

What is worry?

Worry is a completely normal emotion that all of us will experience from time to time. We can never get rid of all worries, but what we can do is learn how to manage them so they don't start to interfere with our daily lives and stop us doing the things we enjoy.

Because our thoughts, feelings and behaviours all have an impact on each other, we can get stuck in an unhelpful cycle that keeps the worry going. Worry Management can help us break that cycle by helping us notice our worries and make some changes to our thoughts and behaviours so that we start to feel better.

When we try not think about our worries it can be like trying to hold a beach ball under water; they keep popping up in front of our face and getting in the way even more. What we need to do is to develop the skills to understand our worries and manage them in a more helpful way.



Different types of worry

There are two types of worries: hypothetical worries and practical worries. It's important to know the difference between these worries because we deal with them in different ways.

- Hypothetical worries are worries about the future or things that might happen, often that we can't do anything about as we have no control over them. For example: "What if the teacher asks me a question?"
- Practical worries are worries about a current situation that we are able to do something about. For example: "I have lots of exams coming up".

Ways in which we can help you to manage your worries

We may ask you to write down your thoughts or keep a worry diary. This can be a great way to become more aware of your worries and work out what type they are.

- **Worry Time:** If you're struggling with hypothetical worries, it can be helpful to schedule in some Worry Time. This is a set period of time each day allocated to worrying and should be no more than 20 minutes. Worry Time can be effective as it means we postpone our worries until later in the day, allowing us to move on quickly and enjoy the present moment.
- **Problem-Solving:** For practical worries, we need to break the problem down and solve them, rather than putting them off.

