

Tip Sheet: Worrying

We all worry and stress about something. It's part of human nature. But if you're prone to hypothetical worry and what-if scenarios, you may find it helpful to notice these thoughts and then redirecting your attention to things within your control.

So, think about everything you're currently worried about. What problems in our life are causing stress and anxiety? Write these concerns down into two lists or use a different colour to highlight:

1. What you have control over
2. What you cannot control

For the list that you have control over, what can you do about them? Can you tackle them now or schedule in a timeframe to do them?

- E.g. build resilience, healthier diet, time to relax, reconnect with someone, seek help, etc.

For the list you can't control, can you acknowledge and accept that? Can you ask someone to help you find peace with it? You can also take any kind of action when you feel yourself becoming overwhelmed.

- E.g. distract yourself with an activity or change your thinking by thinking about the problem in a more positive way.
- By accepting the things you can't control, you can have more faith, feel happier, think more rationally, be able to move on.

These are not easy questions or tasks but doing this exercise can be an empowering process.

We understand that you may not be able to stop hypothetical worries from occurring, but you can control your response to them.

Activity Sheet: Overthinking

Thought challenging is a simple yet powerful tool for reducing anxiety.

Unhelpful thinking patterns can occur when your mind fixates on threat, uncertainty and negativity. Thought challenging is a simple but powerful cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) technique that helps to broaden your focus to include the bigger picture.

Here are two thought challenging techniques you can try to see what works best for you.

1. ABCDE

- **Attention** – When you feel distressed, stop what you're doing and pay attention to your inner dialogue. What is your mind telling you?
- **Believe?** – Do not automatically believe your thoughts!
- **Challenge** – Defuse anxiety by broadening your focus. What's the bigger picture? Is the thought fact or opinion? What might you think if you were feeling calmer?
- **Discount** – Acknowledge that anxiety has been dominating your thinking and let the unhelpful thoughts go.
- **Explore options** – What would be helpful to focus on right now? What options do I have available?

2. THINK

- **Technique True?** – Is this thought 100% true? If not, what are the facts, and what is opinion?
- **Helpful?** – Is paying attention to the thought useful to me or others?
- **Inspiring?** – Does the thought inspire me or does it have the opposite effect?
- **Necessary?** – Is it important for me to focus on the thought? Is it necessary to act on it?
- **Kind?** – Is the thought kind? If not, what would be a kinder thought?