



Exercise: Worry time

Goal

Rather than worrying about things throughout the day, learn to set aside a specific time of the day to worry about everything that is troubling you.

Instructions

For a period of one week, set aside between 15 and 30 minutes each day to work through your worries. Make sure that your worry time is not too close to your bedtime.

As anxious thoughts arise during the day or at night, write them down on a piece of paper. Resist the urge to think about your worries at that moment. Save them instead until your worry time.

Spend your worry time addressing each of the worries that has troubled you in the previous 24 hours. You can develop your own technique or use the questions below to guide you:

- What if the issue is not resolved?
- What happens then?
- What does that mean to me? What does it tell me about the situation?

Text boxes for writing down your answers are provided on the following page.

Example

Worry: "I will never get to sleep".

What if the issue is not resolved?: "I will not get my work done or I will not perform as well as I should and will be told off."

What happens then?: "I will no longer be considered a good employee."

What does that mean to me and what does it tell me about the situation?: "I value good sleep and I value my work, and I am a conscientious person. I can be a little black and white in my thinking."

What worries should I try to accept?: "I will try to accept the fact that I cannot fully control whether or not I get a good night's sleep."



Worry

Further reflection

After at least three days of recording your worries, you can also consider the questions below.

- What are the benefits and disadvantages of worry time?
- Has postponing your worries until worry time been easier or harder than you imagined?
- How effective has the technique been in stopping you from worrying all the time?