

WELLNESS TIPS

MANAGING EXCESSIVE WORRYING - Part 2

Today's Wellness Tips continues to address the topic of ways to manage excessive worrying, which was introduced last week.

While worrying can be a motivator for addressing concerning situations, when it is focused on theoretical future events or is continuous and can't be turned off, worrying increases stress and anxiety, decreases ability to concentrate and interferes with one's ability to problem-solve.

STRATEGIES FOR MORE EFFECTIVELY MANAGING WORRYING

1. Consider keeping a journal of your worries, with brief 1-2 sentences describing it. Review your entries at a later designated time and consider if you can change the worry to "How can I ...?"
2. In reviewing your journal entries, pay attention to your thinking, using the following questions to see if your thoughts are realistic:
 - How likely is your worry to happen?
 - What is the most likely thing to happen?
 - Is it as threatening as I think it is?
 - What would I say to a friend who had this thought?
 - Is there a more helpful way to think about this?

You might realize that your concern may not be as bad as you had first thought or unlikely to occur. But if there is a problem, brainstorm options and develop a plan for addressing or solving it.

3. Ask family and friends how they cope with uncertainty and worry. Consider if you can do the same.
4. Distract yourself from your worried thoughts. Making a list of activities that you can do at these times can be helpful because you can refer to your list instead of having to think of something when stressed with worry. Consider a variety of options that would cover different circumstances and locations: while in MERF, while driving, when it's raining and you can't go outside. Examples: video games, household chores, reading, organizing your closet, watching a comedy, writing, playing or listening to music.
5. Interrupt your worrying:

Engage in a physical activity – pay attention to and focus on how your body feels as you are moving
Practice yoga or tai chi
Download a meditation app on your phone and practice using
Tell yourself you will think about it during your designated worry time

6. Mindfulness techniques can help you to not fight your worries, which can result in them intensifying. Notice and acknowledge them but move on to something else. Avoid judging yourself about having the worries.

If excessive worrying isn't helped by using the strategies identified in either Part 1 or Part 2, and is on-going, distressing, and/or severe, consider contacting an MSCC counselor, a mental health provider, or your health care provider for recommendations.

Verywellmind. “How to Stop Your Constant Worrying.” Katharina Star. June, 2019.
<https://www.verywellmind.com/ways-to-stop-worrying-2584069>

HelpGuide. “How to Stop Worrying.” Lawrence Robinson, Melinda Smith, & Jeanne Segal. October 2019.
<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/how-to-stop-worrying/htm>

WebMD. “9 Steps to End Chronic Worrying.” Denise Mann, January, 2008.
<https://www.webmd.com/balance/features/9-steps-to-end-chronic-worrying#1>

Psychology Today. “10 Tips to Manage Your Worrying.” Graham C.L. Davey. June 25, 2012.
<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/why-we-worry/201206/10-tips-manage-your-worrying>

If you would like to review previous Wellness Tips, go to the CCOM Medical Student Counseling Center Website: <https://medicine.uiowa.edu/md/student-support/student-counseling/mscc-wellness-programs-and-resources>

Stay safe and stay healthy!

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