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## *Tips for Wellbeing Series No 1*

# **Anxious Worrying**

## *How you can reduce it*

### **What is anxious worrying?**

Anxiety and worry are normal human experiences and are quite a common response to pressure, danger and generally to new or difficult situations. Anxious worrying becomes a problem when it occurs too often; becomes too intense; interferes with everyday functioning or when there is no obvious trigger for it.

One of the most common types of anxious worrying is called *Generalised Anxiety Disorder* and involves chronic and excessive worrying. It usually takes the form of: uncontrollable and persistent worrying about a variety of things; restlessness; physical tension; feeling tired; sleep disturbance; difficulty concentrating and memorising; irritability; procrastination; avoiding certain situations; inability to let go and hating uncertainty.

### **What can be done about it?**

It is not necessary to suffer from anxiety and worry. If you regularly experience them, it may be helpful to try and:

- > Talk to a counsellor (at CIT or elsewhere) or to your doctor
- > Learn how to increase helpful and eliminate unhelpful thinking. For example, you can delay your worrying by writing down your worrying thought, setting a time when you are going to address it and then do not engage with that thought until the set time. Or you can use a worry log to write down your worry and determine if it is a current problem or a future problem. Then decide if it is one you can problem-solve (such as planning to study for the exam next week), or one which is a pointless rumination – one you can't really do anything about right now.
- > A counsellor can help you to learn these skills, including how to solve problems instead of worrying about them, how to let go of the worries, how to be more focused on the present moment and accept uncertainty.
- > Learn to relax by using Breathing techniques or Progressive muscle relaxation.

## Breathing technique

- > Sit comfortably and place one hand on your abdomen
- > Breathing through the nose take a gentle breath in for approx. 4 seconds and notice the abdomen expanding
- > Hold the breath in for 2 seconds
- > Gently breathe out for approx. 6 seconds and feel the abdomen relaxing
- > Repeat this for a few minutes and notice how you feel afterwards

## Progressive muscle relaxation

- > Set aside 10 – 15 mins and sit or lie down comfortably
- > Following the given sequence, tense each muscle group for 5 seconds, then relax for 10 seconds while saying to yourself “*relax*” or “*let go*”:  
right hand and forearm; right upper arm; left hand and forearm; left upper arm; forehead; eyes and cheeks; mouth and jaw; neck; shoulders; shoulder blades and back; chest and stomach; hips and buttocks; right upper leg; right lower leg; right foot; left upper leg; left lower leg; left foot.
- > Repeat the sequence if you have time. Practice regularly in order to release muscle tension which builds up through stress and anxiety.

## For further reference

### Websites:

- > *Self Help on anxiety* - [ecouch.anu.edu.au](http://ecouch.anu.edu.au)
- > *Centre for Clinical Interventions, anxiety resources* - [cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/consumers.cfm](http://cci.health.wa.gov.au/resources/consumers.cfm)
- > *Anxiety Disorders factsheets* - [adavic.org.au/PG-fact-sheets-generalised-anxiety-disorder.aspx](http://adavic.org.au/PG-fact-sheets-generalised-anxiety-disorder.aspx)

### Books:

- > *Change Your Thinking* by Sarah Edelman (2006) ABC Books
- > *Letting It Go; The Book of It; Living It Up* by Bev Aisbett, Harper Collins Publishers
- > *Don't Panic: You Can Overcome Anxiety Without Drugs* by Sallee McLaren (2004)

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