

**A Writing Therapy Workshop
for SIUC Students During Covid-19**

'I hear and I forget, I see and I remember, I write and I understand.'
Chinese Proverb

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Abstract

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) has changed the way higher education presents and develops its courses and activities. The pandemic has posed challenges in higher education, as many institutions have shifted classes online and some have sent their students home. The epidemic has brought not only the risk of infection, but also psychological pressure for college students. The research objective of this proposal is to understand the stress the pandemic has generated on Southern Illinois University Carbondale (SIUC) students and promote student success through a writing therapy workshop. Writing therapy is defined as the exercise of journaling for therapeutic purposes, providing important benefits related to stress relief, personal growth, and developing a sense of empowerment. Writing therapy has a long research history regarding the benefits of self-reflection and writing, which has the potential to provide mental and physically healing. To achieve this objective, a group of 15 students will participate in a pilot writing therapy workshop. The goal is not only understand how students manage stress, but also to enrich their ability to achieve stress relief via cognitive processing of memories and experiences, resulting in more adaptive, integrated representations about themselves, their world, and how to cope with the challenges ahead. It is also possible that the development of a coherent narrative over time results in ongoing processing and finding meaning in their experiences. Based on social psychology paradigms, the outcomes not only include student success and wellbeing, but also relevant qualitative data for publications and new grant submissions.