

Notes from Training week #7 —Healing Worry and Fear Embrace it A.L.L.— Acknowledge. Learn. Let go.

I recommend that therapists (and everyone really— parents, educators, supervisors, managers, and leaders) tune in to personal worries and fears first. Practice coping and reframing tools on yourself before attempting to assist others. With this recommendation in mind, I asked for the training group to generate a list of worries. This list included therapists' worries from both personal life and professional conversations with clients.

“Anything that's human is mentionable, and anything that is mentionable can be more manageable. When we can talk about our feelings, they become less overwhelming, less upsetting, and less scary. The people we trust with that important talk can help us know that we are not alone.”

Mr. Rogers

Step 1: Acknowledge by creating your worry list. Do not judge or edit when acknowledging emotions, thoughts or problems... *this is a brainstorming step, editing comes later. Feel free to rant, vent, feel like a 5-year-old or sound like a teenager—acknowledge it all.*

Common worries identified by the participants in this training.

- A. *Worry about everything—mind racing before bed causing difficulty falling asleep.*
- B. *Worry about finances*
- C. *Worry about time management*
- D. *Worry about relationships*
- E. *People-pleaser based worries (worry about anger, conflict, rejection, etc..)*
- F. *Worry about what to do after college graduation (or any life stage change, losses, or transitions into the next uncertainty)*
- G. *Worry related to Imposter syndrome (Therapists or clients) —the feelings and thoughts of: not sure what I am doing—they are going to figure out that I am winging it—lack of confidence—who do I think I am? I don't belong here! Imposter syndrome includes perfectionistic worries that we won't say or do the right thing. Worry that we won't be helpful enough. Sense of dread when feeling overly responsible for another's progress or success. Sense of helplessness or vulnerability when lacking the ability to articulate worries, think of solutions or implement changes.*

Step 2: Learn-from the worry list: “Learn” always starts with a reality check and may require more questions to understand and evaluate deeper issues. “Learn” also applies coping skills that align with [intention](#) and [wise mind](#). “Learn” is the [editing, coping and problem-solving step](#). This step invites your brain to transition out of [worry into wisdom](#). A few tips that help with the “learn” step include:

- Always congratulate yourself or others for completing Step#1. Acknowledge —that was brave!!!!
- Remember to **normalize and humanize your worry list** by knowing that worries are predictable, common, and human. Google the worry if you are not sure about that. Zero

search results mean your worry is so unique that it has not been documented before in the history of humankind—so you may be sitting on the next bestselling book and movie. But, before you take that daydream any farther, a [reality check](#) will bring you back to the conclusion that not only has your worry been done before, it comes with a vast variety of evidence-based coping skills for you to choose from.

- When you are ready, let's [learn](#) how to cope with those worries!

Insider Hint: The goal is to remove the shame, dread or hopelessness from your worry list by applying a little humor, positivity and hope. We also need a “buy in” to trying some coping skills. What is your intention?

- Do you want to address your worry list with problem-solving and coping skills?
- Or would you prefer to complain, blame and remain worried?

If the answer is that you or someone else prefers to complain, blame and remain worried—no problem! Then we will simply move on to the next item on the worry list. We don't spend energy talking anyone into something they said “no” to. so we move on until we hit a solid “yes” for learning, insight and coping.

Tools—When the intention is to heal the worry using coping skills.

A. Worry about everything—mind racing before bed causing difficulty falling asleep.

Mind racing before bed has a huge toolkit of options.

1. Using the list in [Creating Best Results](#), evaluate the lifestyle or health issues that may cause a racing mind and delayed, interrupted or disturbed sleep. Check for problems with [caffeine](#) and [sleep hygiene](#). [Creating Best Results](#) recommendations include effective strategies such as meditation, [mindful breathing](#), journaling, and [mind-calming apps](#) ... are you willing to try any of those options? A physician consult is helpful for people with complex medical conditions, sleep disorders, chronic pain, addictions, ADHD, and severe mental illness such as bipolar and psychotic disorders.

2. Coping tools to help with worry:

- [Identify source of worry- is it reason/logic mind, wise mind, emotional mind?](#)
- [What data supports your worries? Reality check—are the worries true or distorted thoughts?](#)
- [Is this worry in or out of your control? Work through worries using the map](#)
- [Transform the worry into wisdom.](#)
- [Reframe the thoughts that keep you awake at night using the Ladder Tool](#)
- [Stress Prevention Tests](#)
- [Understanding the difference between worry, anxiety and fear](#) may be useful
- [To address that worry loop keeping you awake, use the Finish the Sentence Tool](#)
- [Stop “Shoulding” on Yourself Tool](#)
- [Still stuck with obsessive thoughts? Try the Sticky Brain 20/20/20 tool](#)

B. Worry about finances

1. Reality check—(Run the math.) What data supports your worries? Financial worries based on fact are a smart concern, not a worry problem. Address real financial concerns with assistance from resources and supports

Resources

[Michigan 211](#)

[GreenPath](#)

[Debtors Anonymous](#)

[Suzy Orman,](#)

[Dave Ramsey,](#)

Use of the public library, employer based financial advisors, friends with money management skills, legal advice, retirement planning or referral to other social services.. etc... be open to whatever resources, supports, entitlements and information is available.

2. Tools: If the reality check proves that finances are stable and the worry is a [distorted thought](#), then use the **tools highlighted in red**, listed in Worry A (Worry about everything).

C. Worry about time management

1. Reality check- how is your time management negatively impacting work, home, school or relationships? If you are successful in all areas and the data proves that your time management skills are producing positive results, then perhaps the issue is that you are too hard on yourself. That said, my experience is that by the time someone tells a therapist that they have time management issues, there is usually measurable data to prove that they are correct. Time management concerns may need further evaluation to rule out: cognitive brain functioning issues, ADHD, focus, memory and sequencing disorders, mood disorders, sleep disorders, neurological disorders such as stroke, dementia, narcolepsy etc.. or a side effect of medications or undiagnosed substance use disorders. In addition to reviewing the items in **[Creating Best Results](#)**, use testing, resources and referrals to determine the origin of the time management deficit and coordinate concerns with the other health care professionals. Once the origin of the time management concern is identified, an action plan specific to the origin of the worry is required. **If the time management worry is identified as mental health related, consider the following:**

Questions:

1. What are you willing to do differently to manage your time more effectively?
2. How do you imagine your life be different once you are managing your time more effectively?
3. Do you believe your time management worries stem from **[bad habits](#)** or choices within your control or something medical, health related, out of your control?

Tools

Use the **tools highlighted in red** listed in Worry A (Worry about everything).

[Circle of Life Stress Test](#)

[Replace Bad Habits with Coping Skills](#)

Resources in addition to neuropsychological evaluation and cognitive testing

[Michigan Rehabilitation Services for employment concerns](#)

[Additudemag.com](#)

Consider an educational and [ADA accommodations](#) that may be applicable

D. Worry about relationships

1. Reality check- notice how your relationship impacts your health, safety, dignity, work, finances, home, school or other relationships. Notice which part of your mind is active during the worry—(**wise mind tool**) What data supports your worry?

Questions/links to tools

1. Is this relationship dangerous?
2. What advice would you give a loved one who has a relationship worry exactly like yours?
3. What are the options, choices, supports and resources available to resolve this relationship worry?
4. Are your thoughts aligned with healthy relationship thinking? Or with distorted thoughts?
5. Does this relationship worry involve reasonable expectations?
6. Does this relationship worry involve healthy trust?
7. Is the relationship worry based on healthy boundaries or on checkers cheating?
8. Is the worry about relationships connected to passivity or aggression?
9. Is the worry following the rules for healthy dating?
10. Would the relationship worry be eased by understanding emotional accounts and love languages?
11. Would the worry resolve with understanding how to detach with love, and let go?
12. Is the worry related to childhood trauma, raised in a dysfunctional family?
13. Does the relationship worry stem from an inability to cope with anger?
14. Is this relationship worry concerning something you can practice transforming worry to wisdom?
15. Does the relationship worry involve someone with personality disorder traits?
16. If you feel at a complete loss for how to address this relationship worry.. look more closely at several of the personality disorder traits. Borderline, Dependent, Narcissistic
17. Is this relationship worry listed in the thoughts consistent with obsessive thoughts?
18. Have you watched the relationship videos and parenting videos applicable to your worry?
19. Do you believe that Stress tools and stress videos would improve your relationship?
20. Would your relationship worries benefit from understanding yourself?

E. People-pleaser based worries (worry about anger, conflict, rejection, etc..)

1. Reality Check: Where is this worry coming from—emotion, logic or wise mind?

A worry related to pleasing others in response to oppression or a dangerous or life-threatening situation is a survival strategy, not a worry problem. What data supports your worry?

Questions/tool links:

- 1 Is this people pleaser worry stemming from childhood trauma, distorted beliefs
2. How old are you when you have this worry—what inner-age is your worry stemming from?
3. What memories do you have about this worry—when was the first time you remember being worried about pleasing someone-- do you have a pattern?
4. At what age—what birthday—do you believe you will be old enough to no longer worry what those people think? At what age do adults focus on living by their own standards, values and beliefs?
5. If the worry is not related to survival or danger.. then list the worries associated with people pleasing by listing all the worries associated with displeasing others... then what will happen?
6. **Apply any or all of the tools in red, section A “Worry about everything.”**

7. Apply any or all of the tools in purple, section D Relationship worries.
8. Would your people pleasing worries be resolved with healthier self-esteem?
9. Would your people pleasing worries benefit from understanding yourself?

F. Worry about what to do after college graduation (or any life stage change, losses, or transitions into the next uncertainty)

1. Reality check: What part of your brain does this worry originate—reason, emotion or wisdom? Is your worry based on facts or distorted thinking?

Questions/tool links:

1. What data supports your worry? A worry based on facts is an opportunity to address a real problem. Good for you! What are your choices to address this real problem? What resources or supports could assist you with problem-solving? How have others in your situation navigated the problem successfully? Create an action plan to solve real problems.
2. A worry that is completely based on emotions and distorted thinking requires an emotional tool. **Use any or all of the tools outlined in the red section A Worry About Everything.**
3. A worry that is half emotion and half real-data driven concerns requires both an action plan for addressing the practical concerns and an emotional pep talk for coaching through the illogical fears. After completing #2 and #3 above, let's also add some self-coaching and inner-pep-talk.
 - How have you successfully navigated through and coped with major life stages and changes up to this moment?
 - What prior skills, experiences and accomplishments have prepared you for this next step?
 - Do you have realistic expectations about this next step? If not, how could you become more realistic? What advice would you give a friend in a similar situation?
 - Have you created several different fallback plans so that you know, no matter what, you will be ok? If not, create those plans now.
 - If your worry is related to graduating with “imposter” syndrome, use the tools outlined below in Section G Worry related to Imposter syndrome

G. Worry related to Imposter syndrome

Reality check: Where does this imposter syndrome worry originate in your brain —reason, emotion or wisdom? What data supports the “fact” that you are, indeed an imposter? Your data should include the certifications, degrees or recommendations that you obtained through cheating, forgery, bribery and falsification that allowed you to have your current position.

Questions/tool links:

1. Notice which imposter syndrome thought stems from distorted thinking. Imposter syndrome by definition, is a “distorted” thought.
2. What do you believe is the “normal” amount of doubt, anxiety or uncertainty that someone in a position similar to yours would have? What data supports your belief?
3. Have you openly discussed your doubts, fears and insecurities with peers, teachers, mentors or supervisors?
 - If yes, what are the similarities and differences?
 - If not, ask peers if they have some of the thoughts and feelings you have. Remember, every expert was once a beginner.

4. Check out the Self-esteem section of the website. Specifically: watch all the videos and Complete all 12 tools in the self-esteem tool kit
5. Transform imposter syndrome worry into wisdom