
Managing Worry

Worries can interfere with getting adequate sleep. Our minds have the ability to create rabbit holes of future possibilities that keep us lying awake in bed. Consider the following two approaches based on CBT and ACT to managing worry.

SCHEDULING WORRY TIME

Often, the time we're lying in bed is time that our minds are finally undirected, and free to comb through the day or roam through future possibilities. Instead of trying to stop this from happening, give yourself 20-30 minutes during your day or evening to purposefully give free rein to your thoughts. Outside of this time, jot down a reminder of the worry thought and remind yourself that you'll have designated time to consider it.

Note: Make sure that you actually give yourself that time to wander and worry! If you don't, your mind will not let the thoughts go or redirect, knowing that the promise of dedicated time is essentially a trick.

DESENSITIZING WORRIES

Maybe it's a recurring, particularly fear-inducing worry that keeps coming up and plaguing you. During the day, you're able to hold it at bay, but at night, the feared scenarios come full force. In this activity, you'll face that worry head-on.

- 1 Identify the core worry that is coming up, that to even say out loud might be too difficult. For example, fears about "I'll mess up in my relationship and my partner will realize
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that I'm not good enough for them and leave me" might reflect a core worry of "not good enough."

2 Sing your worry to the tune of "Happy Birthday" or "Baby Shark."

3 Say your worry out loud repeatedly, over and over on end, until your mouth starts to feel tired, and the words are more or less just sounds.

Worry thoughts are simply that—thoughts. Desensitizing the thought means that you'll spend less time avoiding that thought, and even be better able to assess or address the worry.