

THE WORRY TREE

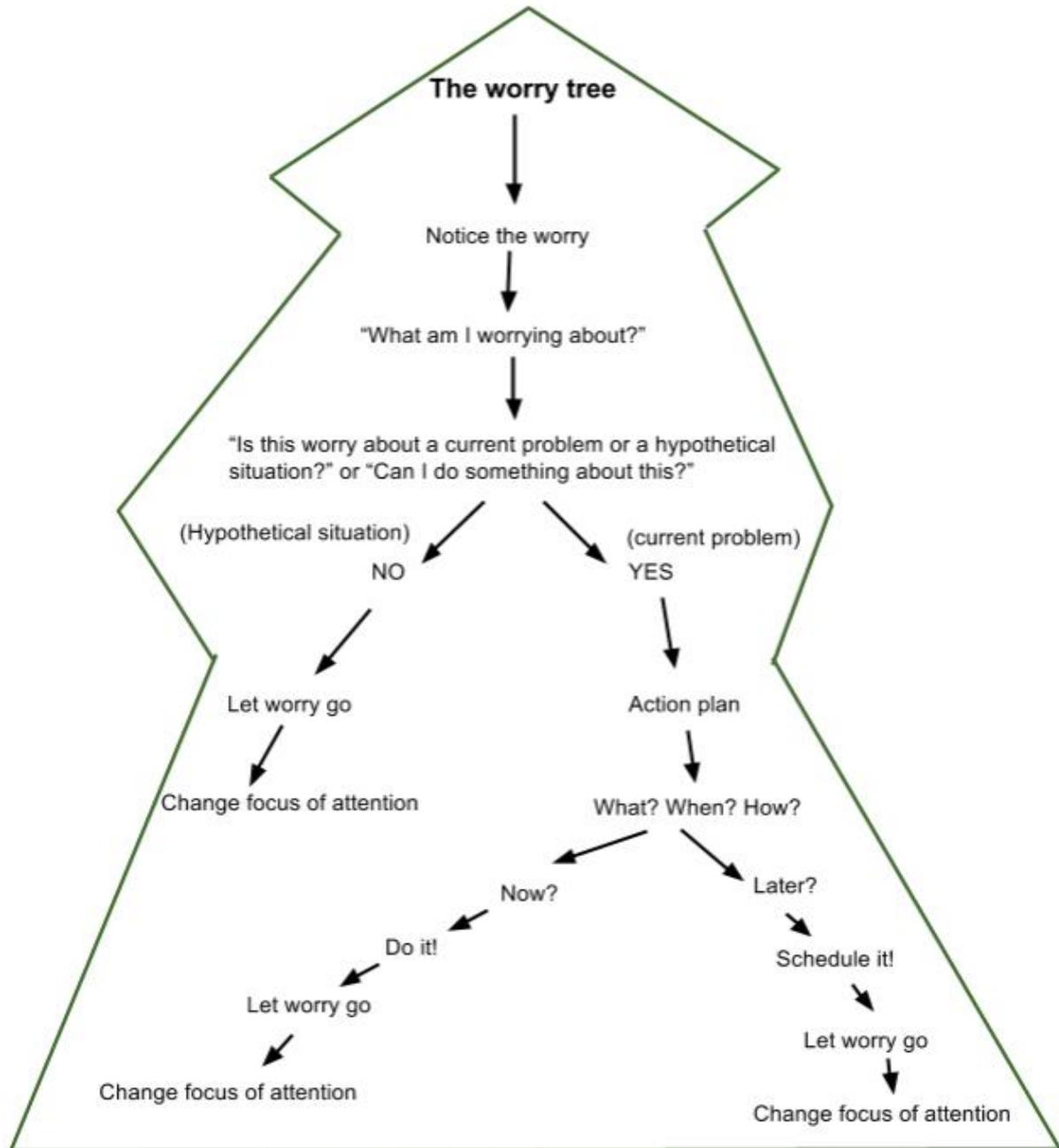
Use the following **Worry Tree** print out to help you manage your worry.

The Worry Tree is named because of its resemblance to a tree (sort of) when written down as a flow chart.

When you recognise a worry it is important to ask yourself whether the worry is about a current situation (a 'real' worry) or about a hypothetical situation (these tend to include 'what if ...' questions about things that may or may not happen).

Where the worry is **real** you should action plan how to respond. What are you going to do about it? When are you going to do it? How are you going to do it? Weigh up the pros and cons of possible solutions, choose an approach, and carry it out. This will help you deal with the threat, or let it go, which reduces the worry. For example, following an argument with a friend, we can reduce the resulting worry by apologising to them or trying to resolve the cause of the argument.

Where the worry is **hypothetical**, you can waste energy and time trying to understand how you might manage and deal with this worry, even though it may never become real. Because of this it is often best to let hypothetical worries go and focus your attention on the present. For example, your friend is late coming round to your house so you worry about what has happened to them. "What if they have been in an accident?" In reality, the simplest answer is most often correct and this could be that they are simply late.



The worry tree is adapted from Butler and Hope's (1995) approach to worry and anxiety.
 Butler, G., Hope, T. (1995). *Manage your mind*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.