Using ourselves in research*. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Feltham, C. (1999). *Controversies in counselling and psychotherapy*. London: Sage.
- Fine, M. (Ed.). (1992). *Disruptive voices: The possibilities of feminist research*. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press.
- Frank, A. (1947). *The diary of Anne Frank*. London: Macmillan Children's Books.
- Furedi, F. (2004). *Therapy culture: Cultivating vulnerability in an uncertain age*. London: Routledge.
- Gilbert, J. (1995). Clients as poets: Reflections on personal writing in the process of psychological change. *Clinical Psychology Forum*, 75, 3–5.
- Gilbert, P. (2005). *Compassion: Conceptualisation, research and use in psychotherapy*. London: Routledge.

- Graf, M.C., Gaudiano, B.A., & Geller, P.A. (2008). Written emotional disclosure: A controlled study of the benefits of expressive writing homework in outpatient psychotherapy. *Psychotherapy Research*, 18 (4), 389–399.
- Greer, G. (1999). *The whole woman*. New York: A.A. Knopf.
- Hayes, S.C., Strosahl, K.D., & Wilson, K.G. (1999). *Acceptance and commitment therapy*. New York: The Guilford Press.
- Hermans, H.J.M., & Dimaggio, G. (Eds.). (2004). *The dialogical self in psychotherapy*. Hove and New York: Brunner-Routledge.
- hooks, B. (1999). *Remembered rapture: The writer at work*. London: Women's Press.
- Horney, K. (1942). *Self analysis*. New York: Norton.
- Hunt, C. (2004). Reading ourselves: Imagining the reader in the writing process. In G. Bolton, S. Howlett, C. Lago & J. K. Wright (Eds.), *Writing cures: An introductory handbook of writing in counselling and psychotherapy* (pp. 35–43). Hove: Brunner-Routledge.
- Hunt, C., & Sampson, F. (1998). *The self on the page: Theory and practice of creative writing in personal development*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- Hunt, C., & Sampson, F. (2006). *Writing, self and reflexivity*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Josselson, R., Lieblich, A., & McAdams, D.P. (Eds.). (2002). *Up close and personal: The teaching and learning of narrative research*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Lather, P. (2007). *Getting lost: Feminist efforts towards a double(d) science*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- McLeod, J. (2003). *An introduction to counselling* (3rd edn). Buckingham and Philadelphia: Open University Press.
- McLeod, J. (2006). Counselling and psychotherapy as cultural work. In L. Tsoi Hoshmand (Ed.), *Culture, psychotherapy and counselling* (pp. 47–64). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Milner, M. (1952). *A life of one's own*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Oakley, A. (1999). People's ways of knowing: Gender and methodology. In S. Hood, B. Mayall & S. Oliver (Eds.), *Critical issues in social research* (pp. 154–169). Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Pennebaker, J.W., & Chung, C.K. (2007). Expressive writing: Emotional upheavals and health. In H. Friedman & R. Silver (Eds.), *Handbook of health psychology* (pp. 263–284). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Pinnegar, S., & Gary Daynes, J. (2007). Locating narrative inquiry historically. In D.J. Clandinin (Ed.), *Handbook of narrative inquiry: Mapping a methodology*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Proffoff, I. (1975). *At a journal workshop: The basic text and guide for using the intensive journal*. New York: Dialogue House.
- Richardson, L. (1990). *Writing strategies: Reaching diverse audiences*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.
- Richardson, L. (2000). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (2nd edn, pp. 923–949). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Richardson, L., & St Pierre, E.A. (2005). Writing: A method of inquiry. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds.), *Handbook of qualitative research* (pp. 959–978). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Rogers, N. (1993). *The creative connection – expressive arts as healing*. Palo Alto: Science and Behaviour Books.
- Sloan, D.M., & Marx, B.P. (2004). Taking pen to hand: Evaluating theories underlying the written disclosure paradigm. *Clinical psychology: Science and practice*, V11 (2), 121–137.
- Smyth, J.M. (1998). Written emotional expression: Effect, size, outcome types and moderating variables. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 66 (1), 174–184.
- Speedy, J. (2008). *Narrative inquiry and psychotherapy*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Thompson, K. (2004). Journal writing as a therapeutic tool. In G. Bolton, S. Howlett, C. Lago & J.K. Wright (Eds.), *Writing cures: An introductory handbook of writing in counselling and psychotherapy* (pp. 72–84). Hove: Brunner-Routledge.
- Wright, J.K. (2003). Five women talk about work-related brief therapy and therapeutic writing. *Counselling and Psychotherapy Research*, 3 (3), 204–209.
- Wright, J.K. (2004). The passion of science, the precision of poetry: Therapeutic writing – a review of the literature. In G. Bolton, S. Howlett, C. Lago & J.K. Wright (Eds.), *Writing cures: An introductory handbook of writing in counselling and therapy* (pp. 7–18). Hove: Brunner-Routledge.
- Wright, J.K. (2009). Autoethnography and therapy: Writing on the move. *Qualitative Inquiry*, 15 (4), 623–640.