

THE WORRY CHAIN

To use this technique, call to mind a thought or event that provokes anxiety or a “thought spiral” for you, and follow the steps below.



1. Identify the triggering worry.
2. Play out all possible outcomes link by link until you reach the worst case scenario.
3. Underneath each link, identify actions you could take, or things within your control or influence for that link.
4. Consider the length of the chain, noticing how many steps are in between your triggering worry and the worst case scenario.
5. Now, consider all of the actions or things within your control for each link in the chain.
6. Take action on any items within your control underneath the first link now. postpone worry/action underneath other links until that link becomes your current circumstance/reality.

To give you an idea of how this might look, here is an example of a worry chain, as well as the steps involved in creating and processing the triggering worry:



I HAVE A HEADACHE → I MIGHT HAVE COVID → WHAT IF I GAVE IT TO EVERYONE AT WORK? → THEY'LL PASS IT ON AND DIE → I COULD LOSE EVERYONE I KNOW & LOVE

1. What if I have covid?
2. I could pass it on to people at work and my family, they could pass it on, get really sick or die, and then I could end up losing a lot of people I know and love.
3. I can exercise influence/control by taking headache medicine, laying down, drinking water > getting tested for covid, informing the health dept (& anyone I was in contact with) to contact trace, maintaining my vaccinations and abiding by quarantine protocols per the CDC > encouraging my coworkers and loved ones to get vaccinated and wear masks/social distance in public spaces > get help/support to grieve, honor memories, and help myself process/keep functioning
4. There are three steps in between my triggering worry and worst-case scenario.
5. It's fairly likely my action steps can influence or prevent the worst-case scenario happening.
6. I will take headache medicine, drink some water, and rest right now. I will undergo testing today or tomorrow if my headache does not go away. I may start encouraging my loved ones to take safety measures and continue to take them myself.