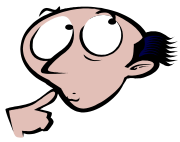
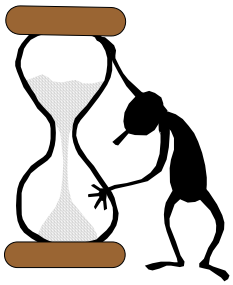
postpone your worry



Worry can occur at any time or place, often without you being aware of its exact triggers. As such, worry can be very interfering when going about your daily life. A strategy to deal with this problem is to postpone your worry to a particular worry period. By learning to postpone your worry, it will be less intrusive in your life and you will be managing your worry effectively, giving you a greater sense of control.. The steps to postpone your worry are outlined below. Be prepared to practice this approach over and over again. It does take some time and patience.

1. Create a worry period:

- To begin, choose a particular time, place, and length of time for worrying. This time, place and duration should be the same each day (e.g. 6pm, study, 20 min)
- Make this place unique and comfortable, free from distractions. It should not be somewhere you go to regularly, like a lounge room chair. Rather somewhere you assign for the worry period only.



- The time should be convenient so you can regularly follow through with the task, and not close to bed time.

2. Postpone your worry:

- As soon as you become aware of a worry, postpone it to the worry period.
- Note your worry briefly on paper (in a couple of words only). Carrying a small notebook with you may be useful.
- ***Remind yourself*** that you will have time to think about it later, no need to worry about it now; you will be in a better position to deal with the worry in the worry period; and there are more important or pleasant things to attend to right now, rather than worry.



- Turn your focus to the present moment and the activities of the day to help let go of the worry until the worry period has arrived. ***Tip:*** see the ***What is mindfulness?*** or use the ***Letting go of Worry with Mindfulness*** sheets for help in doing this.
- Finally, decide what is the most important and best thing you can practically do for yourself right now. Take immediate action to do something that is either practical, positive, pleasant, active or nurturing.

3. Come back to your worries at the designated worry period:

When your worry period comes around, settle yourself down at the place you had planned and take some time to reflect on the worries you had written down from the day. Some points to remember are:

- Only worry about the things you have noted if you feel you **must.**
- If all or some of the worries you wrote down are no longer bothering you or no longer seem relevant, then no further action is required.



- If you do need to worry about some of them, spend no longer than the set amount of time you specified for your worry period. It may also be helpful to write your thoughts on paper rather than worrying in your head. You can do this in whatever way feels right to you.

Note: Later on you will learn more specifically what to do with your worries, but for now just focus on the process of postponing your worries throughout the day and only worrying at a set time of the day.

Worry postponement may seem like a strange thing to do, and it may seem like an effort to carry a notepad around to jot down your worries and commit to sitting down and reflecting on the days worries at a set time everyday.

It is important to do this at the start because it is a difficult and new skill you are developing. But with time and practice in this formal way, you will be able to do it effectively more informally. Also, typically people predict that they won't be able to postpone their worrying, but often people are surprised that they are actually able to postpone many of their worries, and experience a greater sense of control.

This document is for information purposes only. Please refer to the full disclaimer and copyright statement available at http://www.cci.health.wa.gov.au regarding the information from this website before making use of such information.
See website www.cci.health.wa.gov.au for more handouts and resources.

Centre for Clinical Interventions
• Psychotherapy • Research • Training