

Managing Worry: Young Person's Fact Sheet

What is worry?

Worry is a normal emotion that everyone will feel at some point in their lives. It usually involves thinking that something negative is going to happen. This can become a problem when it interferes with everyday life. For example, it might start to negatively impact our social life, academic performance, sleep and mood. This is when we might need some extra help.

The cycle

Our **thoughts**, **feelings** and **behaviours** (what we do) are all linked together and all have an impact on each other. When we are feeling worried, we can get stuck in a cycle of negative or unhelpful thoughts, feelings and behaviours. By using the strategies in this fact sheet, you can break that cycle by making some changes to your thoughts and behaviours so that you start to feel better.

Thoughts

What if I'm late?
What if we get lost?
What if I have no one to sit with?
I haven't seen my friends in ages.
I have so much homework to do.
What if I don't know what to say?

Behaviours

Seek reassurance
Avoid situations
Struggle to sleep
Put things off
Distract myself

Feelings

Anxious
Upset
Nervous
Scared
Shaking
Stomach ache
Overwhelmed
Frustrated
Heart beating fast
Tired

Follow the steps on the next pages to help break the cycle and manage your worry more effectively.

Classify your worries

There are two types of worries: *hypothetical* worries and *practical* worries. It's important to know the difference because we can deal with them in different ways.

hypothetical worries

Hypothetical worries are worries that we don't currently have control over and can't do anything about. These can be overwhelming and tiring.

What if I get lost?

What if it rains?

What if the bus is late?

What if I feel tired in the morning?

What if I get worried?

What if the teacher asks me a question?

practical worries

Practical worries are usually worries about a current situation that we can do something about. It can be easy to put these worries off or try to ignore them all together. However, if we don't do something about practical worries, they can pile up and make us feel overwhelmed.

**I don't have
enough time to
do my
homework**

I have lots of exams coming up

I have to do a presentation

I haven't seen my friends in age

**I've been eating
lots of unhealthy
food**

Worry diary

Keeping a worry diary can help you become more aware of your worries and what type of worry they are.

[illegible]

Worry Time

Worry time gives you time each day to address all of your worries. The more you use worry time, the less your worries will impact you throughout the day.

1 Plan your worry time

It's important to plan in your worry time for the same time each day. This should be a time where you can focus on the worries and not be distracted. Start with a maximum of half an hour each day. As you use worry time more and more, you may notice that you eventually need less than half an hour each day because you get better at dealing with your worries.



2 Catch the worries

As you notice worries during the day, catch them so that you can come back to them later at worry time. You can do this by writing them down, drawing a picture or making a sound recording. You could use a diary, sticky notes, your phone or any other way you can think of to catch the worries as they happen.



3 Refocus your attention

Once you have caught the worry, it's important to focus on something different. Pay attention to whatever it is you're doing at that moment OR do something totally different. You can also refocus by using 5, 4, 3, 2, 1 (see below for more info on this).



4 Worry time

Use worry time to go back and address all of the worries you have caught that day. For each worry decide whether it is a practical worry or hypothetical worry.

- For **practical worries**, use **problem solving**.
- For **hypothetical worries**, **let the worries go**. You can do this by ripping up, scribbling out, deleting or scrumpling up and throwing away the worry.

Some worries might not even be worries anymore! For these, you will learn that a lot of worries may seem big at the time but later they will seem much smaller and manageable.



Let's Do It

My worry time will be at (time):

It will last for (number of minutes):

I will do it with (will anyone help?):

I will catch my worries by (what will you use?):

Top Tip

To refocus your attention, try to take deep breaths and think: 5, 4, 3, 2, 1. Notice 5 things you can see, 4 things you can feel, 3 things you can hear, 2 things you can smell and 1 thing you can taste. This gives you chance to calm down before focusing on a current or new task.

Problem Solving

If you're struggling with a practical worry, use this step by step guide which helps to break the problem down and solve it in a more manageable way.

Practical worries can feel overwhelming and it's easy to put them off.

However, it's much better in the long run to solve the problem now rather than later.

Step 1 Write down your problem in 1 or 2 sentences.

Step 2 Write down all the ideas you can think of to solve the problem (no matter what they are!).

Step 3 Make a table and write down ALL of the good things and ALL of the not so good things you can think of for each of your ideas.

	Good things	Not so good things
Idea 1		
Idea 2		

Step 4 Choose one idea that looks like it could work (if you struggle, see which one has the most good things). Ask yourself, is my idea realistic? If it isn't, choose a different idea.

Step 5 Make a plan! Write down the answers to these questions to create your plan of action!

1) What will you do?

2) When will you do it?

3) How will you do it?

4) Who will you do it with?

5) Could there be any difficulties? If so, what could you do to overcome these?

Step 6 DO IT!

After you've given your idea a go, review it.

Answer the following questions to help you reflect on how it went.

Was it helpful?

Did you achieve what you wanted to?

If not, could you do something differently/change something next time?

Did you achieve anything (no matter how small) towards solving your problem? Even tiny steps forward are big achievements.

What did you learn?

The Worry Tree

The Worry Tree can help break down worry management into simple steps. Start at the top and follow it down to find out the best strategy to use.



Tops tips for managing worry

These tips can help you feel calmer so you're better able to manage your worries. But, **REMEMBER**, don't use these as a way to avoid or put off doing something about your worries as this makes them even more difficult in the long run.

- 1 Create a worry box**
- 2 Tell someone about your worries**
- 3 Go to a yoga class**
- 4 Download a mindfulness app**
- 5 Meditate**
- 6 Spend time with family or friends**
- 7 Draw or create something**
- 8 Go for a walk or jog**
- 9 Take a relaxing bath**

Or, create your own list!