

# Writing a fundraising blog for Mind

These guidelines explain what we're looking for from fundraising blogs.

Thank you so much for not only raising money for us, but for wanting to share your story too!

We believe that everyone experiencing a mental health problem deserves both support and respect. Blogging can be a vital part of that, as personal stories show people they're not alone.

Reading or watching a piece about an experience we didn't know about can also open up our eyes, give us a unique insight and motivate us.

By sharing your fundraising story you can inspire others to fundraise and take part in a life-changing experience, just like you.

## Before you get started

- Check if you're feeling well enough to tell your story. If you're not sure you feel up to it yet, or need to talk to someone right now, visit our helplines page or the 'I need urgent help' section.
- Read our guidelines and tips for writing (they're below)
- Be aware that your blog must be a story written from personal experience and that we don't publish poetry or creative writing
- Be aware that we may say that your blog isn't suitable if you don't have personal experience of mental health problems (this can include supporting friends and family). This is because our blogs are there to give a voice to people with lived experience of mental health problems.
- Be prepared to have your blog tweaked slightly after you've sent it to us. This is usually just for length, spelling, grammar and style.
- Know you don't have to use your real name if you don't want to. We understand some people haven't told their friends, family or employer about their mental health problem and aren't yet ready to. You're welcome to use a pseudonym if you wish – just let us know.

## Planning your blog

Before you start writing, take some time to think about the journey you've been on, what people are going to find most interesting and how you can get your point

across.

1. **What do you want to focus on?** If you're writing about running a marathon, for example, resist the temptation to cover every minute of the run. This will be far too much for one blog. It's usually much more effective to **focus on shorter, defined periods in a longer journey** (more on that in a bit).

- o [Heather](#), for example, wrote about how her guests reacted to her Mind wedding favours:

There is still a lot of stigma around mental health so we hoped that if our guests saw how open we were with it, that it would get them talking about mental health. We chose Mind pin badges as our wedding favours and attached them to a card to let them know a donation had been made on their behalf. By the end of the meal it was lovely to see guests wearing their badges and we received numerous comments on what a thoughtful idea it was.

2. **Describe particular moments** and how they made you feel. Sometimes **little moments** can help readers to understand your point and how things were/are for you. Think about the moment when you decided to start fundraising. What gave you that idea?

- o [Imani](#), for example, describes the moment she decided to run every day for a month:

'This will be my year,' I thought. My body had virtually packed in from the energy zapping effects of my regular anxiety medication. I knew I wanted to change things as my body image was poor and my confidence low. I had my vague plan of becoming fitter and more active, but then a post caught my eye on my Facebook feed. It was about R.E.D January (Run Every Day January) – a challenge to run or move your body every day in January to raise money for Mind. "This is perfect!" I thought. This is some mystical sign from the universe saying I need to do this!

- o [Nicola](#) tells us how she ended up skydiving for Mind, even though she's scared of heights:

When I turned 40 in 2014 I decided to see challenges as opportunities for experiences. And to say yes to things I would previously turn down flat. So when my sister publicly challenged me on Facebook to do this I knew I would eventually agree.

3. **Try not to shy away from the difficult bits** – these are the experiences that make your story real and interesting. Without them, there is no story!

Do you have personal experience of a mental health problem? Have you supported a family member or a friend?

How did you get through the tough times on the trek or cope with memories your Crafternoon brought up for you? (If you find these bits too painful to write about, perhaps put the blog to one side until you feel more able to work on it – put your wellbeing first.)

4. **Have you come on a journey?** How were things for you before the event, compared to how they are now? Do you feel you have changed at all, because of it? Was it the first time you'd taken part in something like that? Are you planning more events in the future?
5. **Do you have any tips or advice you'd like to share?** What would you say to someone going through a similar experience? Has Mind ever helped you or your friends or family? If so what difference did this make? Even if you haven't used any of Mind's services directly, have a look at Mind's current campaigns. Is there a campaign that you feel particularly strongly about because of your own experience?

## Writing tips

### Style

We find that blogs work best when the style is informal and conversational. Here are some tips:

- **Write as if you were talking.** Picture someone you'd like to tell your story to and imagine telling it to them in person as you write.
- **Be yourself.** Don't feel you need to be 'a writer' – just be you! Let your personality come through in your writing (writing as if you were talking will help with this).
- **Use short words** instead of long words where possible, for example 'try' instead of 'endeavour'.
- **Use short sentences and short paragraphs.**

### Structure

- **Think about your opening sentence.** What can you say that will have an impact on your readers and get them interested straight away? This doesn't mean you need to say something shocking, it could be something simple and honest.
- **Think about the events in your story and build your story around these.** Stay focused and keep it simple – make it easy for your reader to understand what's going on. Avoid repeating yourself.
- **Once you've finished, try to read through your blog/story from the perspective of one of your readers.** Will it make sense to them? Is it focused? Edit it to make any changes/improvements you think are needed. Most writers say that editing their story down to size is most difficult – but also the most useful – part of the process.
- **Aim for your blog to be between 500 and 1,000 words in length.**

## What we can't publish

### Opinion pieces

We don't often publish opinion pieces from guest bloggers, e.g. views on a mental health or political issues, because we find these are **best covered by our campaigns team**. However, if you have a personal story which relates to our current campaigns, we would love to hear from you.

### Triggering descriptions of suicide or self-harm

- When talking about these, it's important to focus on feelings, not behaviours
- Avoid giving detailed descriptions or talking about methods
- Read more about why this is important

### Blogs that have been posted somewhere else

We don't use previously-published material. However, after publication on the Mind blog, you are welcome to cross-post your story on your own personal blog.

## What we need from you

- One 500 – 1,000 word blog.
- One high resolution headshot. This is so that we can include a high definition photo on the website, Twitter and Facebook. It can be a selfie. (If you don't want to include a photo that's fine too.)
- Any extra high resolution photos that you have taken yourself that will enhance your blog. We can't use copyrighted photos.
- Up to 30 words about you for your bio. We'll add your bio to our website, alongside your blog.
- Any fundraising page links and links to your own blog and social media if you want to share them.

## The blogging process

Once you've sent us your blog (and extras) we will usually edit your final blog for clarity, plain English and web usability. We make changes to nearly all blogs so they fit our house style. When we edit your post, we will provide links to our own information and remove any which are promoting or advertising commercial companies.

We'll then send you blog back to you to approve. We won't publish anything that you haven't approved and you can make changes at any stage.

Once you're happy with it we'll let you know when it'll be published and shared on social media. Sometimes the original date can change if something urgent comes up, like a big news announcement. We'll always let you know if it does change.

And that's it! You're a published blogger.

## Other information

### Comments

A blog post starts a conversation and invites others to comment and share their own experiences. Please remember to **be courteous to your commenters**, and to assume that their questions are asked in good faith. All comments are moderated, but if you have any concerns about them, don't hesitate to [contact us](#).

### Legal points

By submitting a post for publication on Mind's blog, you are confirming that the rights to any materials used are yours, and that any sources are credited as necessary.

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