

What Next?

This booklet is based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). This aims to identify unhelpful thinking patterns and behaviours. It also looks at how to change them to help you feel better in your body and mood. Research has shown that CBT can help to manage symptoms and problems that cause anxiety and keep it going.

The rest of this booklet concentrates on how you can recognise and then challenge your anxious thoughts. So that you can:



See it



Treat it



Beat it

Try each of the techniques to see which ones work for you. They are designed to help you take back control over your thoughts. You will need to make time to practise the techniques to start to feel better.

And, try to remember:

Just because you think it, doesn't make it true.

Thought Diary

A thought diary can help you to recognise what you are thinking. There is an example of one over the page.

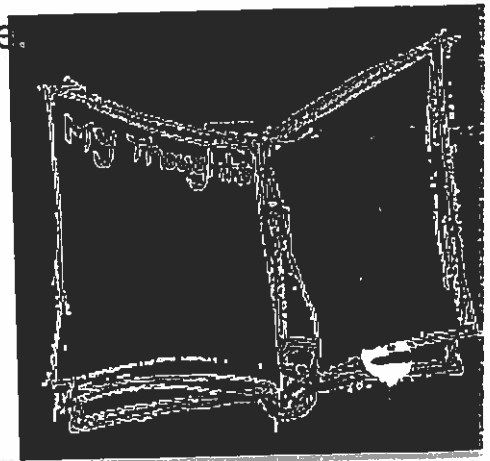
Once you have filled in your thought diary, you will be more aware of what your thoughts are and how they affect you. Next, you need to see if those thoughts are unhelpful. Then you can start to challenge them.

Complete the table on the next page. Rate how worried or stressed you felt at the time on a scale of 0 to 10.

0 = absolutely calm and

10 = the most stressed/worried you could ever be.

There is a blank copy of the diary sheet available to download from mhim.org.uk



Thought Diary

Date & Time	What happened	What I was thinking	My emotions	How my body felt	Stress rating 0-10
29/02/12 4pm	I have been asked to go to a friend's birthday party	"I won't know anyone there" "No one will talk to me" "I'll say something to upset someone"	anxious overwhelmed nervous	hot heart racing breathing faster	7



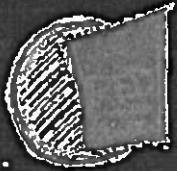
Treat it?

There are many options for treating anxiety. This booklet focuses on what you can do to help yourself. Your thoughts are messages from your brain. They are often random and automatic. This means that they will pop into your head whether you like it or not. You might not be able to control what thoughts you have, but you can choose how to react to them.

When they happen, you can learn to do one of the four Ds:



Demand evidence



Dismiss the thought



Distract yourself



Do something about it

The 'Do something' option could also include getting professional support. This could be through your doctor or other services. There are more details about these options near the end of this section.



Demand Evidence

Many of your upsetting thoughts are untrue and you can learn to challenge them. If you can catch the unhelpful thought and challenge it, you can start to see how true it is.

Take the example of Chris, who was invited to a party. Chris' thoughts were

- "I won't know anyone there"
- "No one will talk to me"
- "I can't cope"

By challenging those thoughts and replacing them with balanced ones, Chris can start to feel less anxious.

Over the page are a set of questions to help challenge thoughts. You can see how Chris has used the questions to challenge his unhelpful thinking.

Use the set of questions to start to challenge your thoughts. You can download a blank version from mhim.org.uk

Thought Challenging Questions

Unhelpful Thought
"I won't know anyone there"
"No one will talk to me"

Challenging Thoughts: What is the evidence?

I haven't been to a party for a while, so I'm not sure what would happen

What type of unhelpful thinking am I making?

Expecting the worst and Fortune telling

What different views are there?

What would someone else think?

My friends are all looking forward to seeing each other

What advice would I give to a friend?

I'd suggest that they could meet up with someone before they go

What effect does this thinking have?

Does it help or make things worse?

It is making me feel worse

What action can I take?

What could I do to change things?

Am I ruling anything out?

I could phone a friend and arrange to meet them before the party

Helpful / Balanced Thought

I'm going to be okay. I will have someone to talk to when I'm at the party and I know some of my other friends will be there.

unhelpful thinking styles

catastrophising

When a person experiences an unhelpful emotion (eg, depression or anxiety), it is usually preceded by a number of unhelpful self-statements and thoughts. Often there is a pattern to such thoughts and we call these, "unhelpful thinking styles". One of the things we have noticed is that people use unhelpful thinking styles as an automatic habit. It is something that happens out of our awareness. However, when a person consistently and constantly uses some of these styles of thinking, they can often cause themselves a great deal of emotional distress. One of these thinking styles is called "catastrophising".

catastrophising

When someone says "you're blowing things out of proportion", or "you're making a mountain out of a molehill", chances are the person is catastrophising. This style of automatic thinking often begins with the following phrases; "What if !!!" or "Oh no! ..."

Let's try some examples.

"What if I blush in front of people and they realise I am anxious!"

"Oh no! I have a chest pain! I might be having a heart attack"

"What if I disagree with my partner on this I will lose an important relationship!"

"I feel depressed this morning...what if I will stay depressed?"



All of these examples get at the essence of this unhelpful thinking style - that the person views the situation as terrible, awful, dreadful and horrible. Sometimes unhelpful thoughts will also include other unhelpful thinking styles – notice, for example, the appearance of a bit of overprediction and a bit of jumping to conclusions, as well as catastrophising.

Let's look at this final example. Have you ever submitted a project, perhaps at work, and then realised that you'd made a small error? You might think "I can't believe I made that mistake. This is going to be a poor submission I'm going to lose the account and probably lose my job. I'll probably never find work in this city again!" What do you think it would be like for someone with this style of thinking? Even though the reality is that the problem itself is quite small, when we catastrophise, things can get very big very quickly, and we can work ourselves up to a point where it all seems beyond our control.

Can you think of a situation where you have used this thinking style?

Briefly describe the situation.	What were the thoughts that went through your mind?	What feelings did you experience consequent to your thinking?

Decatastrophizing

What is the catastrophe that I am worried about?

Clearly state: What am I worried will happen? What am I predicting will happen?

Change any "what if...?" statements into clear predictions about what you fear will happen

Rate how awful you believe this catastrophe will be (0-100%)

How *likely* is this event to happen?

Has anything this bad ever happened to you before?

How often does this kind of thing happen to you?

Realistically, is this likely to happen now?

How *awful* would it be if this did happen?

What is the worst case scenario?

What is the best case scenario?

What would a friend say to me about my worry?

Just supposing the worst did happen, what would I do to *cope*?

Has anything similar happened before? How did I cope then?

Who or what could I call on to help me get through it?

What resources, skills, or abilities would be helpful to me if it did happen?

What positive & reassuring thing do you want to say to yourself about the 'catastrophe' now?

What would I like to hear to reassure me?

What tone of voice would I want to hear that reassurance in?

Rate how awful you believe this catastrophe will be now (0-100%)

What Is Rumination?

Rumination is:

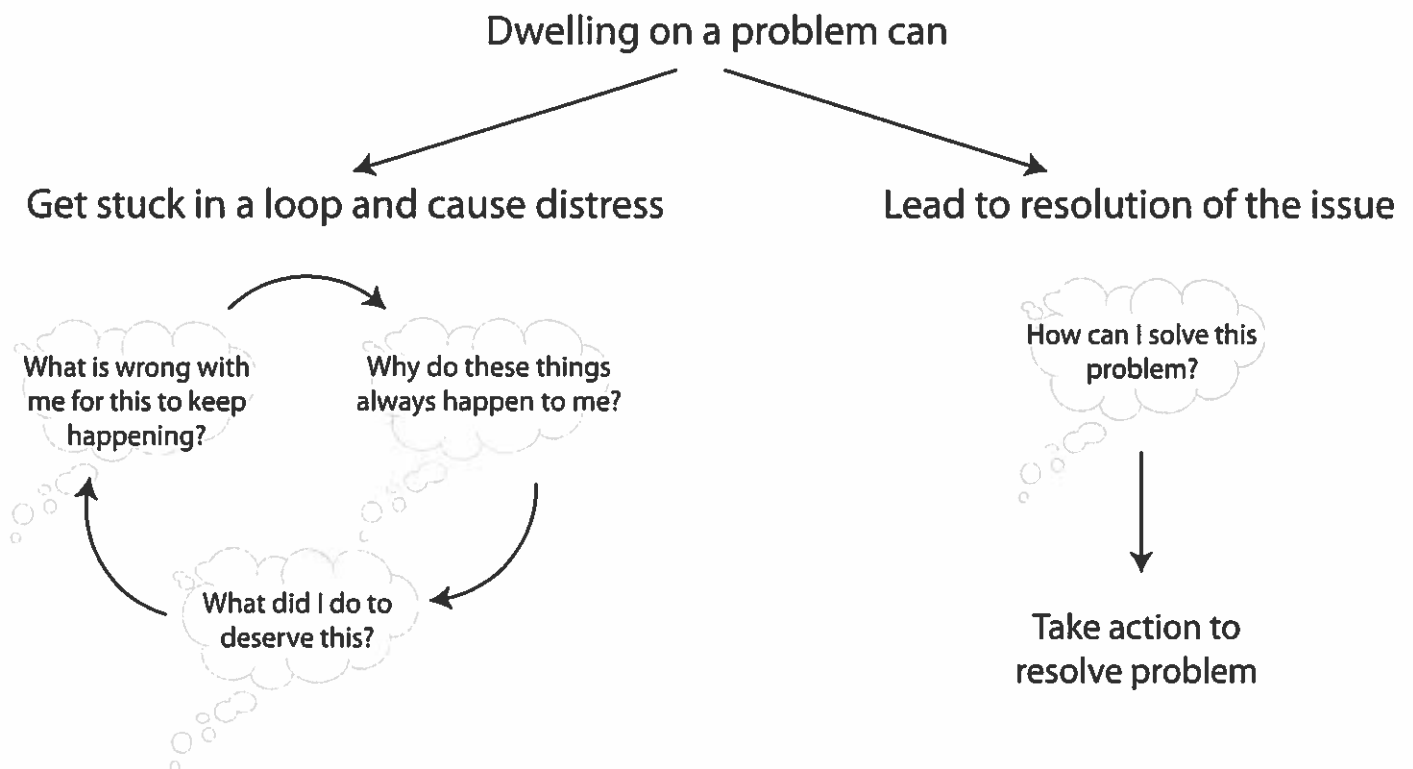
- dwelling on difficulties and things which distress us
- repeatedly thinking about events from our past
- becoming preoccupied with something and not being able to get it out of your mind
- a learnt strategy for trying to deal with our problems

Is rumination normal?

- Yes, to some extent everyone ruminates or dwells on their problems
- Thinking about our problems can be helpful: especially if we reach a solution and put it into action
- Most of the time, and for most people, rumination is time-limited: it stops when the problem is solved
- Although rumination is normal, excessive use of it can become problematic

What are the problems with rumination?

- Unhelpful rumination tends to focus on causes and consequences instead of solutions
"What did I do to deserve this" and "Will my life ever get better?" instead of "How can I make my life better?"
- Rumination tends to focus on what has gone wrong and can lead to negative thinking
- When used excessively, rumination can lead to depression
- When used excessively, rumination can maintain an episode of depression
- Unhelpful rumination can lead to inactivity and avoidance of problem-solving



Unhelpful rumination

Unhelpful rumination asks more *"why ... ?"* questions (this is sometimes called the 'evaluative mode' because these questions evaluate the meaning of events or situations)

"Why ... ?" questions tend to focus on the problem, its causes, and its consequences

"Why am I in this situation?"

"What if it never gets better?"

"What did I do to deserve this?"

Helpful rumination

Helpful rumination asks more *"how ... ?"* questions (this is sometimes called the 'process-focused-mode' because these questions focus on the process of how events and situations happen)

"How ... ?" questions tend to focus on solving problems

"How can I get out of this situation?"

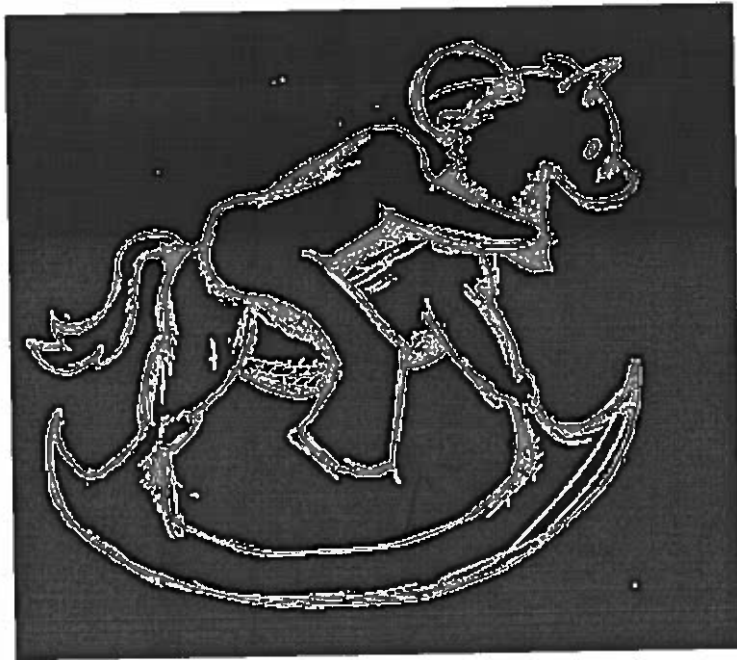
"What can I do to make this better?"



Dismiss the thought

Although worry can be useful at times, sometimes it can get in the way. The physical effects of worry take up a lot of the body's energy. It can wear you out and make you feel ill.

Worry is like a rocking horse:



**It keeps you going,
wears you out
and gets you nowhere.**

Is it worth worrying about?

There are four things that are not worth worrying about but that account for a lot of our worries: the unimportant, the unlikely, the uncertain and the uncontrollable. Ban these from your life, and you will worry less.

The Unimportant

It is easy to fill your life with worries about little things. When you find yourself worrying, start to question yourself instead. Ask yourself, "How important is the thing that I am worrying about?"

Here are three points to help you answer this question.

1. **The 5 year rule.** Ask yourself "will this matter in 5 years time?" This is a way of looking at your worry from a long-term point of view. View your worries in different ways: will this still be a concern in a week, a month, a year?
2. **The measuring rod.** Ask yourself: "Where, on a scale of bad experiences, is the thing I'm worried about?" Think about a very bad experience you have had. How does your current worry feel when compared with this.
3. **The calculator.** Ask yourself. "How much worry is this worth?" We only have a certain amount of time and energy. Make sure you do not spend more worry on your problem than it is worth. You need your time and energy for more important things. Maybe some time you would have spent worrying could be used for **doing** something.

When you have thought about these three points, decide if your worry seems unimportant. If so, try to stop worrying and distract yourself by using some of the techniques on page 6. If you still feel your worry is important keep reading.

The Unlikely

A lot of worries ask "What if..." questions. All kinds of terrible things could happen today or tomorrow but most things are very unlikely. If you allow yourself to worry about the unlikely then there will be no end to your worrying. Tackling existing problems is hard enough. Do not waste time, energy and happiness on problems that do not exist.

The Uncertain

Often we do not know how something will turn out. Many things we worry about have not yet happened and we can only take action once we know what has happened. For example, worrying that you may have failed a test or exam is not going to improve the results. It is only once the results are released that you can decide what, if anything, needs to be done.

The Uncontrollable

We have no control over many of the things we worry about. For example, worrying that you are getting older does not change the fact that in a day's time you will be a day older. This will be the case even if you worry as hard as you can.

Dealing with persistent worries

Thinking about the type of worry you have using the exercises above may help you stop worrying. However, some worries are very difficult to get rid of and keep going through your mind. On the next page we will look at further action you can take to deal with those worries.

Stepping through worries

Still worrying? Try these three steps to help deal with the worries. Worries can be divided into two types: those you **can** do something about and those you **can't**.

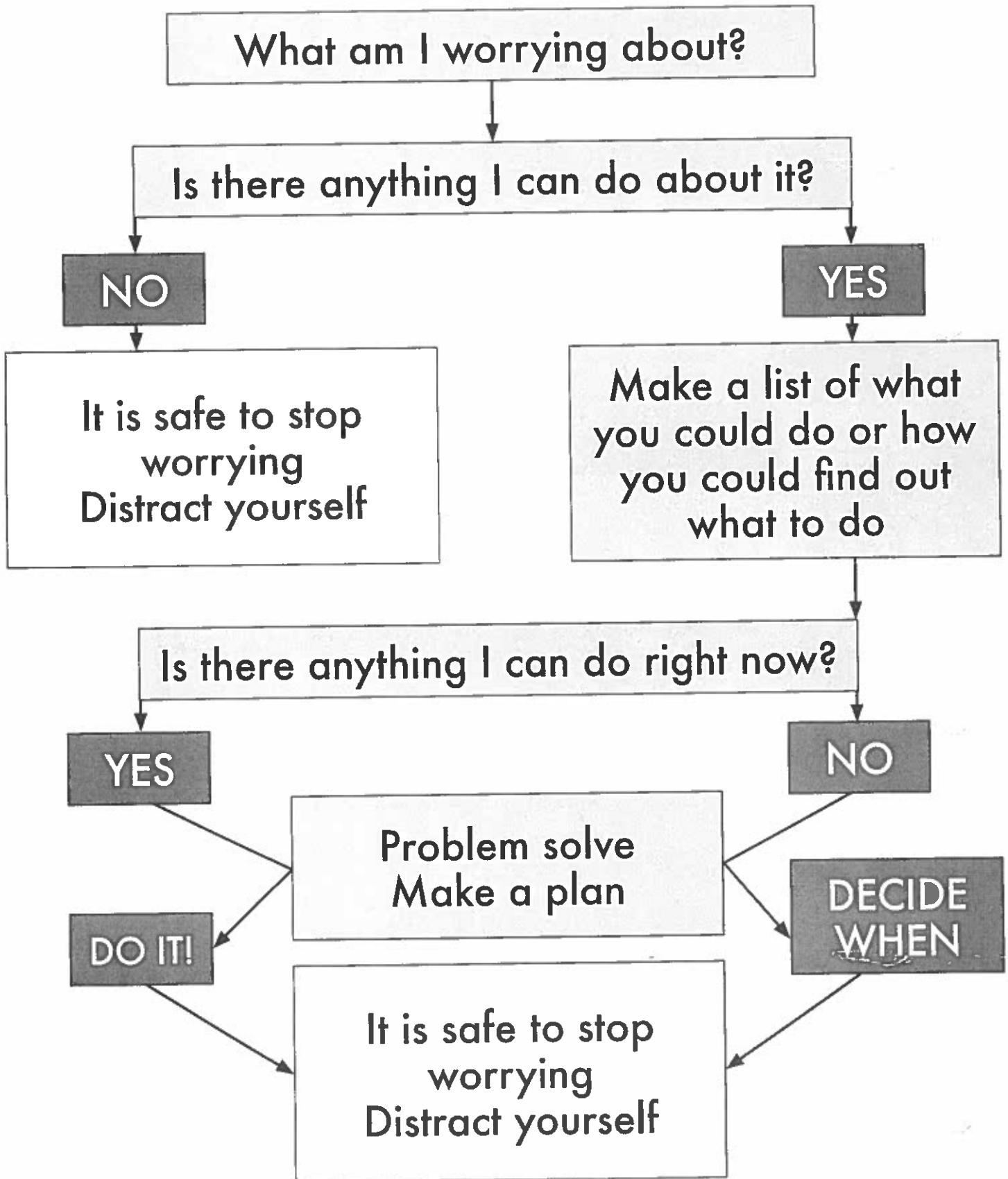
1. Be clear what the worry is.
 - a. Ask yourself "What am I worrying about?"
 - b. Think about each worry and write them down one at a time.
 - c. Try to write down the worries as clearly as you can.

2. Decide if something can be done.
 - a. Look at each worry you have written down and ask yourself, "Is there anything I can do about this?"
 - b. Use the examples on pages 3 and 4 to help you decide. Be honest with yourself when answering. If the answer is no then you can be certain that no matter how much you worry, nothing will change.
 - c. Think it through and try to explain to yourself that there is no point in worrying. Try distraction, there are hints on how to do this on the next page.
 - d. If the answer is yes, something could be done, go to step 3 and think about what it is you could do.

3. Write a list of things you could do to solve your worry.
 - a. Look at your list and ask yourself "Is there anything I could do right now?"
 - b. If there is something you could do right away then **do it**.
 - c. If there is nothing you can do right away then make a plan of **when, where** and **how** you will tackle the problem.
 - d. When you have done what you can, tell yourself that you have done what is needed and continue with your day.

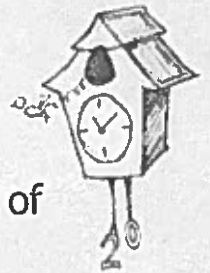
If you would like some extra advice on how to solve problems you can request a booklet called, "How to Solve Problems: A DIY Technique," details on how to get a copy are on the back page of this booklet.

The Worry Tree



Worry Time

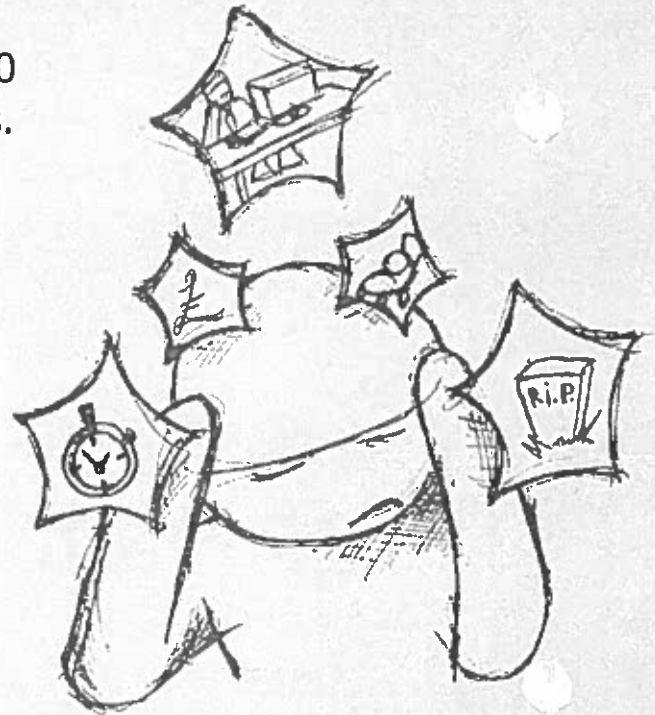
When people are anxious they tend to spend too much time worrying. This means that they find it difficult to relax and allow their bodies and minds rest. If you can reduce the amount of time you spend worrying, you can reduce your levels of anxiety.



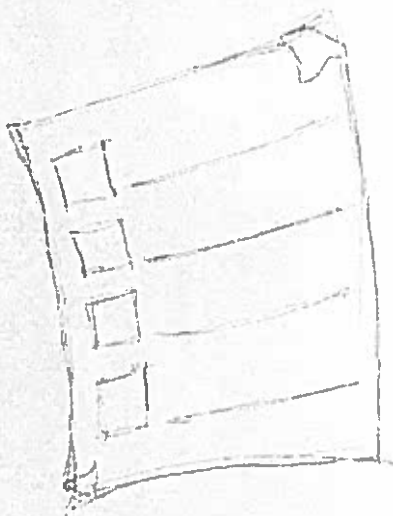
Worry time is when you set aside around 20 minutes every day to focus on your worries.

When a worry pops into your head, write it down and forget about it until your 'worry time'. It is important to write it down so that you will know that you won't forget about it.

When your worry time arrives, you can work through each worry using the techniques in this booklet. Remember to time yourself so that you don't over run.



Here are some top tips for managing 'worry time':



- Stop when your 'worry time' is over. If you have any worries left over, just save them for the next day.
- Don't worry if you find it difficult to stop worrying; it will get easier with time and practise.
- When you sort out your worries before your 'worry time' is over then stop and congratulate yourself.
- Use relaxation techniques to help you de-stress after your 'worry time'. The booklet 'From Distress to De-stress' has lots of information about this.

Problem Solving Worksheet

Step 1	Identify the Problem Break it down into smaller steps and decide what you need to action first
Step 2	Brainstorm and write down as many ideas as you can that might help solve the problem, no matter how silly they seem – don't dismiss any possible solutions.
Step 3	Consider the pros and cons of each possible solution, using a separate piece of paper.
Step 4	Choose one of the possible solutions that looks likely to work, based on the advantages and disadvantages
Step 5	Plan out step-by-step what you need to do to carry out this solution. What? When? How? With whom or what? What could cause problems? How can you get around those problems? Is this realistic and achievable?
Step 6	Do it! Carry out the plan
Step 7	Review how it went. Was it helpful? Did you achieve what you set out to achieve? If not, how could you have done it differently? Did you achieve any progress, however small, towards your goal? What have you learned?
Step 8	If you achieved your goal – consider tackling the next step of your original problem. If you didn't fully achieve your goal – make adjustments to your chosen solution, or return to steps 3 and 4 and choose another possible solution.

THINK !

Ask yourself if your thought is:

TTrue?

Is this thought FACT or opinion?

What IS absolutely true about this situation?

Helpful?

Is this thought helpful to me?

What WOULD be helpful to think right now?

Inspiring or Important?

Does this thought inspire me, or is it very important, right now?

What IS really important to think or do right now?

Necessary?

Do I really need to believe and act on this thought?
Immediately? Later? Never?

What IS necessary to do right now?

Kind?

Is this thought kind to me or others?

What WOULD be a kind thought, right now?

If you answer NO to any of these **THINK** questions, you can:

- Safely dismiss the thought
- React to the thought using the more reasonable (blue/italics) thoughts.

Then choose your new focus of attention.



TOLERATING UNCERTAINTY

When we are anxious, we tend to over-estimate the danger, and the odds, of bad things happening, and we under-estimate our ability to cope if or when those bad things happen. Even if the odds are really small that a bad thing will happen, that tiny chance is enough to really upset us. We call it "intolerance of uncertainty". We might think things like "I just can't cope with not knowing", "I have to be 100% certain", "uncertain events are almost always bad", so "I must prepare for each uncertain event".

The thoughts make us feel anxious, so we try to reduce the uncertainty by worrying about it - by planning and preparing for the possible negative future event. However, although we think worry helps us feel better and helps us feel more in control, it doesn't reduce the risk of the possible negative event happening. Sometimes we even think it would be better if the bad thing happened right now, because that would be better than living with the uncertainty.

We might try to increase certainty by planning and preparing for each worst case scenario, by seeking reassurance from others, by checking and looking things up on the internet, by avoiding certain things, putting things off or making excuses, or we might try to keep busy so that we don't think about the uncertain future.

However, worrying doesn't affect the future outcome, we cannot prevent all bad things from happening and life remains uncertain. By worrying about what MIGHT happen, how does that affect us right now? Worrying seems like the best thing to do, but it only makes us feel worse and makes us less able to cope with real life.

We can deal with uncertainty in two main ways. We can **challenge our need for certainty** by looking at the advantages and disadvantages of needing to be certain and how it affects us. We can explore other areas of our lives in which we do tolerate uncertainty, or look at how other people deal with uncertainty, such as friends or characters in television programmes.

The other way is to learn to **tolerate uncertainty** – to reduce our need for certainty. And we can do this, using the acronym: APPLE

Tolerating Uncertainty with APPLE:

A for AWARE – Notice the need for certainty as it comes up in your mind

P for PAUSE – Don't react as you normally do. Don't react at all. Just pause, and breathe

P for PULL BACK – Tell yourself this is just the worry talking, and this apparent need for uncertainty is not helpful and not necessary

L for LET GO – let go of the thought or feeling about needing certainty. Tell yourself it is only a thought or feeling. *Don't believe everything you think!* Thoughts are not statements of fact. They will pass. You don't have to respond to them. You might imagine them floating away in a bubble or cloud.

E for EXPLORE – you can explore the present moment, because right now, in this moment, we are ok. *Notice your breathing*, and the sensations of breathing. Notice the ground beneath you, look around you and notice what you see, what you hear, what you can touch, what you can smell. Right now. Then *shift your focus of attention* to something else – maybe carry on what you were doing before you noticed the worrying thought, or *do something else* – mindfully, with your full attention.



Resources available from the UOM Counselling Service Website

Go to : <http://www.manchester.ac.uk/counselling/>

Relaxation audio downloads from the Counselling Service Website:

<http://www.counsellingservice.manchester.ac.uk/self-help/>

Drop ins session and workshops available at the Counselling Service

<http://www.counsellingservice.manchester.ac.uk/workshops/>

NHS Self Help Guides - These self help booklets have been written by clinical psychologists with contributions from service users and healthcare staff, including topics such as anxiety, sleep and bereavement. <http://www.selfhelpguides.nth.nhs.uk/manchester/>

Online Self-help Tool

Silvercloud is an online self help tool, free to students and staff of the University. Are you worried, feeling low, stressed out or finding it hard to sleep? If you've answered yes to any of these questions, then think about trying our new Silvercloud online, multimedia programme. It uses clinically proven tools to identify your key problems and offers programmes of activity to help you overcome them.

<http://www.counsellingservice.manchester.ac.uk/silvercloud/#d.en.391669>

Support Services - Here you can find out about the Support Services available to you during your time at University, including the Disability Advisory Support Service, Nightline, the Student Support team and more. <http://www.studentsupport.manchester.ac.uk/taking-care/support-services/>



UOMWellbeing (@ WellbeingUOM)

Follow our [WellbeingUoM](#) twitter account for daily tips to help you take charge of your wellbeing and useful links to interesting wellbeing resources.

Other resources

AnxietyBC <https://www.anxietybc.com/adults/introduction>

AnxietyUK <https://www.anxietyuk.org.uk/>

Useful Apps

You can learn technique to help with your anxiety with the following app, which is available for iPods, iPads and PCs.



- MindShift
- Self help for Anxiety Management
- Stop Panic and Anxiety Self Help
- The Worry Box
- Breathe2Relax
- Pacifica
- Headsapce
- Calm