**Expressive Life Writing and Telling During Crisis: Addressing Urgent Needs in the Akkar Governorate, Lebanon: Questionnaire uses and results**

**This research project, working with two NGOs in Lebanon, necessitated the design and implementation of several styles of questionnaire and data-gathering.**

Two are presented here as an example of action in practice, addressing the challenges of working during a multiple crisis in Lebanon (Covid, lockdown, lack of electricity, lack of petrol, uncertainty, and insecurity) as well as showing the headline results.

Expressive Writing and Telling During Crisis Surveys:

**Questionnaire One: Post Joint Analysis Workshop (JAW)**

This survey was designed to take less than five minutes to complete and was for NGO staff who had used Expressive Writing and Telling techniques with 10+ people or families, during crisis. This was the pilot to test whether the ‘in crisis’ curriculum was fit for purpose.

A link to use this questionnaire as a template can be found on [Forms](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=VdQuDq-WAEG-06jl_ZgWhayWjshnUCFBoJugN1pZWLNUQThERUdJTVBZV0M3V00wN1VKOVhGOU4zVS4u&sharetoken=zlUMvRI5YiC4w1ivrlZQ). The template also provides these questions in Arabic.

1. How many individuals did you have contact with directly to offer this psychological support during COVID-19?
2. Do you think that beyond the individuals you had direct contact with, you had wider reach? For example, with an individual's family and friends? If yes, can you explain how, and how many others?
3. How did you make contact?

* Phone call/ mobile call
* WhatsApp
* Zoom
* Messenger
* Email
* Telegram
* MS Teams
* Twitter
* Facebook
* Social Media – other
* Other

1. How well did your method of communication (see question 3) work? For example, connection or accessibility. 5 stars being very good, 1 star being very bad.
2. What can we learn from your experience with this technology?
3. What kind of connection do you have available to you?

* Broadband/ WiFi at home
* Mobile phone data: Pay Monthly contract
* Mobile phone data: pre-pay/ top-up card
* In workplace

1. When doing this work in the COVID-19 crisis (and during the ongoing economic/ political crisis) what were the main challenges?
2. When using Expressive Telling, how did you begin? Did you use Intentional Listening?
3. What Expressive Telling techniques did you use or adapt? How did you adapt them?
4. What techniques worked for you, and why, do you think?
5. Were there any techniques that you used that were less successful? If yes, why do you think this was the case?
6. Do you think that if we work together, we can develop ways to use the Expressive Telling techniques in COVID-19 with:

* Those who have been exposed to this by you already when in person
* Those with whom you have not used Expressive Telling before
* Both

1. Your Ideas! With your experience, what parts of the Expressive Writing and Telling curriculum could be adapted for crisis and what are your ideas for using this during COVID-19 or other crises?

Rationale:

This questionnaire was developed to ascertain the ways in which participants had adapted the creative and expressive writing methodology to different modalities of working during the early period of the COVID-19 crisis.

The questions enabled the researchers to understand the particularities of the situation in Lebanon during both the pandemic and socio-economic crisis, and to consider which would be the most effective, ethical, and cost-effective mode of working in crisis.

Results:

Despite the questionnaire being designed to only take five minutes to complete, the average time taken was 44.33 minutes. Due to the ongoing issues with power supply and data connectivity during the period in which the survey was sent out (February 2021), this may have been a factor in the length of time take to complete. There may have also been an issue with the choice of platform – MS Teams. Did this take too long to load, and would a word document have been easier to use? The team undertook to review their methods.

For question 3- ‘how did you make contact’ respondents used mobile phone/ phone call and WhatsApp. No other provider was used. These methods of communication received an average rating of 4.33 out of 5 in terms of connectivity and accessibility. Two thirds of those surveyed only had access to data and phone coverage via pre-pay or top-up services, and only one respondent had broadband or WiFi at home.

Respondents believed that Expressive Telling (ET) techniques would be useful during crisis (COVID-19) and respondents universally agreed that ET could be used with people with or without prior experience of the method.

**Questionnaire Two: as part of asynchronous Joint Analysis Workshop (JAW)**

The second JAW of this project had to be held online and in an asynchronous fashion due to the unreliability of electricity supply in Akkar as well as the unreliability of internet connection.

This survey was designed to take less than five minutes to complete and was for NGO staff who had used Expressive Writing and Telling techniques with further families and groups as well as individuals, up to between three and five months after the initial pilot. AND estimate the reach to be between 60 and 70 people.

A link to use this questionnaire as a template can be found on Forms in [English](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=VdQuDq-WAEG-06jl_ZgWhayWjshnUCFBoJugN1pZWLNUNU5BUURJM0dSM01QN0NKSTBaS1FOQUY2Ry4u&sharetoken=pZtlUUqyY9mW6YKlYwm1) and in [Arabic](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ShareFormPage.aspx?id=VdQuDq-WAEG-06jl_ZgWhayWjshnUCFBoJugN1pZWLNURDJHVUZFTFc5NkwwN0hCVTI4MDBXQVJWTS4u&sharetoken=6vyUsPbHNfjRuXtJh4Jc).

Questions:

1. During the last three months, how did you use Expressive Telling?

Online

Phone/ Mobile

WhatsApp

Other

1. If other, how?
2. How many individuals did you reach?
3. Did you use Expressive Telling or Expressive Writing**in** **person**, with clients over the last three months?

Expressive Telling

Expressive Writing

1. How many individuals did you reach?
2. If you used both methods, which did you feel worked best, and why?
3. If you used one or other method, could you say what were the advantages, and what were the challenges?
4. We know that crisis can change working methods. Have you had to change the ways you use Expressive Telling and Expressive Writing?  If so, please describe how you adapted these methods.
5. Working during crisis can be very difficult, particularly working in a role such as yours. What did you find were the major challenges for yourself as a person at work?
6. Did the challenges of working in crisis affect you at home, or in your personal life? Did it effect your mental wellbeing? If you feel comfortable, please tell us about those.
7. In that context, we have developed (in collaboration with AND) the **Expressive Writing Toolkit for Frontline Workers and Human Rights Defenders Working in Crisis*.***Please tell us if you have had a copy, and if so, please tell us if you think the exercises work well, or if you would like to see any changes.
8. If we could arrange a workshop for your own wellbeing using Expressive Writing, would you be interested in attending (online, or in person)?

Yes – online

Yes – in person

No

Rationale:

This questionnaire was free-form and included sections in which participants could provide the researchers with opinions on the methodology and its usage. The first question regarding modes of contact is much reduced, due to answers from the previous questionnaire which suggested social media was generally not used for contacting clients (q3). From answers provided in the first JAW regarding ethics, risk, and client safety during the process, questions were added about practitioner wellbeing (q9 & 10). Due to the increasing need for virtual or telephone sessions, questions were asked about the use of Expressive Telling (verbal) rather than Expressive Writing (q4).

Results:

Participants completed the questionnaire much more quickly, averaging around 10.13 mins despite the majority of the questions being free form. As with the responses to the JAW One questionnaire, mobile phone and WhatsApp were the preferred methods of communication with clients. It is apparent from the answers during lockdown in Lebanon that there are particular challenges for female clients. Access to what is usually a shared mobile phone cannot be guaranteed so making appointments is difficult to clients. They may also have to pretend they are speaking to a friend, instead of a caseworker. The team established ways to allow this to happen with a second open screen available to switch to easily if someone interrupted. The wifi connectivity itself also proved a challenge and the insecurity of clients is evident in the new trust-building measures that AND case workers had to develop. AND report that EWT techniques enabled the establishment of trust as case workers would expressively speak about their own situations in Covid, as a preamble to the work with the client. Results here show too that the types of trauma experienced are changing (queuing for petrol, fear of fights at the depots, lack of medicines and of medical help at the clinics, inability to travel to work or to seek aid due to lack of petrol). The case workers opined that the curriculum needs to adapt to be able to assist with the mitigation of these, and part of the next phase of the project was to do this, resulting later in a self-care curriculum for social workers themselves as well as a GBV training program for the use of EWT with women in particular situations.