

## Top Tips for Managing Worry

### Identify your Triggers

The first step in managing worry is to identify the situations/problems that are making you feel stressed. If you find this difficult try keeping a diary – watch out for times when you feel anxious through the day and write down what you were doing, who you were with, and what you were thinking at the time.

Also make note of what you did to help yourself feel better. For example if you were worried about the safety of a loved one did you call them to check they were ok or did you ignore the worry?

### Manage Your Thoughts

When we're anxious we tend to catastrophise about the future and think about worst case scenarios. Thinking about worst case scenarios makes them seem more likely and this increases anxiety.

Look at your anxious thoughts objectively and ask yourself: Are you worrying about something that's unlikely? What's the most likely outcome? Have you worried about this before? What happened last time you worried about this; were your predictions correct or incorrect? Anxious thoughts can be convincing but try not to buy into them – use logic to help you evaluate which thoughts to give attention to and which to ignore.

### Change How You Respond To Your Worry

How you respond to your worry is important. Some actions will help you to feel better in the short-term but will actually make your anxiety worse in the longer-term. As a general rule, going along with your anxiety will offer reassurance in the short-term but strengthen your anxiety in the longer-term. For example, if your anxiety tells you that something's wrong with someone you love, calling them to check that they're safe and well will make you feel better initially but keep your anxiety around in the longer-term. Going against your anxiety (e.g. not calling or trying to delay calling) will make you feel anxious in the short-term but help your anxiety go away in the longer-term.

### Develop an Action Plan

Some problems can be solved while others are unchangeable and have to be accepted. Once you've identified your triggers see if there's anything you can do to solve your problem. Brainstorm possible solutions – forget logistics and the feasibility of your ideas – just get your ideas onto paper. Consider the pros and cons of each idea and select the solution that is most likely to help you solve your problem. Think about what resources you'll need to implement your plan and identify possible barriers and ways to overcome them. Put your plan into action and then accept that there's nothing else you can do.

## ANXIETY + WORRY

**Anxiety is far more common than most people think – in fact it's experienced by 1 in 4 people at some point in their life – but far too many people don't seek help.**

**Anxiety is a normal emotion that we all experience on a regular basis so it can be difficult to differentiate between normal anxiety and problem anxiety.**

**Common signs of problem anxiety are:**

- Anxiety that is more intense than others would experience in the same situation
- Anxiety that lasts for longer than would be expected for a situation
- Anxiety without any cause or trigger
- Worry that's hard to switch off from
- Anxiety that interferes with everyday activities
- Irritability, restlessness, or edginess
- Sleep problems
- Tense muscles
- Concentration Problems

**Regardless of whether or not you meet criteria for a diagnosable anxiety disorder, if anxiety and worry affects you on a regular basis and if it interferes with your enjoyment of life it may be worthwhile seeking advice from a clinical psychologist.**

**Try the tips on this tips sheet, but if your anxiety persists, ask your GP for a referral to a clinical psychologist.**