



# HEALTH AWARENESS

## Bloggers Key In On Health Benefits

(NAPSA)—You might already know that the pen is mightier than the sword, but have you heard that blogging could help you fight off bad health?

Studies show that expressive writing—the type often found in the blogosphere—has therapeutic effects ranging from improved memory and sleep to boosted immune cell activity and improved healing after surgery.

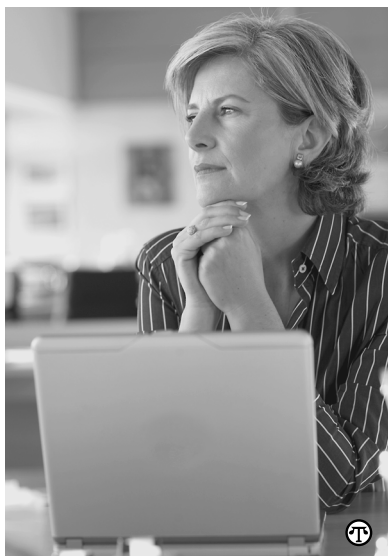
James Baker, a masters student at Swinburne University of Technology who studies the benefits of blogging, even concluded that “the connections they [bloggers] made online had a clear spin-off to the satisfaction they had in their outside life.”

It’s a fact not lost on Sona Mehring, who created a Web site in 1997 to keep friends and family updated during a loved one’s health crisis. Today, more than 20 million families each year use that service to connect during a loved one’s illness, making it the third largest nonprofit Web site in the world behind AARP.org and MoveOn.org.

The site, called Caring Bridge.org, lets users who are going through a health crisis create a private online journal for friends and family to read. The entries help loved ones better understand the writer’s situation and ensure that everyone has accurate information.

The site also gives readers a place to show support, in the form of a guestbook, while providing a much-needed chance for the bloggers to express themselves during difficult times.

“The benefits to users range from the social support they



**Studies show blogging during a sickness could be good for your health.**

receive online to the fact that their CaringBridge sites can provide a detailed documentation of their journey—including their medical procedures, improvements and setbacks, along with their feelings and thoughts, which they can refer to at later dates,” explains Mehring.

The site can also cut down the number of phone calls or e-mails that need to be exchanged for family and friends to stay in touch with a sick loved one on a daily basis.

So are the benefits truly therapeutic? At least one survey suggests they are. It found that over 90 percent of patients using the site said it helped them in their actual healing process.

For more information, visit [www.caringbridge.org](http://www.caringbridge.org).