

Worry - Thinking Time

Research into worry shows that 85% of the things we continuously worry about don't happen. Of the remaining 15%, only 4% turn out to be as challenging as predicted. Most importantly, the process of continuous worry doesn't change the outcome and can make the situation more difficult to handle. Shifting from worry to problem solving helps to improve the outcome of the things we can influence and reduces unnecessary personal distress.

To undertake this exercise, you first need to set a regular daily time aside as a dedicated worry-thinking time. E.g. 4:30pm (not just before going to bed). Once you have identified your daily worry-thinking time, use the following two-part exercise to capture, suspend and manage worrying thoughts:

Part 1 – Identifying and Suspending My Worry

What is the specific worry?	
What consequences am I predicting?	
What distressing feelings am I experiencing (Rate 0-10)	
What time am I suspending this worry for later consideration? (00:00:00)	

Part 2 – Thinking– Problem Solving Time

What is the hard evidence supporting my predicted worry?	
What is the hard evidence against my predicted worry?	
What is the worst that could happen?	
What is the best that could happen?	
What is the most likely / realistic outcome?	
What are the consequences of worrying about this?	
What is a helpful way of thinking about this; what would I say to a friend?	
Can I trust myself to let go of this worry now?	Yes – Re-rate worry 0-10 No – Continue to next questions
What practical problem solving options are open to me?	
What is the most helpful / effective course of action?	
What, where, who and when?	
How have my thoughts about the initial worry changed?	
How distressing is this issue now? (Re-rate 0-10)	