

Coping with Anxiety

Session 3

Weekly check-in

- How has your week been overall?
- What's been positive about your week?
- How are you feeling today?



What about your target?

- Did you use your new helpful coping strategies when you felt anxious?
- Is there any you would change, or add?
- Did you create an anxiety thermometer?
- Did you notice any patterns with your feelings or your Early Warning signs?
- How will you make sure you use your helpful coping strategies when you feel worried or anxious?
- Have you noticed any positive changes with regards to your anxiety? Are you starting to find it easier to manage?



Worry

In this session, we will start to look at worries. In our previous sessions, we have looked at what behaviours we can do immediately to help relieve the emotional and physical feelings of anxiety, but sometimes our worries don't just go away when we do a breathing exercise. However, it can help us get into a position where we can start to tackle our long term worries.



Let's start by asking the question:
"who has worries?".

Now the answer may surprise you, but everyone on the planet either has things that they worry about, have worried about or are likely to worry about in the future. Not everyone will have exactly the same worries, but it is perfectly normal to worry about things. We want to be able to help you to get into a position to be able to manage these worries more positively, in a way that is less distressing for you.

Constant worry can take a really heavy toll on you both mentally and physically: you may lose sleep or feel tense and edgy during the day; you may find it difficult to concentrate. It can be really really tough to be productive during our daily activities when we feel that our thoughts are dominated by our worries and this can sometimes distract us achieving at school or even our home life. On the next few pages we will show a couple of techniques of worry management that we would like you try.

Hypothetical Or Practical Worry

Hypothetical Worry.



Hypothetical worries, are the worries we have no control over and usually start with "What if..."

Examples could be:

- What if there is a storm next week?
- What if a fire alarm goes off during the exam?
- What if I am late because my car breaks down?

It is important to remember that with hypothetical worries, we have little or no control over these situations. We must therefore LET THEM GO, distract ourselves and refocus our attention.

Practical Worry.

Practical worries are the worries that we can solve. If we have practical worries, it is important to tackle them straight on.

Examples of practical worry solutions could be:

- Making that dentist appointment we have been avoiding.
- Answering the phone when it rings
- Going to the lesson that we maybe don't like

Practical worries are our minds way of telling us to fix something. Sometimes it's not practical to drop everything to do this, but we can schedule a time to do it later. This is better than avoiding situations and burying our heads in the sand.



The Worry Tree

By using The Worry Tree as a tool, we can start to break down and analyse our worries.

What am I Worrying about?



Can I do Something About it ?

No

Yes

Let the Worry Go

Action Plan
What? When? How?

Change the
Focus of Your
Attention

Now

Later

Do It!

Schedule it

Let the Worry Go

Let the Worry Go

Change the
Focus of Your
Attention

Change the
Focus of Your
Attention

Worry Time

Pick a time of day that suits your needs to think about your worries

If you don't get through all of your worries during worry time, save them for tomorrow

It is really important that you make sure you use the same time each day and it is protected from interruptions

You can do worry time on your own, or with a trusted friend or family member

Don't pick a time that is too close to bedtime; you need to be relaxed to get good quality sleep

You need to recognise your worries to be able to work on them in worry time

IMPORTANT:
If you miss worry time, you have to wait for tomorrow's worry time

Write down any worries you have during the day and save them for worry time



Growth vs Fixed Mindset

People with a fixed mindset often think the worst case scenario. This can make their anxiety even worse because they believe that the worst possible outcome is going to be the only outcome. This can lead to more negative thoughts in the cycle we looked at in session two.

E.g. John has planned a camping trip and is worrying that the weather will be really bad that day. This causes John to feel worried that his whole holiday might be ruined. John now feels like he wants to cancel his trip and avoid his family as he believes that he won't have any fun if the weather is bad.

This is an example of fixed mindset. It is important to challenge the fixed mindset, especially with hypothetical worries; we need to start practicing how to let them go.



People who learn to have a growth mindset aren't hard on themselves for not being able to do something right away. They tell themselves that if they keep trying, they will be able to do it. They rarely give up hope, even when things seem really difficult.

E.g. Emiel has been trying to pass his chemistry exam but has been unsuccessful. Emiel knows what he needs to work on to improve and tries hard in his lessons and home study during the week to improve his skills. Emiel knows that he might not get every question correct, but if he keeps working on his studies he will improve and this keeps him motivated.

This is an example of growth mindset. It is important not to ignore the practical worry and start doing something about it. In this example, Emiel recognised the worry about the test and put a plan into action to study and do something about it to help him become successful and tackled the worry in a positive way



Growth vs Fixed Mindset

Having a 'fixed mindset', means you limit yourself from ever knowing what you are capable of and how amazing you really are! By believing in yourself and telling yourself you can do hard things, you start to free yourself from this mindset. Along side using the Worry Tree or allocated Worry Time, here are three easy steps we can take to start challenging ourselves to help us grow.

Sometimes we do need to realise that we may be worried about things that are out of our control (hypothetical) and need to let it go, but the following can help with our practical worries, in helping us to start tackling them.

Reflect on the skills you already have.

Everything you have learnt so far in life has taken time and perseverance to master, we are not just born with skills and that is perfectly okay. Everyone has different skills because people are very different and that is perfectly normal. Some people might be really good at solving a math problem, others might be really good at video games. By looking at the skills you have already learnt, you are reminding yourself that you can achieve things that you may have previously found quite difficult to do.



Keep learning how to do new things. Setting yourself a challenge can help you to build your growth mindset. This could be as simple as playing a new game or trying a new hobby. Every time you learn how to do something new, it proves to yourself that you can succeed at things out of your comfort zone. The more you practice, the more you will see yourself improve and your confidence will grow! When you are more confident you are more likely to tackle your practical worries.

Change the way you speak to yourself.

Sometimes we might be faced with a practical worry and we might say to ourselves: "I can't do this." Try adding the word YET to your sentence e.g. "I can't go and speak during assembly yet" or "I can't cook that chocolate cake without burning it yet". This proves to yourself that you may be struggling but you haven't given up and want to keep trying. This can really aid us when we are struggling with our practical worries.

Weekly Targets

Recognising our worries and learning how to manage them.

The first target this week is to keep a note of any worries that we may have, and to start using the Worry Tree to triage the worry and plan how to deal with it if necessary, or finding a really positive distraction tool for those hypothetical worries or the times we need to let worries go.

Alternatively, if you feel like the Worry Tree isn't for you, try to incorporate some Worry Time into your day, using the clock on page 5 within this session.



Your second target: now it's time to start challenging the fixed mindset when we need to. When you have noticed and recognised a worry and you find that things might feel impossible to fix, if it's a practical worry, try and use our tips on overcoming a fixed mindset, all on page 7 within this session.



Information Page

If you do feel that you need further support, please check out our dedicated young people section on our website for more resources and support.

<https://cwmind.org.uk/children-and-young-peoples-services-temporary-service/>



The best people to talk to about getting a referral are:

- School
- GP
- Support Worker
- School Nurse



Please aim to leave at least 5 days before completing Session 4 of this workbook. This will give you time to start recognising your worries and starting to manage them in a positive way