

Dear Dairy — Research Summary on Emotional Suppression in Young Adults

Executive Summary

1. Habitual emotional **suppression** is linked to higher levels of anxiety and depression in young adults.
 2. **Expressive writing and journaling** can improve mood, reduce stress, and support mental health.
 3. **Digital/online journaling interventions** are effective, scalable, and particularly beneficial for minority or stigmatized young adults.
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A. Peer-reviewed Research

1. [A meta-analysis of emotional regulation outcomes in youth \(2021\)](#) — Emotion-regulation improvements predict better treatment outcomes; suppression is maladaptive.
 2. [Development of Emotion Regulation across the First Two Decades \(2020\)](#) — Tracks how regulation strategies, including suppression, evolve from adolescence to young adulthood.
 3. [Effectiveness of Expressive Writing in Reducing Mood Symptoms \(2020\)](#) — Online RCTs show expressive writing can reduce mood symptoms.
 4. [Online Positive Affect Journaling \(2018\)](#) — 12-week web journaling improved psychological distress and quality of life.
 5. [Habitual Expressive Suppression of Positive Emotions \(2023\)](#) — Suppressing positive emotions is linked to lower wellbeing.
 6. [Brief online interventions for LGBTQ young adult mental health \(2020\)](#) — Self-guided writing interventions were effective in sexual-minority young adults.
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B. Systematic Reviews / Meta-Analyses

- Expressive writing meta-analyses show small-to-moderate benefits on mental health; moderators include population and writing style.
 - Writing across psychotherapies review (2021) — expressive writing is a low-contact tool to promote mental health.
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C. Popular Science & Blogs

- [Psychology Today: Emotional Suppression and Mental Health](#) — Multiple articles explaining harms of suppression and strategies to process emotions.
- [Verywell Mind: Journaling for Anxiety & Stress](#) — Guides on journaling techniques and benefits.
- [APA Blog: Expressive Writing Research](#) — Accessible interviews and summaries of expressive writing studies.

D. News Coverage / Trends

- Mainstream media highlight young people struggling to express emotions in modern digital life.
 - Public health reports indicate increased mental health needs in young adults.
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E. Implications for Dear Dairy

- **Feature Ideas:**
 - Guided expressive writing prompts
 - Positive-affect journaling (gratitude/benefit-finding)
 - Targeted interventions for minority/ stigmatized groups
 - Habit-tracking for emotional expression
 - **Metrics to Collect:**
 - Frequency of journaling
 - Prompt types used
 - Self-rated emotional burden before/after journaling
 - PHQ-2/GAD-2 style screeners
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This summary includes links to peer-reviewed papers, accessible science articles, and blogs for user-facing content and evidence-based design of the Dear Dairy app.