

WORKSHEET

Planning exercise | Worry time

Client's Instructions

People with generalized anxiety spend a great deal of time worrying about various problems. They have trouble with “letting go” of their worries. Excessive worrying can be draining, both physically and emotionally. It can take away one’s energy and interfere with the ability to relax and enjoy life. It is not uncommon for people who experience anxiety to have problems with both falling and staying asleep. High levels of anxiety and excessive worrying can make it difficult to concentrate on one’s schoolwork and other tasks in life. Furthermore, people who worry to excess often do not enjoy their time spent with family and friends because they are so focused on their problems.

The purpose of this exercise is to reduce the amount of time you spend each day worrying. The first step in this exercise is to identify the specific stressor or issue that you are worried about in your current life. Next, you will select specific time and place where you can focus or concentrate on your worries. You are asked to set aside a specific “worry time” for 15-20 minutes each day. Your therapist can help you select a specific time and place. The idea behind this exercise is to limit your worrying to a specific time and place. After your “worry time” has ended, you are introduced to strategies or interventions (i.e., deep breathing, relaxation, thought-stopping, or refocusing that you have been taught in the therapy sessions) to manage your anxiety and worries for the remainder of the day. You may find it helpful to engage in some leisure/recreational activity to take your mind off your worries (this is called “refocusing”). Talk with your therapist about which specific strategy you feel is most helpful in limiting the amount of time you spend worrying outside of the “worry time”. We realize that this is easier said than done, but with regular practice of these techniques (i.e., deep breathing, relaxation, thought-stopping, or refocusing), the hope is that you will be able to manage your anxiety more effectively. Please fill out the Daily “Worry Time” Log at the end of each day to let your therapist know how successful you have been in limiting the amount of time you spent worrying each day.



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Date and Time: _____ Place: _____

1. What were you worried about today?

**2. Rate the degree of your anxiety and worry on a scale from 0 to 10
(circle the appropriate number).**

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

**3. What strategy did you use to try and restrict the amount of time you spent worrying?
(please check all that apply).**

☐ Deep breathing

☐ Thought-stopping

☐ Relaxation

☐ Refocusing

☐ Positive self-talk

☐ Other _____



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4. How successful were your strategies in limiting the amount of time you spent worrying?

5. If the strategies were not helpful in limiting the time you spent worrying today, what factors or stressful events interfered with your ability to “let go” of your worries?