



Techniques to control worry.

Resilience isn't a personality trait – it's something that we all have the ability to develop and achieve. This factsheet takes you through an exercise if you're feeling worried a lot of the time, to improve your mental wellbeing.



The worry buster technique

Being worried is a very common state that we all experience from time to time. When you are under pressure for extended periods of time, it is not unusual to feel 'worried all the time'. Worry creates unnecessary negative emotions that reduce your ability to cope with the specific issue and with daily life in general.

Control your worries

If you are worried about something, then try this exercise. Take a sheet of paper and divide it into three columns. The columns should be headed:

1. Define the worry.
2. Worst possible outcome.
3. Damage limitation.

In the first column write a clear and accurate description of the problem that is worrying you. If it is a problem with several different parts, then describe each one separately. In the case of these 'cluster problems' it sometimes happens that if you solve just one of the components, the rest simply disappear!

In the second column, write down the worst case scenario. Usually you will find that this is not the end of the world! Once you have mentally faced up to the possibility of the worst possible outcome, the worry usually loses a lot of its strength.

Now you have resolved to accept the worst, should it occur, and to live with it, you are ready to move on to damage limitation. In the third column write down all the things you can possibly do to ensure that the worst does not happen. In other words, how can you minimise the impact?

Quite often you will find that, in column 2, when you are identifying the worst possible outcome, the problem isn't really worth worrying about. In other words, it helps you to establish some perspective; and if you identify that something isn't worth worrying about then column 3 becomes redundant.

More techniques to help develop your resilience

To help develop your resilience further, take time to consider the following techniques:

- Be positive - if you only expect the worst things to happen, how resilient can you be? Being positive is one of the biggest factors in recovering from adversity.

- Face your fears - whilst it might seem like the hardest thing to do at the time, facing up to the stresses and challenges that are making us feel overwhelmed can help us to feel better. S
- Develop a support network - speaking with friends, loved ones or colleagues when we're feeling stressed or isolated can give you a fresh perspective as well as enable you to process the experience and focus on ways to move forward positively. Having strong connections at work can help you be more resistant to stress, and be happier in your role. This also goes for your personal life: the more real friendships you develop, the more resilient you're going to be, because you have a strong support network to fall back on.
- Be active - regular exercise protects against the negative emotional consequences of stress. By exercising at a suitable intensity, frequency and duration, you can build your immune system so that when stress comes, your body will be ready. Regular exercise also reduces the baseline levels of stress hormones found in your body reduces the hormonal response to sudden psychological stress. So, if you've a hard day at work or get stuck in traffic when you're in a rush, it will feel less 'stressful' and do less damage to your brain and body.
- Learn from your past – you can build your resilience from learning from mistakes and challenging situations. Reflect on the techniques you used to help you get through it.
- Keep going – Being resilient means that despite your setbacks, you pick yourself up, dust yourself down, reflect and move on.
- Know your purpose – Knowing why you get out of bed on a morning can help you stay focused despite the stress you face. This might be being involved in your community, taking part in activities that are meaningful to you or being clear on your role when at work.

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To build your resilience, focus on thinking positively, and try to learn from the mistakes you make.