

Worrying About School Grades

Objective

To identify when you are worrying excessively about your grades and learn a technique to decrease your worrying.

You Should Know

All students worry about grades. It's only natural. However, some students find that they are so anxious about their grades that they have trouble sleeping, eating, and concentrating. Some students worry so much that they start to experience physical problems like stomachaches or headaches. Some students start using alcohol and drugs to cope with the stress.

So, a little worrying is perfectly normal, but excessive worrying about grades can cause lots of other problems, and ... YOUR WORRYING DOESN'T HELP! You may even find yourself spending so much time worrying about grades that it keeps you from studying, and obviously that's not what you want.

This worksheet will help you identify if you're worrying too much about your grades, such that your worrying and anxiety has become a problem. You will also learn a technique to deal with intrusive worries and cause distress.

Note: Some people have a tendency to worry more than others, but you don't have to let your worries run your life. If you worry about a lot of things, not just grades, make sure that your parents, teachers, or counselor knows that this is a problem for you.

What to Do

You will know that you are worrying too much about grades when your worries are present all of the time and you can't get rid of them. We call these worries "intrusive thoughts" because they intrude on your normal activities, just like a pesky sibling might keep bothering you with interruptions.

There are five steps to dealing with excessive worries about grades. *The general idea is not to fight these worries and try to get rid of them, but rather just accept them for what they are.* When you learn to accept your worries rather than resist them you will soon find that they become less important in your life. Here are the five steps to help you deal with excessive and intrusive worries about your grades.

1. Label your worries as "just thoughts." You can be aware of your worries about grades, but understand that they are just thoughts you are having. You don't have to respond to them. What does this mean? Imagine that you are looking at Instagram and you notice

an image of a terrible storm. You could stop and start thinking about this storm if you wanted to. You could imagine yourself in the storm, thinking about getting wet and blown around. You could imagine the storm blowing down trees, even tearing apart your home, or worse. But you probably wouldn't do this. You would just scroll on to another image. After all, the image is just an image. It has no power. *And your thoughts about grades have no power over you either. Your worries are just thoughts.*

2. Tell yourself that these thoughts are just your brain on "automatic," and you can ignore them.
3. Accept and allow the thoughts into your mind. Do not try to push them away.
4. Breathe from your diaphragm until your anxiety starts to go down.
5. Continue whatever you were doing prior to your worries.

Use the chart below to keep track of how successful you are at using this 5-step technique. Enter the date. Rate the severity of your worrying with 1 = Not much at all to 10 = I can't think of anything else but my grades. Mark if you used the 5-step technique either "yes" or "no." Note how long it took you to get back to what you were doing when your worrying started. If you used the 5-step technique, rate how much you felt in control from 1 = I felt in complete control of my worries to 10 = My worries totally controlled me.

Date	Rate your worrying (1 to 10)	Did you use the 5-step technique? Y/N	How long did it take to go back to what you were doing?	Describe what else you did to stop the intrusive worrying.	Rate your feelings of control (1 to 10)

Reflections on This Exercise

How has this worksheet helped you with your worrying about grades? Describe.

Has anything else helped?

What is your next step in controlling your worries?

How helpful was this exercise? _____
(1 = not very helpful, 5 = moderately helpful, 10 = extremely helpful)

What was the most surprising thing you learned from completing this worksheet?
