

What is Worry?

To worry means to think about problems that *might* happen in a way that leaves you feeling anxious or apprehensive. Worry is experienced as a chain of thoughts and images which can progress in increasingly catastrophic and unlikely directions. It is often experienced as uncontrollable and seems to take on a life of its own.

Why do people worry?

Most of us can foresee problems that might happen in our lives and spend at least *some* time thinking about what we could do to manage them. To the extent that this helps us to solve future problems worry is normal and useful. Psychologists think that worry is an attempt to manage and reduce *uncertainty*. Some people are more sensitive to (bothered by) uncertainty and they tend to do more worrying.



Real vs Hypothetical Worry

We often distinguish between two types of worry:

1. Real event worries are about actual problems affecting you right now and which you can act on now.

Example: “My toddler is reaching for something dangerous”, “I need to call my friend or she will think I have forgotten her birthday” “I can’t find my keys”, “I can’t afford to pay this electricity bill”, “My boyfriend isn’t speaking to me”.

2. Hypothetical worries are about things that do not currently exist, but which *might* happen in the future.



Example: “What if my husband crashes the car when he drives to his parents?”, “Maybe this worrying is making me crazy” “I couldn’t stand if it my son liked playing dangerous sports when he’s older”.

Further information on worry (to access double click):

- [Understanding Worry \(including workbook and information sheets\)](#)
- [How I learned to stop worrying and embrace the struggle \(video presentation\)](#)
- **Wellbeing Website Resources (we have a number of excellent resources for anxiety and worry)** → <http://wellbeing-glasgow.org.uk/>

How do I know if my worry is a problem?

Everyone worries to some degree. Worry can become a problem when it stops you from living the life you want to live, or if it leaves you feeling exhausted and demoralised.

 Normal worry		 Excessive worry
Relationships, health, work, finances, family, school	Content	Relationships, health, work, finances, family, school
Usually about more likely and relatively here-and-now events (real event worry).	Likelihood & timescale	Usually more about unlikely or remote future events (hypothetical event worry).
Worry often starts in response to a specific trigger.	Timing	Worry may be more habitual.
Feels like there is some control over the worry process.	Control	Feels like the worry is not controllable.
Spend less time worrying.	Duration	Spend more time worrying.

There are various strategies that you could utilise in managing your worries. It is about exploring different strategies and finding one that works for you!

When you are stressed, adrenaline runs through your body. Your heart beats fast, your body tenses up and one very important effect is that your thoughts race. Racing thoughts make thinking clearly difficult and that is when you get overwhelmed and stressed.

1. Take a slow breath in through the nose, breathing into your lower belly so you feel it inflate like a balloon (for the count of 4)
2. Hold your breath for 1 or 2 seconds
3. Exhale slowly through the mouth so that you are pushing out the air in the "balloon" and you feel your belly suck in (for the count of 5)
4. Make sure the exhale breath is one or two counts longer than the inhale breath as this activates a greater relaxation response
5. Wait a few seconds before taking another breath

Worrying is a waste of your mental energy. Follow these steps to stop worrying and be more productive



1 LEARN A NEW SKILL

Juggling, crochet, hula-hooping... anything you like!



2 EXERCISE

Clear your mind and put things in perspective.



3 MEDITATE

Train your mind to remain in the present



4 FIND SOMETHING USEFUL TO DO

Occupy yourself with things that need doing e.g. tidying out a cupboard or fixing something



5 GET OUT IN THE WORLD

Go out and about - volunteer, get work experience, build towards your future



6 READ

Educate and entertain yourself with a good book

People who are bothered by worry often experience it as *uncontrollable*, time consuming, and believe that it is beneficial to engage in worry when it occurs. Experimenting with postponing your worries – deliberately setting aside some time in your day to do nothing but worry – is a helpful way of exploring your relationship with worry.

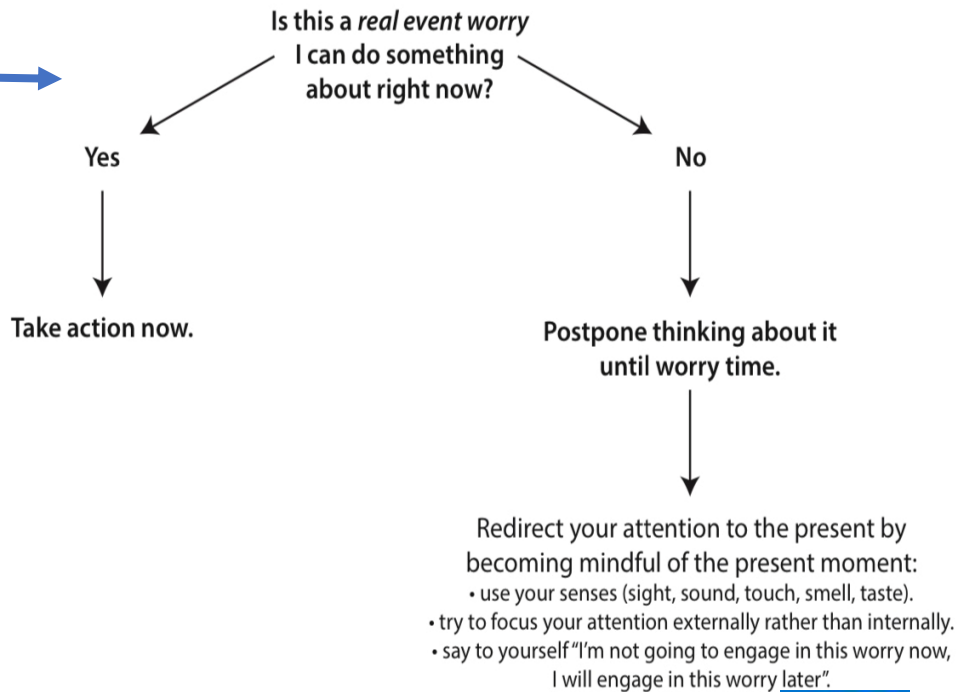
Follow the 3 simple steps below for *at least one week*-

Step 1: Preparation (Decide **when** your worry time will be, and for **how long** it will be for)

- Worry time is time you set aside every day for the specific purpose of worrying.
- What time of day do you think you will be in the best frame of mind to attend to your worries?
- When are you unlikely to be disturbed?
- If you are unsure, 15 to 30 minutes every day at 7:00pm is often a good starting point.

Step 2: Worry Postponement

During the day, decide whether worries that surface are real event worries you can act on now, or whether they are hypothetical worries that need to be postponed



Step 3: Worry Time

Use your dedicated worry time for worrying. Consider writing down any of the hypothetical worries that you remember having had throughout the day. How concerning are they to you now? Are any of them the kinds of worries that can lead you to take practical actions?

[Worry App \(Android\)](#)



[Reachout Worry App \(Apple\)](#)



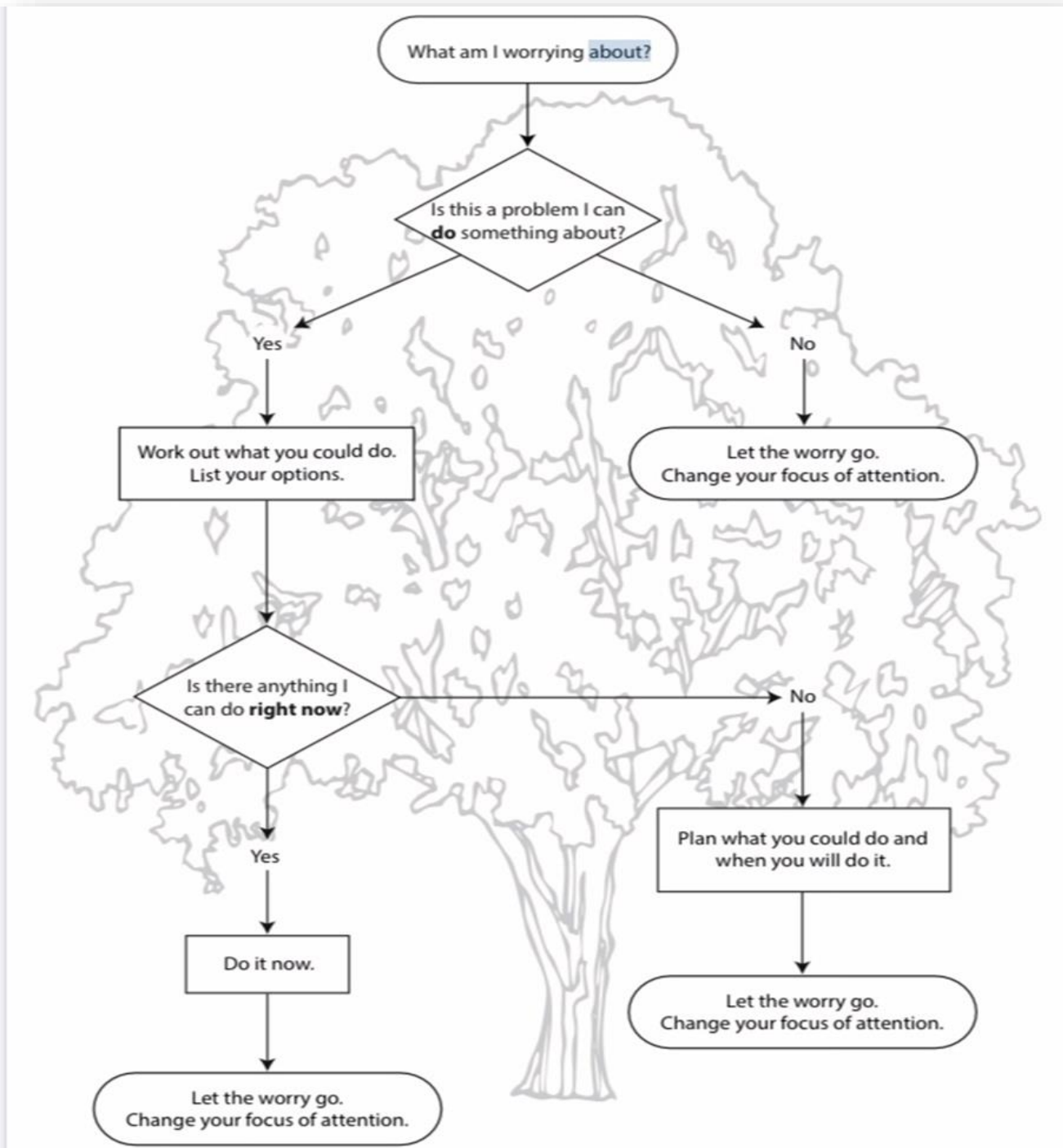
Useful Apps *double click for download access

Top Tips

- Try to use all of your allocated worry time, even if you do not feel that you have much to worry about, or even if worries do not seem as pressing at this time
- Reflect upon your worries now – do they give you the same emotional ‘kick’ when you think about them now as they did when you first thought of them?
- Can any of your worries be converted into a practical problem to which you can look for a solution?

Worry Decision Tree







This process will help you recognise the difference between experiencing *real event worry* and *hypothetical event worry*. once you have identified this you then can move on to the next step of –**problem solving** (real event worry) or **distraction /worry postponement** (hypothetical event worry).



Our recommended resources (click for direct access):

NHS Inform	Offers the most up-to-date advice on dealing varying mental health difficulties, including the 5 Steps to Mental Wellbeing. Please visit: NHS Inform
Wellbeing	Our website offers a variety of self-help materials, groups, and courses for all sorts of problems that you may be facing. Anyone can download the self- help materials. Please visit: Wellbeing Website Glasgow
Mental Health Foundation	A range of content designed to give you more information about mental health and to help you to look after your mental health. Please visit: Your Mental Health - Mental Health Foundation
NHS Every Mind Matters	Interactive website providing you the opportunity to complete a short quiz which creates a Mind Plan of what you can do to improve your mental health. Please visit: Every Mind Matters
Psych Central	Run by mental health professionals offering reliable, trusted information to individuals struggling with a mental health. There is also an excellent quiz section allowing you to find out more about your symptoms and how to manage these. Please visit: PsychCentral for Mental Health
MIND	Information hub provides advice on how to support your mental wellbeing. Please visit: MIND Information Hub
SAMH	Hub of information and guidance about looking after mental health. Please visit: SAMH Guidance for Mental Health

Useful Apps:

	Mind Shift	Rather than trying to avoid anxious feelings, Mind Shift stresses the importance of changing how you think about anxiety. It can encourage you to take charge of your life, ride out intense emotions, and face challenging situations
	SAM	SAM might be perfect for you if you're interested in self-help, but meditation isn't your thing. Users are prompted to build their own 24-hour anxiety toolkit that allows you to track anxious thoughts and behaviour over time and learn 25 different self-help techniques.
	Happify	Need a happy fix? With its psychologist-approved mood-training program, the Happify app is your fast-track to a good mood. Try various engaging games, activity suggestions, gratitude prompts and more to train your brain as if it were a muscle, to overcome negative thoughts
	Headspace	The Headspace app makes meditation simple. Learn the skills of mindfulness and meditation by using this app for just a few minutes per day. You gain access to hundreds of meditations on everything from stress and anxiety to sleep and focus.
	Calm	Calm provides people experiencing stress and anxiety with guided meditations, sleep stories, breathing programs, and relaxing music.
	Smiling Mind	Smiling mind is a way to practice daily meditation and mindfulness exercises from any device. This is helpful during times of stress and is a fun and unique way to help you put a smile on your mind.

Having suicidal thoughts? Discuss with a loved one, call Samaritans on **116 123** or access your **G.P.** or **Crisis Service** via **NHS** on **111**.