

The Worry Tree



Some of us spend large parts of our day worrying, others may be days or weeks without a worry. But from time to time we will all find something which causes anxiety and leads to worry. Whether we are worrying about something that has happened, is happening now or something which might happen in the future our ability to manage these feeling can help to reduce our levels of anxiety.

What does worry look like?

When you are worrying, you often can't stop thinking about something, even if you know you can't do anything about it. We often imagine the worst possible outcome. You experience all the same emotions and sensations as if it was actually happening right now. It can stop your ability to enjoy the good things in your life.

What is the Worry Tree approach?

Current Problems are real situations and importantly you can do something about them. The Worry Tree helps to plan where to put your energy so you can prepare and plan and then put away the worry.

If the worry is completely out of your control, the Worry Tree approach would be to let go of the worry and change your focus to something else. You may postpone your worry until the event happens or you have more information which allows you to influence the situation.



Will it help me?

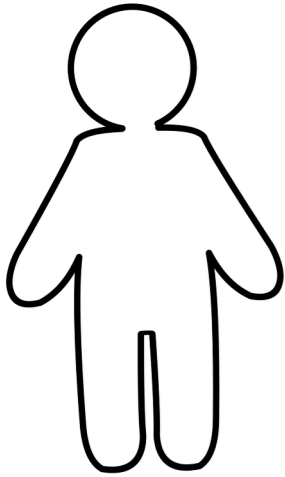
Without a way to work through a situation you may lose control over these feelings, creating an ever growing feeling of dread unable to control how you feel, and having no control over the event itself. The Worry Tree, can help prevent you from spend large periods of time worrying about 'what ifs', future events or things you cannot change or control. If you spend your time thinking about possible outcomes and imagine the worst possible outcome, the Worry Tree might help you out.

The Worry Tree

How it works...

The first thing you need to do when you get worrying thoughts or feelings can seem simple, however it is vital. Notice the worry. Acknowledge your feelings and rather than hide from those feelings look to address them. So, once you know you have feelings of worry, the next thing to do is to ask yourself What are you worrying about? Once you know what you are worrying about you can decide if the problem is a current one or a hypothetical situation and consider can you do anything about the situation.

Step 1: What am I feeling/thinking?



Take some time to reflect on what your body is telling you. Where do you feel your worry? What is your mind saying to you?

Step 2: What is the reality?

What is actually happening now? What is the likelihood of my worst possible scenario? Can I influence the outcome?

The Worry Tree

Step 3: Put away the worry

What if the answer is no, I can't do anything about this?

The answer is distraction! You may already have coping techniques which involve a happy place you can go (physically or mentally) that is free of negative feelings, or you may have activities which act as a distraction to your negative feelings. These activities may include a peaceful walk, mindfulness or simply colouring.

Things I can do to distract myself, let go of negative feelings and create moments of joy.

Step 4: Make a plan

If the answer is yes, there are some things I could do, then make a plan. Don't forget to consider including asking for help from someone you trust.

My Plan

What will I do?

When?

Once the plan is made, and scheduled, go back to Step 3!