



### Worry

Worrying can be defined as a series or spiral of thoughts or doubts about things whereby one is uncertain of the outcome; it is “*there and then*” thinking as opposed to “*here and now*” thinking. In effect, people worry about “*Real Events*” or “*Hypothetical Events*”, and although sometimes their excessive worrying occurs for things that don’t happen insofar as the actuality, depth and/or extent of a specific worry, the unpleasant experiences of excessive worrying and its effects do occur and are felt presently. Despite feeling tense, anxious, panicky, stuck, overwhelmed, and/or powerless by excessive worrying, people can find it hard to stop or divert their worrying and can feel demoralised and exhausted when the worrying eventually does stop. Furthermore, whilst worrying is often a private experience it nevertheless can have a negative impact (i) on maintaining relationships (e.g., becoming over-protective and others seeing this as interfering; not being present with friends and them seeing this as cold) and (ii) in achieving life goals (e.g., rejecting a promotion because of worrying about failing).

To overcome worry, rather than attending to each separate worry, one must attend to the origin and flow of worry, e.g., avoidance, intolerance of uncertainty, unhelpful worry rules and beliefs, “safety-behaviour” use for short-term gain. Consider the following statements to help understand and/or apply to your own worrying flow:

1. Worrying fuels procrastination and avoidance
2. Worrying hinders achievement and personal development
3. Worrying is minimised by accepting that achieving goals can take several attempts
4. Worrying is fuelled by intolerance of uncertainty
5. Uncertainties in life can be challenged and minimised by setting specific, realistic, and fair goals
6. Compassion and non-judgement when failure and worry arrives is important for mental well-being
7. Being flexible with “worry rules/beliefs” reduces frequency, intensity, and rate of worrying
8. Being able to modify or eradicate unhelpful worry rules helps well-being
9. Recognising use of “*shoulds*”, “*oughts*”, “*musts*”, and “*If/then*” statements helps to know own worry rules
10. Taking acceptable risks, challenging own unhelpful thoughts or safety-behaviours, is essential to overcome worrying and developing coping skills

Here is an example of a diary to catalogue and review experiences of worrying, avoiding, intolerance of uncertainty, self-judgement, knowledge of own worry rules, inflexibility with own worry rules, and use of safety-behaviours.

Where and when?	How did I feel?	What went through my mind?	Is this understandable?	Are there reasons to worry?	Is there an alternate way of thinking?	How can I check this out?
Where, when, what was I doing?	What emotions was I Feeling? (Intensity Scale)	What thoughts or images had I? (Intensity Scale)	How do my fears and worries make sense?	What doesn't support the worry? How can I reassure me?	Can I see a more balanced thought? (Intensity Scale: belief)	How can I put my thought into action?