

MATERNAL JOURNAL

Maternal Journal groups



'I realised to my great amazement - through doing this workshop - that I no longer feel broken by the pregnancy and becoming a mother'

'I will have more tools at my disposal should I feel myself teetering on the edge of depression again.'
'Creating the artwork itself was both cathartic and therapeutic'



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Barby Asante -
journaling guide
barbyasante.com



Journaling - a diary, notebook, sketchbook

Pregnancy & early parenting as a journey, a liminal space, a marking of time, a creative act, an embodying experience - a time of great change, challenge and opportunity.

Journaling as a way to express personal, social and political views and document a social history of your life - with a strong female legacy.



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Frida Kahlo - sketchbooks



Contemporary Journals: Bobby Baker's Diary Drawings

'I have found a distinct correlation between the act of writing (the regular drawing of myself and my life and the act of self-reflection which has led to a greater awareness, acceptance and understanding of the world and to hope - and ultimately helped me to survive'



Our 'Founding Mothers' Samantha, Amy, Pia, Mo, Hannah



Collaborators: Debra Bick, Professor of Maternal Health at Warwick University.
Professor Carmine Pariante, Department of Psychological Medicine, at King's College London, Communications & content producer Sam McGowan

Chantelle's Journal



Maternal Journal

Creative journaling to support mental health and well-being.
Providing a positive outlet for some of the new feelings & challenges we experience physically and emotionally during pregnancy and new parenthood.



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Journal by Hannah

Our 'Founding Mothers'
Samantha, Amy, Pia, Mo, Hannah



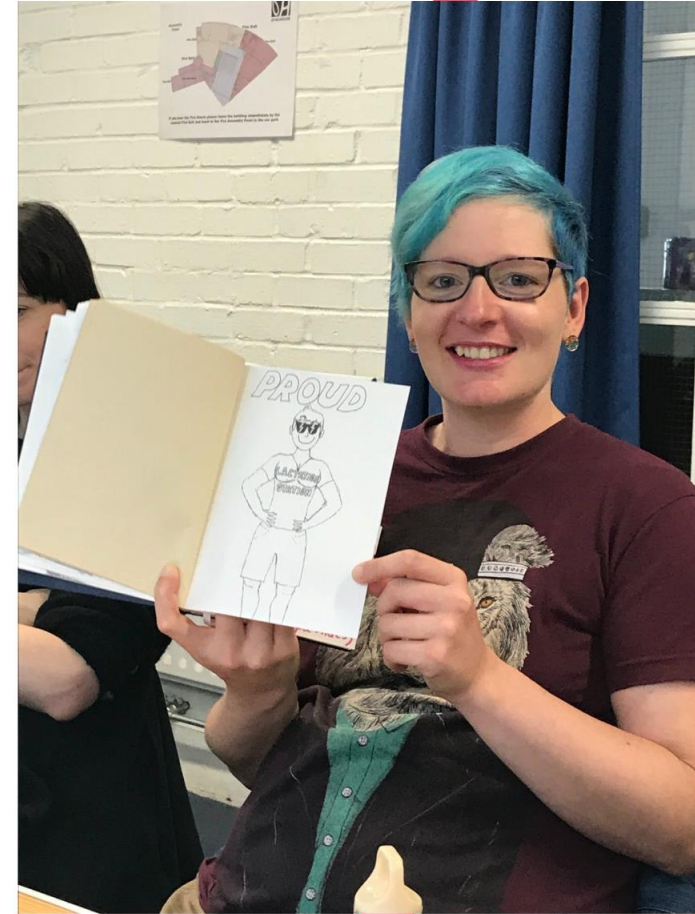
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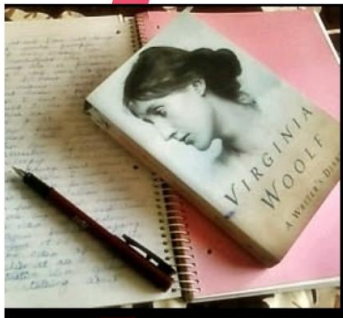
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Historical journals

Fanny Burney 1768 aged 15yrs 'Diary of a Nobody'

'A journal in which I must confess my every thought, every wish of my heart, with the most unlimited confidence, and the most unremitting sincerity to the end of my life!'



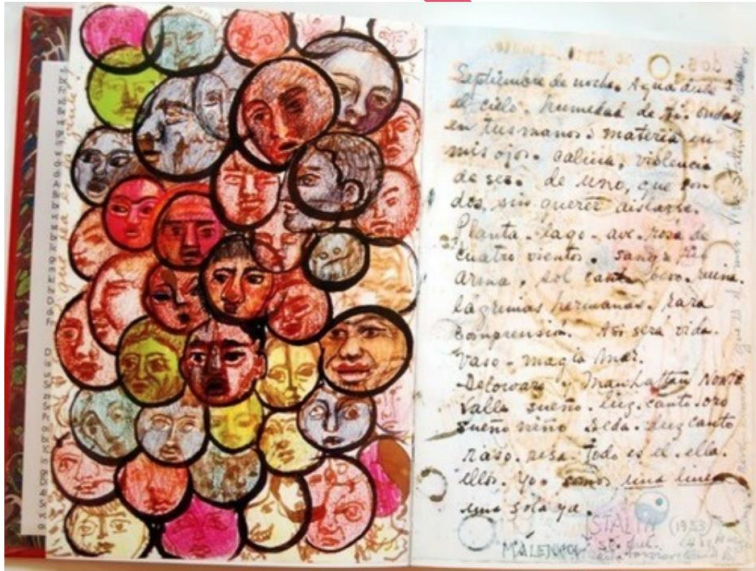
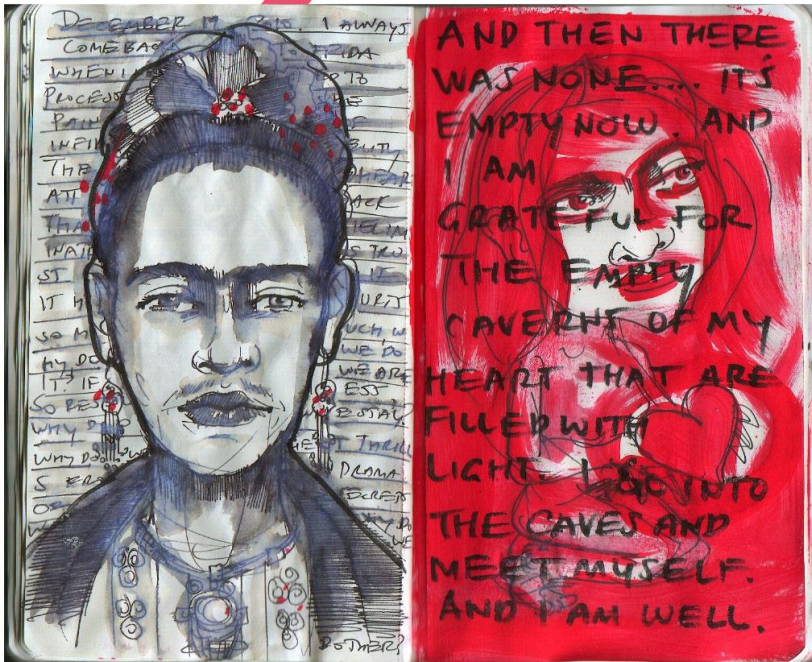
Virginia Woolf - 1915-1941

'an old desk or capacious hold all, in which one flings a mass of odds and ends without looking them through'

**Ida B Wells 19th century
African-American teacher, journalist,
civil rights pioneer and suffragist**
***'One had better die fighting against
injustice than die like a dog or a rat in
a trap'***

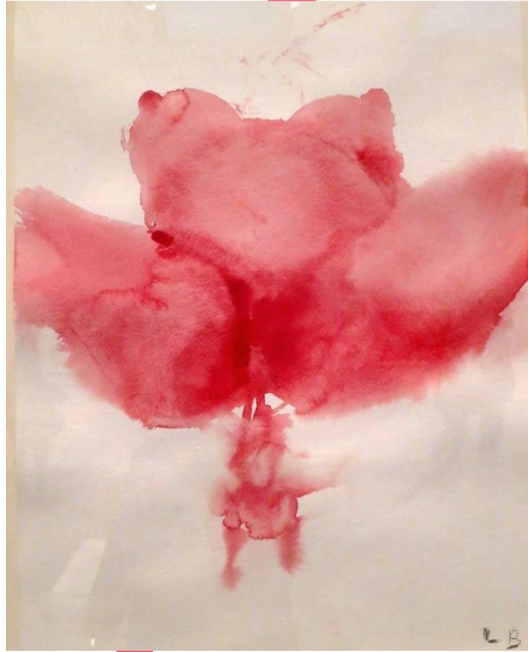


Frida Kahlo - sketchbooks



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Louise Bourgeois - Sketchbooks



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Contemporary Journals: Bobby Baker's Diary Drawings

'I have found a distinct correlation between the act of making these regular drawings of myself and my life and the act of self-reflection which, has led to a greater awareness, acceptance and understanding of the world and its ways - and ultimately helped me to recover.'



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Nobody Told Me

Hollie McNish

WE ARE PARENTS BUT WE ARE PEOPLE
WE ARE SNOT-RAGS AND WE ARE DREAMERS
WE ARE QUEENS AND WE ARE CLEANERS
WE ARE KISSED AND WE ARE SCREAMED AT



WE ARE STORY-TELLING EXPERTS.
AND OUR STORIES ARE MANY.



#NOBODYTOLDME

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Pregnant Butch
Graphic novel
A.K Summers



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Hole in the Heart by Henny Beaumont



What we call people makes
a huge difference to how we see
them. It makes a big difference
to me, as a mother of a child
WITH Down's and my ability
to love her.

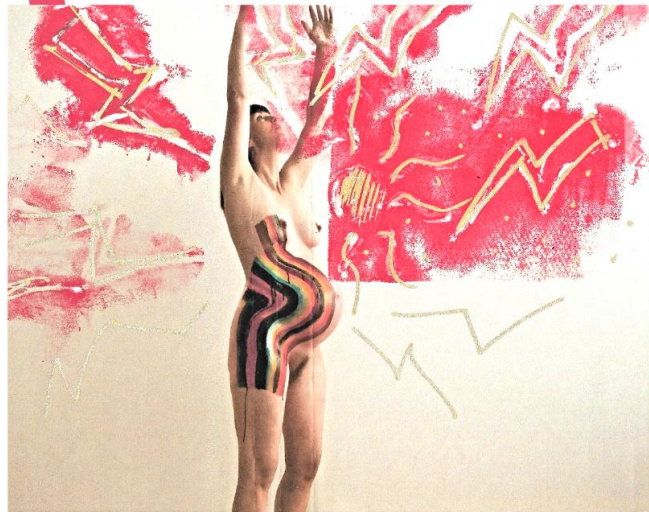


THEY NEED TO BE SEEN
AS PEOPLE, INDIVIDUALS,
NOT AS A DIFFERENT
KIND OF CREATURE,
FROM ANOTHER SPECIES
OR ANOTHER PLANET.

Evidence of the arts and creativity affecting mental health & well-being

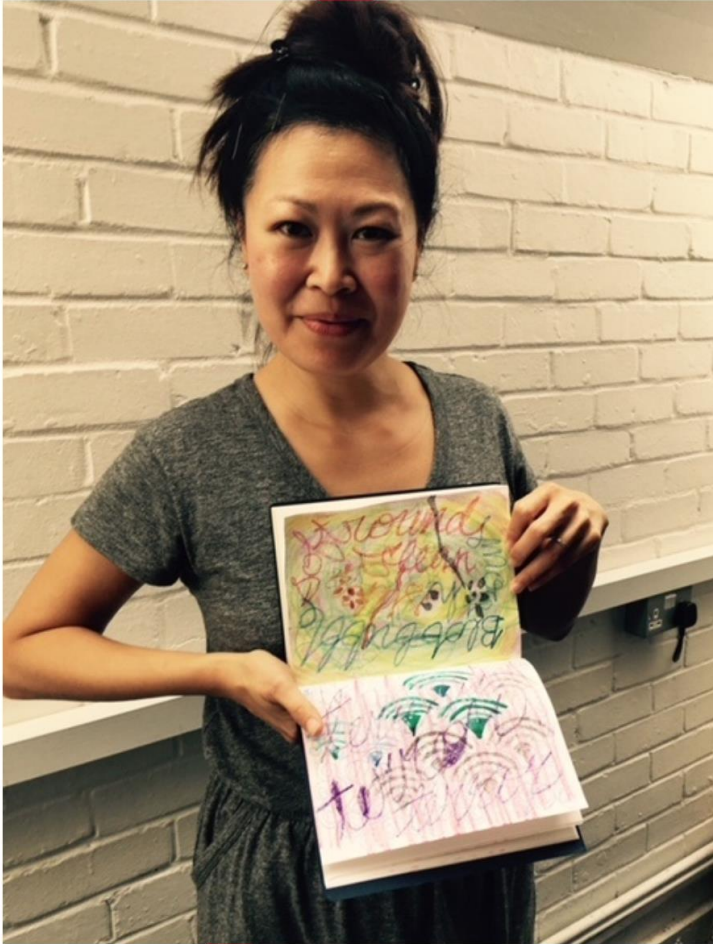
2017 All Parliamentary Group on Arts, Health & Wellbeing 'Creative Health' - *'The Arts can help meet major challenges facing health and social care: ageing, long-term conditions, loneliness & mental health'*

A review of social prescribing by UCL found 10 key benefits; self-esteem, confidence, physical health improvements, better social connection & new skills (Thomson et al, 2015)



Arts on Prescription scheme run by Arts and Minds in Cambridge - 78% participants increase in mental well-being, or decrease in anxiety, depression and social exclusion (Potter, 2013)

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'I realised to my great amazement - through doing this workshop - that I no longer feel broken by the pregnancy and becoming a mother'

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Sam's Journal



Mo's Journal



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Chantelle's Journal

I DROVE ALL NIGHT

PREGNANCY/MATERNAL EDITION

I had to escape, the people were judging + cruel
Maybe you've done a great big shit,
But I was dying to get to you.
I was dreaming while I drove
The long straight road ahead,
Uh-huh, Yeah
Could hear your sweet gurgles, your arms open wide
This fever for you was just burning me up inside

CHORUS

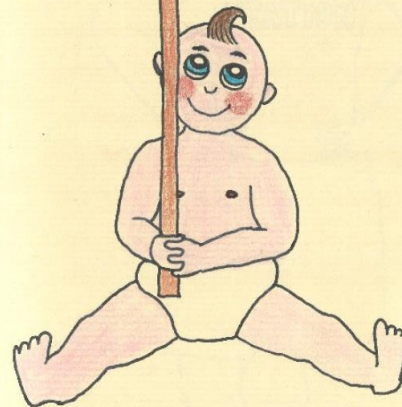
I drove all night to clean your poo.
Is that alright?
I drove all night crept in your room
Woke you from your sleep, to give you my boob
Is that alright?

What in this world keeps us from falling apart?
No matter where I go
I hear the beating of our one heart
I think about you when I'm doing the washing up
Uh-huh, Yeah
No one can cheer me the way that you do
Nothing erases this feeling between me + you.

CHORUS

5/10/17

FOR 1ST MONTH;
FEED ME EVERY 2-3
HOURS, 8-12 TIMES
PER DAY.
FEED ME FOR 5-30
MINS PER BREAST.



Oct 17

<https://maternaljournal.org>



Illustrations by Merlin Strangeway drawntomedicine.com

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SIX BENEFITS OF JOURNALING

1. IMPROVES
EMOTIONAL
WELL-
BEING

4. IMPROVES
CONFIDENCE/
SELF ESTEEM

2. RECORD
SPECIAL
MOMENTS

3. REDUCES
STRESS &
ANXIETY

5. SOCIAL
CONNECTION

6

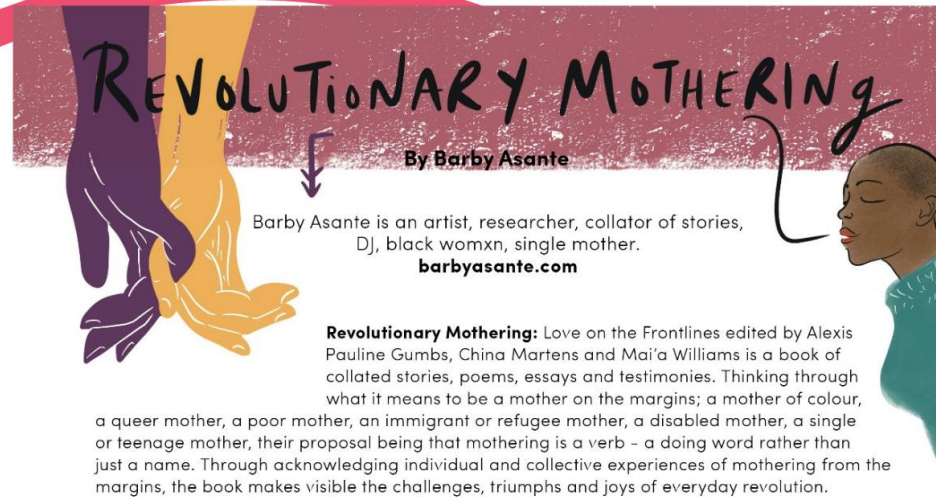
PROCESS PROBLEMS/
NEGATIVE EMOTIONS

illustration by @suttonkate

Barby Asante - Journaling guide barbyasante.com



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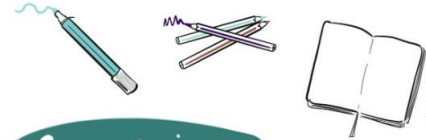


Revolutionary Mothering
By Barby Asante

Barby Asante is an artist, researcher, collator of stories, DJ, black womxn, single mother.
barbyasante.com

Revolutionary Mothering: Love on the Frontlines edited by Alexis Pauline Gumbs, China Martens and Mai'a Williams is a book of collated stories, poems, essays and testimonies. Thinking through what it means to be a mother on the margins; a mother of colour, a queer mother, a poor mother, an immigrant or refugee mother, a disabled mother, a single or teenage mother, their proposal being that mothering is a verb - a doing word rather than just a name. Through acknowledging individual and collective experiences of mothering from the margins, the book makes visible the challenges, triumphs and joys of everyday revolution.

Materials:



Exercises

The times we live in are hard. Becoming a mother, bringing a child into this world can be daunting, but each new life on this planet is potential for transformation/revolution.

Take a breath and reflect on your **dreams, hopes and fears** for becoming a mother- *spend 5 minutes* writing these on a page.

- Next reflect for *5 minutes* on the **small revolutionary acts** of your mother, grandmothers or other mothers that inspire you. Our mothers are not always blood related.

- Spend the last *20 minutes* of your journal time bringing these thoughts together as a **poem or dedication** for you and your child.

- If working in a group or with a friend, spend 30 minutes **sharing** your poems with each other by looking into another's eyes and reading to them.. Or share online using: #maternaljournal



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Hollie McNish - journaling guide holliepoetry.com

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YOUR list POEM

By Hollie McNish

Hollie McNish is a poet and writer.
holliepoetry.com

List poems are a relatable, simple way to start structuring a piece of writing.

Materials:



Exercises

Step 1: Questions and answers - 10 mins

Write the following on separate pieces of paper and turn over when done:

- One piece of good advice you were told about pregnancy and or parenthood.
- One piece of annoying or unhelpful advice you were told about pregnancy and or parenthood.
- Three short, sharp sentences about your relationship with socks.
- Something about your body that other people wouldn't know.
- Show off and swear about your favourite body part.
- Describe in a few vivid sentences a place, view or event in which you felt really content.

Step 2: Collage - 10 minutes

1. Read your answers out loud.
2. Choose images to repeat if wanted.
3. Choose start and end lines.
4. Make a rough order of answers.

Step 3: Writing - 20 minutes

1. Do not write a title yet.
2. Do not write more than 15 lines.
3. Start each new 'idea' on a new line.

Step 4: Edit - 15 minutes

1. Stop. Close your eyes. Distract yourself. Look again.
2. Read your poem aloud continuously for a few minutes.
3. Make any final changes.
4. Choose a title.
5. Write 'by (your name)'

Step 5: Sharing - 30/40 minutes

If in a group, come together and take turns to read to each other.
Or share online using: #maternaljournal





Kate Evans
- Journaling guide
cartoonkate.co.uk

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Kate Evans is a cartoonist, author, activist and mother.
cartoonkate.co.uk

Comics

A cartoon is any drawing combined with text. A comic is a sequence of these pictures. It's a very simple, accessible way to create art and transmit meaning. You do not have to be 'good at drawing' to draw comics – some professional cartoonists draw stick figures. There is a strong tradition of women creating autobiographical comics*.



Some ideas to play with:

- Create a character that expresses how you feel. You could try an *animal alter ego*.
- Document a recent event in your life that evoked strong emotions. It could be funny or it could be poignant.
- Comics are a great opportunity to pretend you said what you wished you said at the time!

Tips:

- You can sketch out the artwork in pencil, and then go over it in pen.
- If you use speech bubbles, write the words first and then draw the bubble around the outside.
- If you enjoy creating more detailed artwork each page of your journal could be a single frame.

After **30 minutes** of brainstorming and scribbling, come together and discuss your ideas. Or share online using: #maternaljournal



*See the work of AK Summers, Lynda Barry, Rachael Ball, Katie Green, Sarah Lightman, Thi Bui, or me, Kate Evans.



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Maternal Journal: Next steps



- Democratising the project - x40 UK and international groups, NHS apps, support organisations, midwives, birth workers.
 - Website - www.maternaljournal.org
- Social Media - Twitter & Insta: @maternaljrnl Facebook: @maternaljournal
 - Research project led by Professor Debra Bick, Warwick Trials Unit
- Bespoke MJ groups - Bromley Perinatal Service, Motherworks Festival
 - Taster workshops and training for HCP's
 - Maternal Journal app