

Worry time

In this module you'll learn a simple, but effective way to deal with worried thoughts. You'll also look at getting a bit of structure and balance back in your life.

Set worry time

This is a funny one, but some of us have found it really helpful. It's a way to stop wasting so much time worrying.

Using 'worry time' doesn't mean you stop worrying altogether (let us know if you master that one!), it's just means that the worry doesn't take over so much.

How does it work?

I like to think of worry as 'half-assed problem solving'. Even though it feels beneficial, it wears you out and rarely gets you anywhere useful. It can also make situations build up to be worse and worse in your mind.

Planning worry time stops you wasting so much time worrying, and lets you deal with the situations you are worried about more effectively at a later point (during worry time).

How do you actually do it?

Do this when you notice yourself worrying about the future or all the bad things in your life.

Step 1 - Ask yourself if this worry is helpful.

Step 2 - If you answered 'no' to the last question, then stop worrying, and tell yourself that you'll worry about it during your scheduled 'worry time' (I know this sounds stupid, but it can actually work).

Worry time could be half an hour each day at 6pm, or whenever you choose. Whenever you keep worrying again (which you might do over and over and over), just note it and worry about it later during worry time

Step 3 - When worry time comes along, spend a good half-hour problem-solving the situations you are worried about. You could make this time even more effective by writing the issues down or talking them over with a friend (these options are way more effective than worrying it out in your head).

Jeff talks about using worry time

I was always worrying about my brother, and how I could help him get off drugs. I had no idea what he was taking, and he used to be a pretty big risk taker. I never knew if it would be the last time I would see him. I'd go through all the possible scenarios in my head, creating these catastrophic stories, and wondering whether there was anything I could do to help him.

That was a few years ago. I now know there's not a lot you can do, other than be supportive if he's making genuinely positive steps. I started scheduling worry time, and actually did this for a month or so. Then I realised that I didn't actually need worry time, and I just dropped the worry altogether. The worried thoughts keep coming up every now and then (sometimes a lot), but I just leave them running in the background and get on with my day.