

# CONSTRUCTIVE WORRY INSTRUCTIONS

When we have problems, we tend to use our problem solving skills to make our lives better and relieve ourselves of anxiety. It is not surprising that some of us may use our problem solving skills at the wrong times and places, namely bedtime. We may think about a problem, trying to solve it, but unfortunately, the anxiety caused by the problem will keep us awake. Constructive worry is a method for managing the tendency to worry during that quiet time when sleep is supposed to be taking over. During the early evening (at least 2 hours before bed) take about fifteen minutes to do this exercise. Here's how it is done:

1. Write down a problem facing you that has the greatest chance of keeping you awake at bedtime, and list them in the "*Concerns*" column.

2. Then, think of the next step you might help fix it. Write it down in the "*Solutions*" column. This need not be the final solution to the problem, since most problems have to be solved by taking steps anyhow, and you will be doing this again tomorrow night and the night after until you finally get to the best solution.

→ If you know how to fix the problem completely, then write that down.

→ If you decide that this is not really a big problem, and you will just deal with it when the time comes, then write that down.

→ If you decide that you simply do not know what to do about it, and need to ask someone to help you, write that down.

→ If you decide that it is a problem, but there seems to be no good solution at all, and that you will just have to live with it, write that down, with a note to yourself that maybe sometime soon you or someone you speak with will give you a clue that will lead you to a solution.

3. Repeat this for any other concerns you may have.

4. Fold the Constructive Worry sheet in half and place it on the nightstand next to your bed and forget about it until bedtime.

5. At bedtime, if you begin to worry actually tell yourself that you have dealt with your problems already in the best way you know how, and when you were at your problem solving best. Remind yourself that you will be working on them again tomorrow evening and that nothing you can do while you are so tired can help you any more than you have already done; more effort will only make matters worse.

6. An additional benefit of Constructive Worry may be less anxiety during the daytime.

ADAPTED FROM: Carney & Waters, 2006



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# Constructive worry worksheet

Concerns	Solutions
1. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ 3. _____ _____
2. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ 3. _____ _____
3. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ 3. _____ _____
4. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	1. _____ _____ 2. _____ _____ 3. _____ _____

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