

FORM 4.11. Possible Interventions for Worrying: A Self-Help Guide for Patients

1. **Relax your mind and relax your body.** Practice muscle relaxation and mindful breathing. Learn how to stay in the moment and let go of your thoughts and tension.
2. **Examine the advantages of letting go of worry.** Be honest with yourself about your mixed motives about worrying. Part of you wants to decrease worry; the other part feels a need to worry to be prepared. The key here is knowing whether your worry will lead to productive action. If not, then it's useless mental energy.
3. **Keep in mind that a thought is a thought—it's not reality.** Keep your thoughts *in mind*, and recognize that reality is not the same thing as your thoughts. As you become a mindful observer of your breathing, you can practice simply *observing* your thoughts. You can stand back and say, "That's just another thought." And then you can practice saying, "Let it go."
4. **Ask yourself whether your worries are really rational.** Practice the cognitive therapy techniques you have learned. Examine the evidence for and against it; ask yourself what advice you would give a friend; review how many times you have been wrong in the past; and so on.
5. **Set aside "worry time," write out your predictions, and keep a worry log to test out what actually happened.** You will find that your worries are almost always false predictions, and you can set them aside for your worry time—which, let's hope, will eventually bore you!
6. **Validate your emotions.** Keep a daily journal of your emotions, both positive and negative. Identify why your emotions make sense, why they are not dangerous, and why other people would have many of the same feelings. Validate yourself.
7. **Accept uncertainty, and accept your limitations.** You can't control or know everything. It's not all up to you. The more you accept what you cannot do, the greater your sense of being empowered in the real world will become.
8. **Realize that it's not urgent.** You don't need to know right now. Nothing will happen if you don't know. But you can focus on enjoying the present moment—and making the best of the moment in front of you.
9. **Practice losing control.** Rather than trying to stop or control your worry, flood yourself with it. Surrender to the worry, repeat the worry, and bore yourself with constant repetitions of exactly the same worried thought. You will get bored and less worried.
10. **Similarly, try to go crazy.** You can't go crazy from your worry. But you can learn that letting go of control allows you to overcome your fear of losing control.
11. **Practice your worst fears.** Imagine the worst outcome, and repeat imagining it. You will find that with time, your images and thoughts will become boring. Think about it: The "cure" is boredom?