WORKSHEET 64 · FOR THE PSYCHOLOGIST

Real or hypothetical worry?

Sorting worries: solving what can be solved, letting go of the rest

AIM

Help the person distinguish worries about current, changeable problems (to be worked on with problem solving) from hypothetical worries ("what if…?"), to be approached with exposure to uncertainty or defusion.

WHO IT IS FOR

Generalised anxiety, numerous scattered worries.

DURATION

15 min in session; daily sorting for one or two weeks

HOW TO RUN IT

1. List the week's worries.
2. For each one: is it about a current problem that can be acted on? Or about a hypothetical, distant event?
3. Real worries: point towards worksheet 65 (problem solving).
4. Hypothetical worries: work on tolerating uncertainty (worksheet 13) or defusion (worksheet 01).

POINTS TO WATCH

> Some worries mix the two: separate the part that can be acted on from the "what if…?" part.

REFERENCES

Dugas, M. J. & Robichaud, M. (2007). Cognitive-Behavioral Treatment for Generalized Anxiety Disorder: From Science to Practice. Routledge.

Clark, D. A. & Beck, A. T. (2010). Cognitive Therapy of Anxiety Disorders: Science and Practice. Guilford.

PSYCHOLOGIST'S NOTES

© 2026 Gonzalo Garzo, clinical psychologist · gonzalogarzo.com · CC BY-NC-ND 4.0: free to share, no commercial use or modifications

WORKSHEET 64 · WORKSHEET TO HAND OUT

Real or hypothetical worry?

Not all worries are the same. Some are about a real problem you can act on. Others are “what ifs” that don’t exist yet. Sorting them helps you know what to do with them.

1. Write down your worries for the day.
2. For each one: is it a real, current problem I can act on?
3. If so: what is the next action (worksheet 65)?
4. If not (“what if…?”): I notice it and let it pass (worksheets 01 and 13).

Worry	Real or hypothetical?	What I do

What proportion of my worries is hypothetical?

These exercises do not replace therapy. If you are in distress or having suicidal thoughts: 112 (European Union), 3114 (France) or the emergency number of the country where you live.

© 2026 Gonzalo Garzo, clinical psychologist · gonzalogarzo.com · CC BY-NC-ND 4.0: free to share, no commercial use or modifications