

WORRY & ANXIETY

SESSION 4 COURSE WORKBOOK





BELIEFS ABOUT WORRY

TYPES OF WORRY

Reminder of the different types of worry

Type 1. Current issues, a problem that exists, e.g. no money to pay a bill.

Type 2. Potential “What if” (not happened yet, might never happen) e.g. Plane crash.

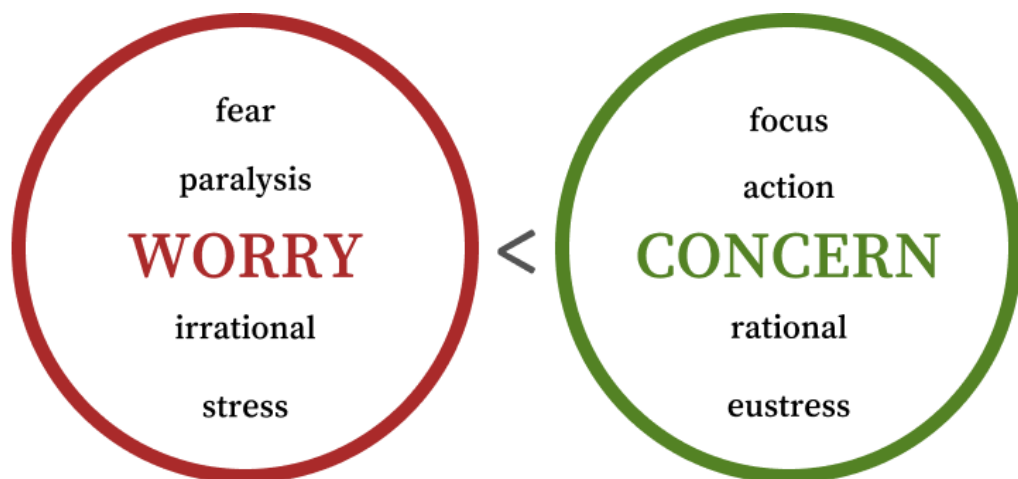
Type 3. Worry about worrying, e.g. “worrying is going to make me ill”

In the previous session we looked at Type 1 worries and used problem solving to help tackle this. We also looked at Type 2 worry, and to help address this type of worry we used the thought challenge technique.

Today we will focus on Type 3 worry and how this type of worrying and beliefs you may hold about worrying form part of the vicious cycle that keep worry in place.

BELIEFS ABOUT WORRY

One of the things that can keep the worry cycle in place is the beliefs we have about worry. We can believe that worrying is helpful to us, which we call positive beliefs, but we can also believe it is harmful which we call negative beliefs. If we examine these beliefs in more detail, we can see if they really are helpful or are they part of the problem that keeps worry going.





TASK 1: POSITIVE BELIEFS

Make a note of anything you think is helpful about worrying:

TASK 2: POSITIVE BELIEFS

Below are some of the reasons you may have for thinking that worrying is helpful. Have a look at each statement and tick if you agree with this and give a personal example if you can;

A. Worrying motivates me to do things and solve problems

Agree Disagree

Personal Example

B. It helps me cope with negative feelings by preparing for the worst in advance 'just in case'

Agree Disagree

Personal Example



C. It stops bad things from happening

Agree Disagree

Personal Example

D. It shows I care

Agree Disagree

Personal Example

E. Any other beliefs that worrying is helpful?



Challenging Positive Beliefs

Read over the evidence for and the evidence against worrying being helpful. This may not completely change your mind that worrying is helpful to you, however you may start to view worrying in a different way now, with the possibility that worrying is not as helpful as you previously thought.

Evidence that <i>supports</i> the belief that worrying is helpful Worrying motivates me to do things and solve problems.	Evidence <i>against</i> the belief that worrying is helpful Taking action is problem solving which is helpful, could you do this without worrying as much.
It helps me cope with negative feelings by preparing for the worst in advance 'just in case'.	<p>If you spend time worrying and preparing for things that never actually happen is this helping you?</p> <p>Would you cope anyway when you have to deal with something?</p> <p>What could you be doing instead of worrying?</p> <p>Review the situations from your worry diary. What was all the imagined negative outcomes? Once the situation has passed compare the actual outcome to your predictions (stick to the facts).</p> <p>Ask yourself: 'If what I worry about is unrealistic and unlikely to happen how can worrying be helpful to me?'</p>
It stops bad things from happening	<p>Is this <i>Magical Thinking</i>?</p> <p>Have there been situations when you have not worried and it's been ok?</p> <p>Has there been times when worrying has made the situation worse?</p>
It shows I care	<p>Do you know people who don't worry as much as you, does this mean they care less?</p> <p>Would your loved ones rather you worried less?</p>



<p>Any other evidence that worry has helped? Do I have solid, reliable evidence that worrying has helped me, how has it helped?</p>	<p>Any other evidence that worry has been <u>unhelpful</u>? What are the disadvantages of worrying, how can it be helpful then?</p>
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NEGATIVE BELIEFS ABOUT WORRY

Type 3 worry ‘worrying is going to make me ill.’

You can also hold beliefs that worrying is unhelpful to you in some way and worry about worrying.

TASK 3: TYPE 3 WORRIES AND NEGATIVE BELIEFS

Tick the statements that apply to you;

I have no control over my worry

Worry will make me lose my mind

Worry will damage my health

It will never stop, worry controls me

I can't focus on anything but my (current) worry

Anything else? (note any other worries you may have about worrying)



CHALLENGING NEGATIVE BELIEFS ABOUT WORRY

Read over the statements and questions below to help gather evidence for and evidence against worrying being helpful. Similar to the process of challenging positive beliefs, this may not completely change your view that worrying is unhelpful to you, however you may start to view worrying in a different way, with the possibility that worrying is not as harmful or uncontrollable as you previously thought.

Evidence FOR negative beliefs	Evidence AGAINST negative beliefs
<i>Worry will make me lose my mind.</i>	<p>Worrying can make you feel anxious and it can be hard to concentrate on things, but have you ever really lost control of your own actions, thoughts, feelings?</p> <p>Have you coped better than you think, did you problem solve, take some actions that helped?</p>
<i>Worry will damage my health.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Worrying thoughts in themselves do not cause damage, it can be the things people do to cope with worry that cause damage, e.g. alcohol, smoking, poor diet, lack of exercise, rest or relaxation, do any these apply to you?• What steps are you taking towards dealing with stress and worry?



<p>I have no control over worrying, it controls me</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have you been suppressing worries rather than addressing things?• Are there times when you have not worried because you have been too busy doing something else?• Does something interrupt your worrying?• Does the worry eventually stop?
<p>Anything else in evidence for?</p>	<p>Anything else in evidence against?</p>



TASK 4: CONTROLLING WORRY

On a scale of 0-10, with 0 meaning 'I have no control' and 10 'I have complete control' how much do you believe that you can control the time you spend worrying?

0.....10

I have no control

I have complete control

POSTPONING WORRY

1. Worry time and postponing your worry...

Worry time involves postponing your worries to your designated worry time. Follow those steps:

- **Create a worry period** e.g. between 5-6 PM every day.
- **Postpone your worry.** Every time you notice your worry, write it down in a few words and postpone it to your worry period. Remind yourself that you will have time to think about it later, no need to worry about it now. You will be in a better position to deal with the worry in the worry period.
- **Turn your focus to the present moment** and the activities of the day to help let go of the worry until the worry period has arrived.
- **If the thought pops back again** (which it likely will), this is not a sign that postponement hasn't worked after all we can't control what pops into our head!

The aim is to stop the engagement with the thought that results in spiralling or snowballing of those thoughts.

- Come back to your worries at the designated worry period.
- When we come back to our worries, we may be able to think more rationally about them or we may no longer need to worry about them as the situation has passed.
- If the issue is solvable use the 8 steps of problem solving.
- If the worry is an anxious prediction, or you are catastrophising or jumping to conclusions, use the worry challenge worksheet to gain a more balanced outlook
- If you decide that your worries cannot be solved by actions and you are struggling to think about them differently say to yourself: 'I don't have to think about that right now. It can wait until I feel stronger. There's nothing I can do about my thoughts, I can't stop them, but I can choose not to focus on them.' You can also try Mindfulness breathing.



After completing the postpone worry exercise for a week re rate how much you believe now that you can control worry on the scale 0-10, with 0 meaning 'I have no control' and 10 'I have complete control'.

0.....10
I have no control **I have complete control**

POSTPONING WORRY EXERCISE

MY WORRY TIME:

Start time	End Time	Place

- Prediction
- What do you think will happen if you postpone worry?

Day	
List of worries during the day	
Outcome: what did you do with the worry? Did you postpone it?	
How much of the time were you able to postpone worry (-100%)?	



ATTENTION TRAINING

During the time you have postponed worry it can help if you can bring your attention back to the present. When people worry, they tend not to focus on what they are doing at that time, instead attention is on the worry and the sense of threat that they may be feeling. For example you could be having a coffee with a friend and they are telling you a funny story, but you are not really paying attention to them, your mind is elsewhere, going over something that you are worried about. You might lose the train of the conversation or miss the humour from their story. When our minds are focused on worries from the past or future we are missing out on the here and now.

With practice you can train yourself to focus more on the present or the task in hand. Think of your attention being like a muscle that you need to exercise.

Don't worry if your mind wanders back to a worry, this is normal, as soon as you notice this has happened bring your focus back to the present.

You can do this by starting to pay more attention to what is going on around you when you are carrying out a mundane task as listed below;

- ✓ Washing the dishes
- ✓ Having a shower
- ✓ Eating a meal
- ✓ Going out for a walk

When you are carrying out the task focus your attention by using as many of your senses as you can

Ask yourself:

- What can I see? The colours, shapes, patterns...
- What can I hear? Close by, further away...
- What can I feel? Temperature around you, is it hot, cold, breezy, what you can feel, e.g. feet on the floor, sitting in the chair...
- What can I smell? Are there any smells around...?
- What can I taste? If eating, the texture of the food...



ATTENTION TRAINING EXERCISE

Try to practice this each day and record your outcomes in the form below

Day of the week...	
Task I am focusing on...	

Attention on worry before exercise (0-100%)	
Attention on task during exercise (0-100%)	
Attention on worry after exercise (0-100)	