

# Dealing with Worry



**in Low Intensity CBT**

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& Kathryn Rayson**





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**Image above:** Clinical Training (CEDAR) at the University of Exeter's Streatham Campus. **Image right:** The Sir Henry Wellcome Building for Mood Disorders Research at the University of Exeter.



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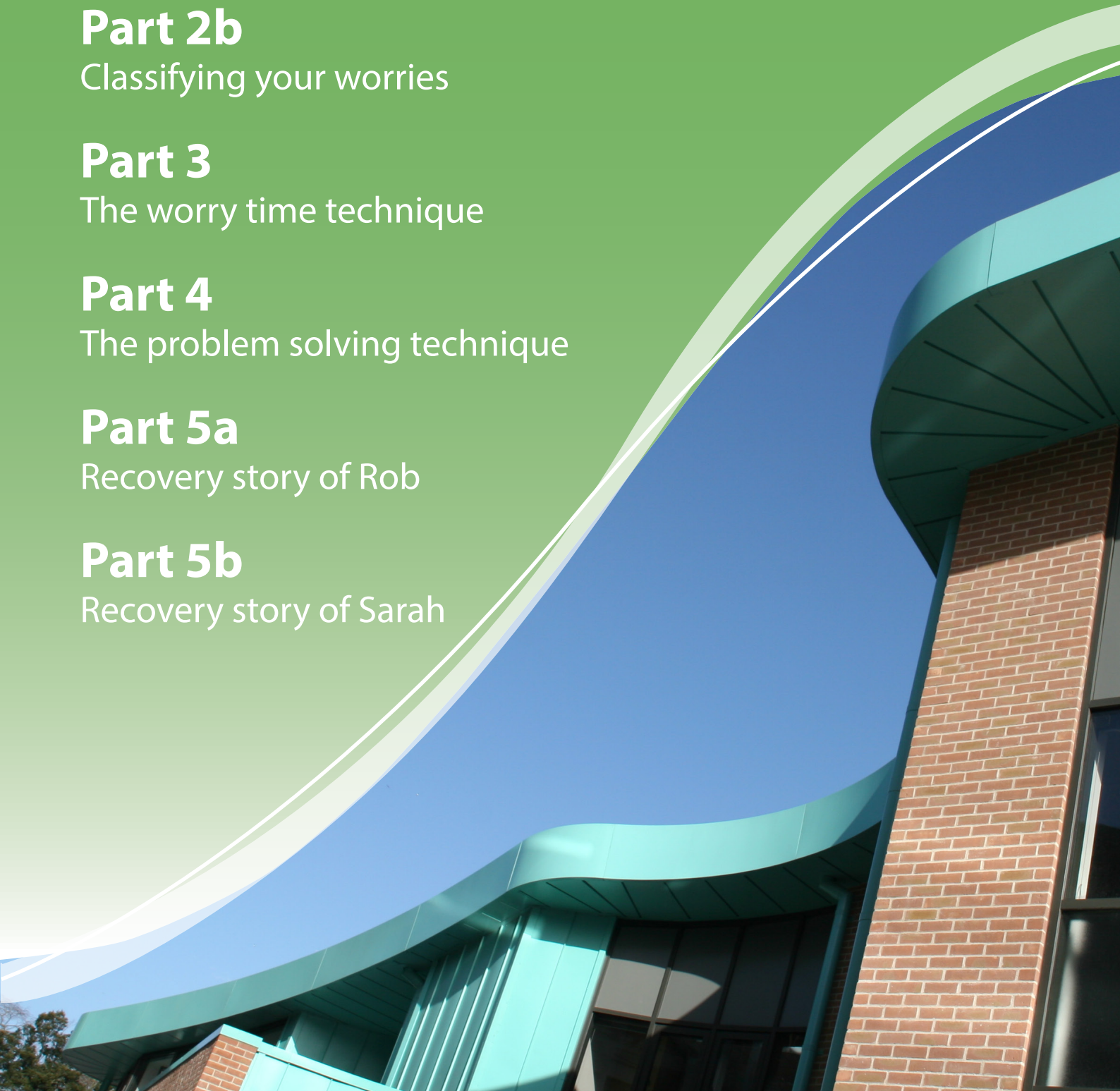
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# About the authors



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# Part 1

## Understanding worry

***Worrying is a normal process and we all worry to an extent at times. For some people however, worrying can become a problem in itself.***

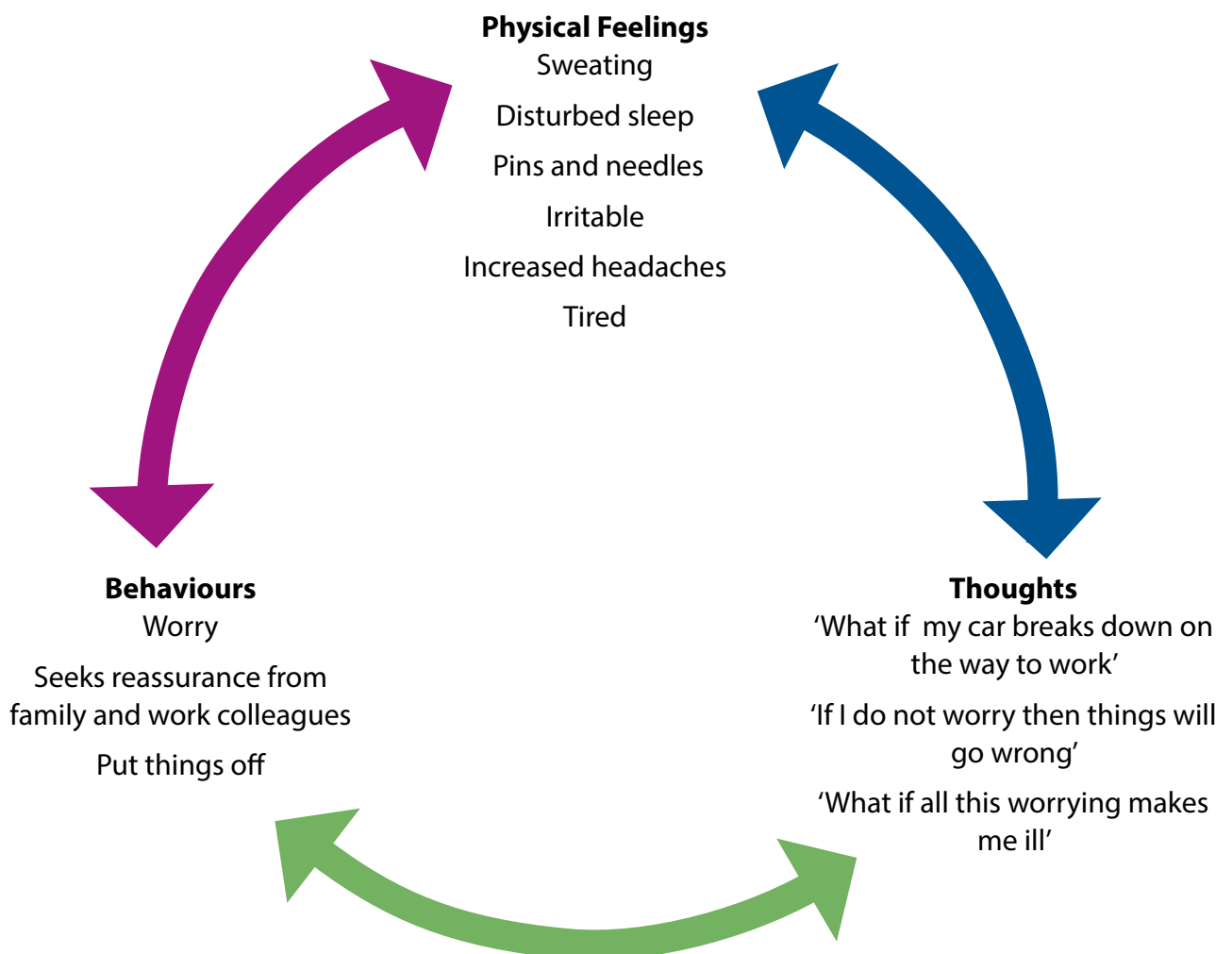
Worrying too much can interfere with a person's ability to do the everyday things they may want to do. People can feel trapped in a cycle of worrying that can make them feel physically tense or on edge, may affect their sleep or make them feel more irritable with the people around them.

People who worry may start to worry about the fact they are worrying so much and what this may mean for their health, or what this says about them as a person. They may also find it hard to stop worrying as it can make them feel that things are under control or they may think that it is useful to worry things through to prevent things going wrong.

We have two main types of worries: practical worries that we can act on and hypothetical worries that we cannot do anything about. These are often 'what if' type thoughts about the future. People who worry a lot often find they have a lot of hypothetical worries. It can be difficult to put these thoughts out of their mind, which can make acting on more practical worries, ones which we can do something about, more problematic.

If this description is something that you can relate to, then this guide is for you.

The vicious circle below illustrates how worry can keep a problem going round and round:



# Part 2a

## Keeping a worry diary

***The first step to tackling your worries is to capture them as they arise and to classify if they are practical or hypothetical worries. Parts 2a and 2b of this guide will help you to record your worrying thoughts and to then use the classifying tool on page 9 to see how to best manage them.***

Try and record your worries as actual thoughts that go through your mind. For example, “What if the bus is late and I miss the meeting?” or “Will my daughter be safe out on her own tonight?” You could either record these directly onto the ‘Worry Diary’ sheet below or jot them down onto a notepad or piece of paper. It doesn’t matter where you write them down as long as you do. Some people have even recorded them into their phone or electronic device. Whatever way of recording them that suits you is fine as long as you record them.

Many people find they worry more at night and this gets in the way of them getting off to sleep or staying asleep. If this is the case for you, keep whatever you are using to record your worries and a pen next to the side of your bed. Then if you find yourself worrying at night write down the worry, turn back off the light and try to get to sleep knowing you will come back to it later.

When you have recorded a worry in the worry diary, the next step is to use the classifying tool to see whether this is a practical worry or a hypothetical worry.

At a good time for you it is important to transfer all your worries into the ‘Worry Diary’ if you have not recorded them directly into it. Then fill in the rest of the columns to identify the situation in which you were worrying, the date and time, and using the 0-10 scale how anxious the worry made you.





# Classifying your worries

## Part 2b

*Sometimes worries are about a current situation and something practical can be done to deal with them. Sometimes however people who worry a lot notice that many of their worries are about future events that cannot be solved or any action taken at that point. These are known as 'hypothetical worries'.*

Difficulties arise if you try to deal with all your worries in the same way. When this happens your worries may soon start to feel overwhelming and you may get caught up in the vicious cycle. This can then get in the way of you trying to take actions to sort any of your worries out and may cause you to start putting things off. You may also find yourself procrastinating or seeking reassurance from others.

A useful next step is to try to classify your worries into two main types:

### **Practical Worries:**

These are worries that are often affecting you now and for which there is a practical solution. For example, these can include things like 'I haven't paid the gas bill this quarter', 'What if the knocking sound coming from the car means trouble' or 'I need two weeks off work after my operation and need to speak to my boss'.

### **Hypothetical Worries:**

This type of worry is often about things that may be well in the future and may not have a solution no matter how hard you try to find one. For example 'What if the plane crashes on the way to Manchester?', 'What if the bus is late tomorrow to take me to the hospital?', 'What if Mark falls out of love with me?'.

To help you to do this use the 'Classifying Your Worries' decision tree on page 9 for each worry you have identified in your 'Worry Diary'. This will help you decide whether each worry is 'Practical' or 'Hypothetical' and will then help you identify the best way to sort it out.

To begin with, you may find it helpful to have the classifying tool in front of you to help you decide what type of worry it is. Over time you may find that you can start to classify your worries in your mind when you are having them. This will be great and something to work towards. To begin with however, because all this may be very new, write your worries down in the Worry Diary and then use the Classifying Your Worries decision tree each time.

# My Worry Diary

Date and Time	<b>Situation</b> (where you are, what you are doing and what is going on around you)	<b>Your Worry</b> (e.g. "What if...")	<b>How anxious do you feel on a 0-10 scale</b>  (0=not at all anxious, 10 the most anxious you have ever been)	<b>Classify</b>  Using the classifying tool in Part 2b overleaf, record here if this is a practical (P) or hypothetical (H) worry
				<div> <div>H</div> <div>P</div> </div>



# Classifying Your Worries

**Is it a current worry  
that I can do something  
about now?**

**Yes?**

If so make a plan to do it.  
What is stopping you?

**No?**

Use worry time to help let  
it go.

## Next Steps:

This is an example of a practical worry; one that likely relates to a problem you are experiencing now. If it is current, practical and it can be solved then go to Part 5 – 'Problem Solving for Worry'. If not go to the next box.

## Next Steps:

This is an example of a hypothetical worry. It is likely that it is a worry about something that is in the future and does not have a practical solution right now. Let this one go. The 'Worry Time' technique in Part 3 can help with these types of worries.

# Part 3

## Worry time

***Sometimes it can be hard to just let go of those hypothetical worries, even if they don't have a current or practical solution.***

When you find yourself worrying about hypothetical worries a useful technique that many people have found effective is to use 'Worry Time'. Worry time is giving yourself time to worry, but at a time that you choose and are more in control of during the day. When you are worrying it can distract your focus away from what you are doing in the present moment onto future concerns. This can keep you in that vicious cycle of worry and prevents you from feeling fully able to enjoy what you are doing in the moment. Worry time has four steps to carry out, and like any new skill it requires practice.

### Step 1: Plan your worry time

Each day plan a time for yourself to worry in, and consider how long you feel is an acceptable period of time for you. For example, you may choose a worry period at 7pm and decide that you will worry for 20 minutes. At first you may feel you need to set aside a longer period of time as you worry so much currently. You can review this in step 4 and may find this time shortens the longer you practice the technique. Whatever time works for you is fine however, this should be a time you set aside just for yourself to worry and you should not do anything else during this time. Ensure that any potential distractions are reduced. For example, make sure that others are aware that they should not bother you during this time, or that the phone is turned to answer phone.

### Step 2: Write down your hypothetical worries

When you notice you are worrying outside of your planned worry time, write down your worry and notice if it is a hypothetical worry or a practical one. At first, until you get used to spotting the difference, you may find it useful to use the classifying tool from part 2b to do this. If it is a hypothetical worry, write it down on your Worry List knowing that you can worry about it as much as you like in your planned worry time.

Use step 3 to refocus on the present and complete the Worry List stating what activity you are going to do to refocus.

If you worry a lot at night when you are trying to get off to sleep, you may find it useful to keep a new Worry List at the side of the bed with a pen so that you can write them down and then refocus on the task at hand - sleeping. Notice where you are what is going on around you, the feel of the duvet against your skin, get comfortable and try and sleep knowing that you can worry about it during your next worry time as much as you want

### Step 3: Refocus on the present moment

Once you have written down a worry on your Worry List, the next step is to refocus on the present moment. This means paying attention to what you were doing before you were worrying, what is going on around you and the task at hand. You may find it helpful to start a new activity and really pay attention to it using your senses. For example, you were sat on the sofa with the TV on and noticed you were worrying about a hypothetical worry, so you then wrote the worry on your Worry List, then the next step is to refocus onto the task at hand. The task you were doing was watching TV. Turn up the volume or change channel and really pay attention to the present moment and the conversation the people on TV



are having. If you get more worries, just repeat the process throughout the day, writing them down and refocusing on the present using an activity. You may find the same hypothetical worries keep coming back. That is ok, just write them down and focus on the present, knowing what activity you are going to do and also that you can worry as much as you want about it during your worry time later in the day.

## **Step 4: Your scheduled worry time - Now worry!**

Now it is time to allow yourself to worry! Go through your list of hypothetical worries and choose one that you would like to start to worry about. For each hypothetical worry you have chosen consider how you felt when you wrote the worry and how you feel about it now. Has the thing you were worrying about happened? How did you deal with it if it has? Were there any worries that when you have come back to them during your worry time are no longer a problem? Spend some time reflecting on this.

Also reflect on what it feels like to worry as much as you want for that period of time. Did you need as much as you planned in Step 1? If some of the worries that you wrote down are no longer a problem for you, then put a line through them and let them go. As you practice worry time each day you may find that you feel less worried outside of your worry time and that you feel more able to deal with your worries.

It is very important however, that at the end of your worry time you stop your worry. To help you to do this some people like to throwaway their worry list after their worry time, or screw up the papers and put them into the bin afterwards to help them let them go! It is good to always start with a new list and fresh paper each day so that you only focus on the worries that have happened since your last worry time. Worry time takes practice and repetition, but is a really useful and effective technique to help you manage your worry.



# My worries today

<div><div>My worry is...</div><div>What if the parcel doesn't arrive on time?</div><div>I can worry about it as much as I want during my worry period at</div><div>7:30am/pm</div><div>Now i am going to refocus on the present moment by doing:</div><div>Cook dinner and notice the lovely smell of the lemon and coriander</div></div>	<div><div>My worry is...</div><div></div><div>I can worry about it as much as I want during my worry period at</div><div></div><div>am/pm</div><div>Now i am going to refocus on the present moment by doing:</div><div></div></div>
<div><div>My worry is...</div><div></div><div>I can worry about it as much as I want during my worry period at</div><div></div><div>am/pm</div><div>Now i am going to refocus on the present moment by doing:</div><div></div></div>	<div><div>My worry is...</div><div></div><div>I can worry about it as much as I want during my worry period at</div><div></div><div>am/pm</div><div>Now i am going to refocus on the present moment by doing:</div><div></div></div>
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## Remember:

### Refocus on the present moment

Once you have written down your worry, remember to refocus on the present moment. Focus on what is going on around you and tune your attention onto it. It is harder to worry when you are really focussed on the present moment. If the worry comes back, or new ones enter your mind, write them down knowing that you can worry about them during your worry time as much as you want. Writing down the activity that you are going to focus on using the Worry List also helps you to ensure you refocus.

Regular practice of worry time really helps you to manage your worries during the day.





# Part 4

## Problem solving your practical worries

*When we worry, our problems can sometimes feel overwhelming, like there are no solutions. Problem solving is an evidence-based intervention that helps you initially distance yourself from your worries to help you think about different types of practical solutions that there may be. Problem solving has eight steps and can be supported by your Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner.*

### Step 1: Identify the worry you want to focus on

In Parts 2a and 2b you identified your worries and separated them into worries about current problems that have a practical solution and worries about hypothetical situations that are often in the future, for which you can do little about. Choose one of the practical worries you would like to try and problem solve. Choose one that you really want to get sorted and feel is manageable or one that you absolutely need to address given the consequences if you don't (for example a worry about paying an overdue bill). Write this in the space in **Worksheet A**.

### Step 2: Convert the worry into a practical problem

Convert the practical worry you want address into a problem to solve. For example, the worry 'I still haven't paid the gas bill' should be converted into a practical problem that can be solved such as 'I need to sort the overdue gas bill by Thursday'.

### Step 3: Identify solutions

You should then try to identify as many potential solutions as possible. At this stage nothing should be rejected, no matter how ridiculous some solutions may seem. In fact, the ridiculous ones can help to generate other more practical solutions. Solutions can be generated to address different parts of the worry identified in Step 1.

### Step 4: Analyse the strengths and weaknesses of each solution

Use **Worksheet B** to subject each potential solution that you came up with in step 3 to an analysis of its strengths and weaknesses. You should consider the main advantages and disadvantages of each solution. This may include the possibility of being able to undertake the solution, the resources you have to undertake the solution and how you feel about carrying it out. Pay attention to the resources you have available to carry it out as this will help you in step 5 to select one of your solutions.

## Step 5: Select a solution

You should now choose one of your solutions to carry out. Your choice should be based on the analysis of strengths and weaknesses you did in Step 4.

## Step 6: Develop a plan

The solution you have chosen may require careful planning. Therefore you should seek to outline the steps you will take and any resources you have identified that may be needed. Try to ensure that the steps are specific, linked and realistic. Your Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner will likely help you to do this using the 'Four Ws' – what, where, when, with whom – to help you develop your plan if you are being supported to use this guide.

## Step 7: Put your plan into action

Now that you have developed your plan, it is all about putting it into action. Use **Worksheet C** to record what you did and how it went. This will help you and your Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner highlight things that went well or discuss things to do differently next time if needed.

## Step 8: Review your plan

You should also use **Worksheet C** to review how well your plan worked. Maybe it worked a little or not at all. The advantage of problem solving is that other options always exist. With the aid of your Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner this section will be used to gather information on the progress of your plan. If the plan worked you can continue to apply it. You could also think about developing new plans to apply to other practical problems. If the plan did not work, then perhaps go back to Step 5 and select a new solution as the basis of a new plan.

## Remember:

Keeping records of how using the techniques went is essential for you and your practitioner to review your progress and help you to problem solve any difficulties.

# Problem solving for worry

## Worksheet A

### Problem Solving

#### STEP 1 What Is Your Practical Worry?

Write down the practical worry you want to try and solve here

#### STEP 2 What Is The Problem?

Convert the worry into a problem you want to try and solve below.

#### STEP 3 What Solutions Are There?

Don't reject anything at this stage, however silly it may seem!

#### STEP 4 What Are The Strengths and Weaknesses For Each Solution?

Use worksheet B to write these down for each solution considered.

#### STEP 5 Select Your Best Solution

Review strengths and weaknesses on worksheet B, select a solution and write it below.

#### STEP 6 Develop A Plan To Apply Your Solution

What steps will you take to apply your solution?

#### Step 7 Put Your Plan Into Action

What did you do? Use worksheet C to keep a diary of exactly what you did.

#### STEP 8 Review Your Plan

How did it go? Use worksheet C to review how well your plan worked.



Part 4

Problem Solving  
Worksheet B

Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis

What are the strengths and weaknesses for each solution? For each solution considered write these below.

Solution	Strengths	Weaknesses

# Part 4

## Problem Solving Worksheet C

### What Did You Do and How Did It Go?

#### **STEP 7 Put Your Plan Into Action**

What did you do? Use worksheet C to keep a diary of exactly what you did

#### **STEP 8 Review Your Plan**

How did it go? Use worksheet C to review how well your plan worked.

# Part 5a

## Rob's Recovery Story

*Rob's story is about someone who used worry time to get on top of his worrying.*

Rob is 46 years old and is married with two children, Lily aged twelve and Harry aged sixteen. He came to see the local talking therapies service as he worried a lot, particularly about work, his family and their finances. For the last fifteen years Rob has worked as a team manager in a local computer company that makes software programmes.

Rob had a new manager at work after a long period of being managed by his previous boss, with whom he had a very good relationship and found very supportive. Since then, work had become more problematic and he worried that he was taking longer to do things than his colleagues. He also worried he made mistakes and that his new boss would be angry with him, or that he may lose his job. Rob avoided team meetings and seeing his boss as much as possible. As a result of his worries he often worked late, took work home and put off doing things for himself. A promotion had come up recently that his previous boss had encouraged him to apply for, but he hadn't as he worried that he would not be up to the job and that he would let his family down by not getting it, or worse, losing the job he had as he was taking so long to do things and was struggling to concentrate. This made him worry that his family would end up not being able to afford to pay the bills or the mortgage on their home. Rob also worried about being a good dad as he spent long hours at work and worried about his children doing well at school, or becoming worriers like him.

Rob found that he was having more headaches and felt increasingly irritable. He worried that he may be making himself ill with all his worries and that the headaches were a warning sign. He tried to push his worries out of his mind, but found they just kept coming back. He spoke to his wife about his anxiety

and they agreed he should get some help, as he was concerned that his worrying was a sign that he was losing control. He spoke to his GP who told him about a local Wellbeing Service that he could be referred to.

With his Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner (PWP) Rob discussed his current difficulties and kept a **worry diary** between their first and second support session. Using the **classification tool** in Part 2b Rob noticed that the majority of worries that he was having were hypothetical ones and that it was taking up a large part of his day worrying about them so much.

With his PWP Rob decided that he would like to use the worry time technique. Rob set a time to worry every day. His PWP asked him how long he thought he would need to set aside, given that he would worry as much as he wanted during this time. Rob thought he would need at least an hour, and so he set 8pm-9pm as his worry time and outside of this time his PWP showed him how to write down his worries using the **Worry List sheet** and to then refocus on the present moment.

At first Rob found it challenging to notice when he was worrying and to write it down and plan what activity he was going to do to refocus his attention onto the present, but with practice this got easier. Rob found that really paying attention to the sounds around him, by getting up and doing a new activity or focusing on the task he was previously doing really helped him to do this. Sometimes worries came back into his mind, especially when he was trying to sleep, but he just followed the process his PWP had suggested and wrote these down and kept a pen and worry list at the side of the bed and then switched his attention onto the task at hand – sleeping! Telling



himself he could worry as much as he wanted during his worry time really helped.

During his set worry period, Rob soon learned that he did not need the full time to worry as many of the things he had been worrying about during the day such as forgetting to reply to emails, the children being late home from school or not having enough time to get the shopping after work – were no longer worries by the time he got to his worry period. If he had not used the technique Rob knew he would have worried about things much more than he did. He also learned that worrying was hard work during his worry time, it got boring and that worrying actually made him feel worse. So he

reflected with his PWP that he no longer felt that worrying was an important way of dealing with things!

Rob was really pleased with his progress and found it easier and easier to recognise practical worries he could do something about using the problem solving technique and to let go of the hypothetical worries that previously would have taken up his whole day! It wasn't always easy and sometime Rob found himself worrying more again, usually when he found his mind drifted or he had a lot on at work, but he felt more able to manage these times and to stop it impacting on what he did as a result.



## Part 5b

### Sarah's Recovery Story

*Sarah's story is about someone who used problem solving to get on top of her worrying.*

Sarah is 29 years old and for as long as she can remember has worried a lot. On a daily basis she found herself worrying about lots of different types of things. She worried about whether her work is good enough, her relationship with Nick, if her car will get through its next M.O.T, and she often worried about getting ill in the future. She was also due to fly to Manchester for work soon and started worrying about whether her flight may crash. To top it all she even worried that all her worrying would make her ill, or that it was a sign that she was going mad.

Sarah used to accept worrying as something she did, as part of her personality as she comes from a family of worriers. More recently however, all this worrying

was beginning to get on top of her and impact on her life. She was having increasing problems concentrating at work and was easily distracted by her worries.

She would often expect Nick to sort things out for her, such as paying the bills or sorting the car, but then would find herself getting increasingly irritated with him for no reason. She felt her physical health was also getting worse, with more frequent headaches and getting really bad pins and needles in her hands and feet. She always had problems getting off to sleep, often lying in bed worrying, but this was getting worse as well.



One evening, whilst Sarah was tossing and turning in bed trying to get to sleep, Nick turned the bedroom light on and said he was having problems coping with her constant worrying. He said she was always snappy, that they never did anything anymore because they were both tired and she often felt ill. He was concerned about where their relationship was heading. He also felt that whilst everyone worries from time to time, Sarah's constant worrying had become a real problem. They both discussed this and Sarah agreed to make an appointment with her GP to see if anything could be done. Sarah did not get any sleep that night, worrying about it!

Two days later Sarah's GP had referred her to the 'Time to Talk' service, and her appointment was in two weeks' time. During her first appointment Sarah discussed her difficulties with Jamie, a Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner.

Jamie suggested that Sarah may be experiencing something called Generalised Anxiety Disorder. He indicated how one of the main features of this was excessive and uncontrollable worry, that was there more often than not and which could cause a number of physical symptoms, such as those Sarah had described.

Sarah found herself a little reassured just knowing that what she was experiencing had a name and that there was something that could be done about it. Jamie talked through a number of ways he could help Sarah and recommended a self-help programme based on cognitive behavioural therapy called Dealing with Worry. Jamie highlighted the value of setting some treatment goals. He discussed how this was helpful as a guide to know how well her treatment was going, and gave them both something to work towards.

**With the aid of her Psychological Wellbeing Practitioner Sarah decided on the following goals:**

### Sarah's Goals

#### Goal number 1

*Be relaxed and enjoy time with Nick.*

**Today's date:** *6th June*

I can do this now (circle a number):

*0*

1

2

3

4

5

6

Not at all

Occasionally

Often

Anytime

#### Goal number 2

*Be more focussed at work and try for promotion*

**Today's date:** *6th June*

I can do this now (circle a number):

*0*

1

2

3

4

5

6

Not at all

Occasionally

Often

Anytime





They talked through this programme and Sarah really liked the idea of trying to get a better understanding of her worries and then using the techniques in the book to help.

Sarah kept a diary of her types of worries over the first week using the **worry diary**. He indicated that this would give her an idea as to what she was worrying about, the types of situations she was worrying in and how anxious it made her feel. He explained this would help her to move to part 2b and classify her worries.

During her next session with Jamie, Sarah discussed her completed **worry diary**. She had found it really easy to write her worries down and became far more aware of the situations in which she tended to worry and the impact that worrying was having on her physically. She had also found it really helpful to separate her worries into those that were about current problems and had a practical solution and those about hypothetical situations using the **classifying tool**. She was able to see how the hypothetical types of worries differed from the more practical ones as they were often about things in the future which she could actually do little about. She told Jamie it had made her wonder about the point of worrying about these types of worries if nothing could be done about them!

Jamie then asked Sarah what she thought would be a useful next step based on what she had read in the guide. Sarah wanted to deal with the practical worries she had identified and to select one that she felt she wanted to address. Sarah was having a problem with a knocking sound when she drove the car and had been putting off getting it looked at. The knocking was there all the time but really bad when the road was uneven, when she went over a speed bump or pot-holes. Sarah wrote her worry *'the car is making a knocking sound, what if it breaks down or I have an accident'* into the space on the problem solving **Worksheet A**.

Sarah then converted her worry into a problem to be solved. Jamie helped Sarah to change her worry into a practical problem *'I need to find out what the knocking sound is from the car and get it fixed'* and then write this into the space below her worry on **Worksheet A**.

# Problem solving for worry

## Worksheet A

### Problem Solving

#### STEP 1 What Is Your Practical Worry?

Write down the practical worry you want to try and solve here

*'The car is making a knocking sound, what if it breaks down or I have an accident'*

#### STEP 2 What Is The Problem?

Convert the worry into a problem you want to try and solve below.

*'I need to find out what the knocking sound is from the car and get it fixed'*

#### STEP 3 What Solutions Are There?

Don't reject anything at this stage, however silly it may seem!

- |  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| <i>-Ignore the noise and it may go away</i>                | <i>-Catch a bus to work</i>        |
| <i>-Chat to Nick as he may know and be able to sort it</i> | <i>-Take the car to the garage</i> |
| <i>-Sell the car and buy a new one</i>                     | <i>-Scrap the car!</i>             |

#### STEP 4 What Are The Strengths and Weaknesses For Each Solution?

Use worksheet B to write these down for each solution considered.

#### STEP 5 Select Your Best Solution

Review strengths and weaknesses on worksheet B, select a solution and write it below.

*Take the car to the garage*

#### STEP 6 Develop A Plan To Apply Your Solution

What steps will you take to apply your solution?

*I will ask Nick to give me the phone number of the garage we usually use. I will then phone them during my lunch hour on Tuesday to ask them to have a look at my car. I will arrange this for after work, but as soon as possible as I am a little worried that something may go bang if I don't! I am a bit worried about the cost however, so I will ask them to identify the problem and also to give me a written quote to repair it first to make sure we can afford it. I will then discuss this with Nick*

#### Step 7 Put Your Plan Into Action

What did you do? Use worksheet C to keep a diary of exactly what you did.

#### STEP 8 Review Your Plan

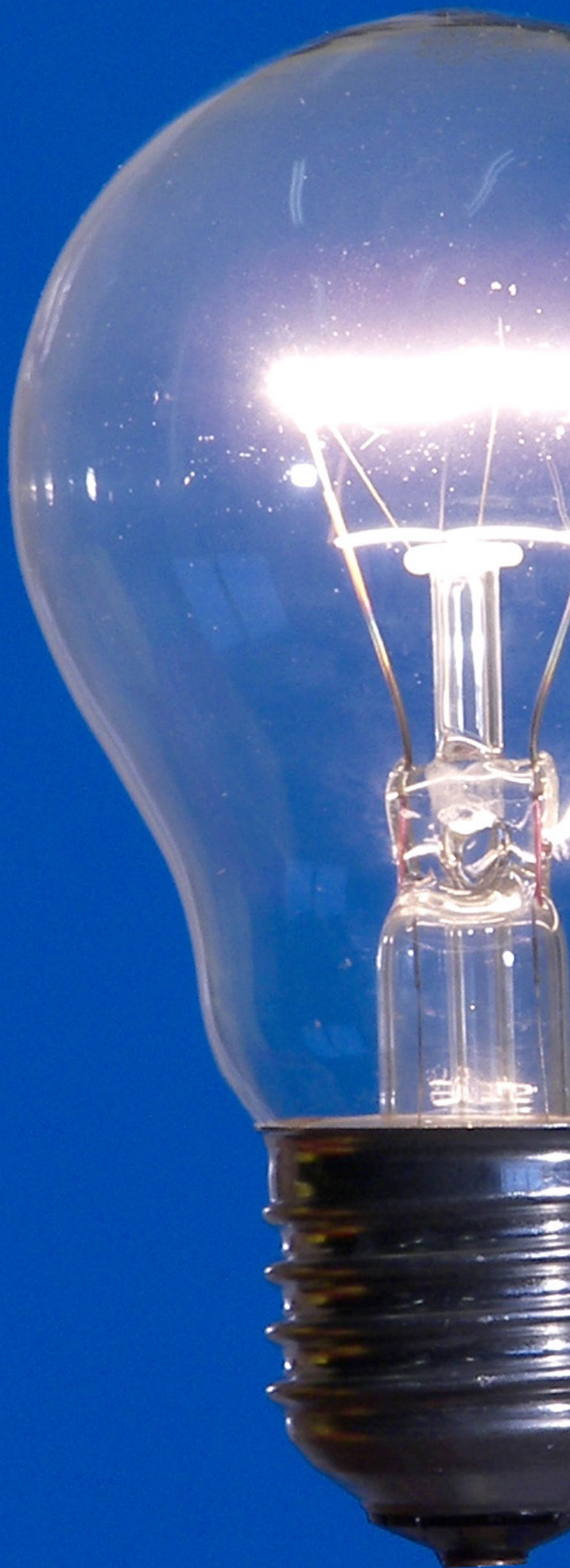
How did it go? Use worksheet C to review how well your plan worked.



Sarah then moved onto writing as many solutions as possible on the worksheet. This started off really easily but after identifying a couple of solutions she began to struggle for ideas. Jamie helped at this point by encouraging her not to rule anything out too early on, but include every option. This really helped as although Sarah initially identified *'scrap the car!'*, which even when writing it down sounded silly, writing it down did help her think a first step was that she needed to actually *'identify what is causing the knocking on the car'*. After Sarah had identified a few solutions she was encouraged to move on to Step 4 and start to think about the strength and weaknesses for each solution. Jamie also encouraged her to continue adding to the list of potential solutions that may occur to her, or in conversation with Nick after the session.

Sarah then moved to **Worksheet B** and wrote down the strengths and weaknesses for each solution. Sarah initially found this quite an easy task and having to do it in a clear and structured manner really helped. For some of the solutions identified Sarah was quickly able to realise that there were no strengths and she was able to dismiss these. However as money was tight Sarah soon noted that two potential solutions – *'take the car to the garage'* and *'sell the car and buy a new one'* set off a worrying thought *'what if the car costs a lot of money which we don't have?'* Jamie suggested that Sarah was falling into the 'what If' trap again. He asked her to consider if she really knew that going to the garage would cost her a lot of money, or indeed how much it would cost her?

Sarah soon agreed that she did not know and would not know until she actually found out. She noticed this again was a hypothetical worry! As such she wrote this new worry down in her **Worry Diary** along with the other hypothetical worries she had been having that day and would return to this during her **Worry Time**.





Sarah was then keen to review the strengths and weaknesses for each solution identified on **Worksheet B** and to choose a solution to try out. Although tempted to choose 'Chat to Nick as he may know and be able to sort it', Sarah decided that there was really only one solution to choose 'Take the car to the garage'. She wrote this into her worksheet and then planned the steps she needed to take to carry it out. The first thing that sprung to mind was that she needed to get the details of their current garage from Nick, as he usually sorted all this himself. However, Sarah was very clear that she would phone the mechanic and not expect Nick to sort it out this time - she wanted to do it. After this, Sarah broke her chosen solution down further into a number of different steps. Sarah found this really helpful as she could see that by breaking it down into smaller steps it did not seem so overwhelming.



# Sarah's Problem Solving

## Worksheet B

### Strengths and Weaknesses Analysis

What are the strengths and weaknesses for each solution? For each solution considered write these below.

Solution	Strengths	Weaknesses
Ignore the noise and it may go away.	None!	It has been there forever and getting worse. Every time I need to use the car it sets my worrying off.
Chat to Nick as he may know and be able to sort it.	He may know what it is and sort it out.	Nick is useless around cars, and all I ever do is ask him to sort my problems out which he is getting fed up with.
Catch a bus to work.	Won't need to use the car.	Will take forever to get to work, and expensive! They are not the most reliable and I would miss my freedom.
Scrap the car!	None!	Won't be able to get around, waste of money, can't afford a new one.
Take the car to the garage	They will clearly know what the problem is and be able to advise.	It may cost a lot of money, what if I can't afford it?
Sell the car and buy a new one.	The problem will be gone, and I will have a nice new car.	Maybe an unnecessary expense and would cost a lot of money.



All that was now left was for Sarah to actually put her solution into action. She was encouraged to do this over the course of the next week using **Worksheet C** to record what she had done and how things had gone for her.

The following week Sarah had a follow up session with Jamie. After reviewing the problem statement and completing the measures as usual, Sarah was really pleased to tell Jamie how she had got on. The car had already been repaired and it was not as expensive as she had feared. Discussing what she had written in her worksheets with Jamie, she reflected on how much she had learnt. Not least, she started to become aware that trying to problem solve the practical worries can also be of benefit for those related, but unsolvable, hypothetical worries.

Over the next few weeks Sarah continued to use the problem solving approach on more of her practical worries, and was gaining confidence all the time. So much so that she began to recognise that some of the things she would have previously worried about before were no longer becoming worries, but merely problems to solve. As a result she was beginning to feel better with herself and getting less irritated with Nick. Sarah was also performing better at work, in fact even better than before as she found her new problem solving skills came in really useful there as well. Although not ready to consider promotion at work yet, for the first time in a long time this felt like a possibility.

# Sarah's Problem Solving Worksheet C

## What Did You Do and How Did It Go?

### STEP 7 Put Your Plan Into Action

What did you do? Use worksheet C to keep a diary of exactly what you did

I got hold of the garage number from Nick and phoned them up during my lunchtime as planned. I then made an appointment to bring the car in however, the garage asked me a few questions about the noise over the phone and told me that from what I said it sounded like it was the exhaust, and if so this was a very easy and cheapish job to fix. This made me feel much better and I noticed that my worrying about my car got better almost immediately.

When I got my car to the garage, they were all really helpful and very quickly identified that it was the exhaust, which had almost broken in two. They had a new one for my car in stock, and given it was actually quite a cheap job they did it there and then. I felt really good about sorting this myself and Nick was also really pleased for me – we had a nice meal to celebrate!

### STEP 8 Review Your Plan

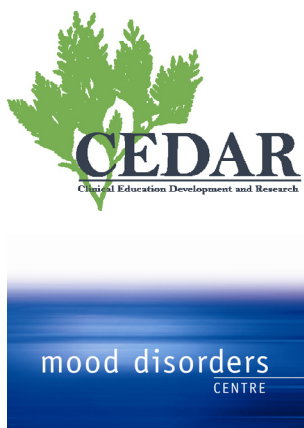
How did it go? Use worksheet C to review how well your plan worked.

I think this went really well. It really helped to identify the problem and break this down, and take some control! Surprisingly, getting the car looked at all seemed fairly straight forward, and by sorting this worry I noticed that some other worries of mine had got a lot better. In particular I was no longer worrying about all those 'hypothetical' worries that Jamie talked about, such as 'what if I lose my job?', 'what if the car breaks down when I am alone at night?'. Overall I really think that using this approach to problem solving will help my worry. At first I thought it was too simple and wasn't sure it would work but it really helped and gave me a logical structure to work through and not put things off anymore! Although I am still worrying about other things, it is getting better and I feel far less tense.



# Additional Worry list

<div><div><div>My worry is...</div><div></div><div>I can worry about it as much as I want during my worry period at</div><div>am/pm</div><div>Now i am going to refocus on the present moment by doing:</div></div></div>	<div><div><div>My worry is...</div><div></div><div>I can worry about it as much as I want during my worry period at</div><div>am/pm</div><div>Now i am going to refocus on the present moment by doing:</div></div></div>
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