

ALTERNATIVE OPENINGS TO AN ARTICLE ABOUT THE USE OF LETTER WRITING BY THERAPY PATIENTS

Since the time of the Pony Express, people in this country have been writing letters as a way of staying in touch. However, recently, a small number of therapists have begun putting pen to paper with a more specific focus in mind. Each of these opening sentences provides an interesting entry into a discussion of this topic, but they launch the discussion in different directions, creating different expectations among readers. Thus, neither is better or worse; the author needs to choose an opening appropriate to the intended "so what" of the article.

1. Therapists have been writing letters to clients for years, but only recently have they recognized the interventive or therapeutic possibilities of doing so.
2. The therapeutic value of *talking* to clients has been widely acknowledged since the time of Freud, but few therapists have recognized the potential therapeutic benefits of *writing* to them.
3. Therapists commonly suggest to clients that they write letters: letters of reconciliation to estranged family members; letters of accusation or forgiveness to abusers; letters of confession to those they have abused. But few therapists have considered the therapeutic possibilities of clients *receiving* letters, specifically, of their receiving letters written by their therapists.