

3<sup>rd</sup> International Conference on

# PEDIATRIC NURSING AND HEALTHCARE

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# PERINATAL NURSING AND ADOLESCENT PSYCHIATRY

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## **The imagine project: Helping kids and teens cope with difficult life circumstances using a standardized expressive writing tool**

**Dianne Maroney**

The Imagine Project Inc., USA

At least half of all children under the age of 17 have experienced one or more traumatic experiences. Trauma, stress and/or milder challenging life experiences in children causes difficulty concentrating, fears, aggression, lack of self-confidence and school problems. For 20 years, the beneficial effects of writing about stressful or traumatic events have been demonstrated. Outcomes for children, adolescents and adults after an expressive writing exercise have measured increased GPA, decreased dropout rates, self-reported positive emotional health outcomes, physiologic changes such as positive cortisol shifts and improved outcomes for health conditions. Such outcomes have rivaled the power of drug studies. The author's observation of both child and adult patients indicate greater improvement when this standardized expressive writing program is used. The structure that emerged was drawn from both empirical cases and from the great body of literature on expressive writing as a therapy. This standardized method has been applied to thousands of students across the United States. It is a process that can be replicated in a variety of settings where children who have experienced trauma or difficult life experiences reside. In schools, it can be used as part of a writing curriculum, social science or psychology class, after-school groups and/or by counselors. This process can also be given to parents to use with their children at home.

### **Biography**

Dianne Maroney is a Clinical Nurse Specialist in Psychiatric/Mental Health Nursing. She is the founder of The Imagine Project, Inc., a nonprofit organization that helps kids and overcome challenging life circumstances through expressive writing. Dianne is an international speaker and author of several books including her most recent, *The Imagine Project: Empowering Kids to Rise Above Drama, Trauma and Stress* (Yampa Valley Publishing, 2018). She is a thought leader in stress and trauma in children. Her simple, yet profound 7-step writing tool, now used by schools across the US, gives kids and teens the opportunity to rewrite a challenging personal story and Imagine new possibilities in its place.

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### **Notes:**