

Controlling Anxiety With A 'Worry Script'

Many people spend hours each day trying to avoid worrying about things that upset them. People distract themselves by watching TV, focusing on a new worry to avoid thinking about an old one, or even self-medicating with drinking, drugs, or over-eating. None of these things help reduce worrying.

In fact, most people find that the harder they try and avoid the thoughts that make them anxious, the worse they get. Trying to push something out of your mind is a little like trying to push a beach ball under water: it takes a lot of work to keep it down, and the minute you let it go, it pops right back up again.

Rather than putting all of your energy into avoiding upsetting thoughts and images, you can instead face your fears, and writing worry scripts is one way to help you do this. By writing a worry script about your biggest worry, you will be facing your negative thoughts and upsetting feelings rather than trying to avoid them. Writing scripts will also help you get a clear picture of what is really upsetting you. Many people who write a worry script for a few weeks report that they feel less anxious about the things they were worrying about.

How to write a worry script:

- Choose a place where you won't be interrupted. Turn off your cellphone, music and television. Set aside about 30 minutes to complete each script.
- Write about one thing you are worrying about.
- Write about the worst-case scenario of one of your worries. For example, if you are worrying about your child getting bullied in school, write about the worst events that could happen to your child and the worst ways he or she might react.
- Write a script that is vivid and include how things look, sound, and feel. Include your feelings and reactions.
- Write a new script on the same subject each day, going deeper into your feelings with each script.
- After about two weeks, you can move to the next worry.

NOTE: If you feel anxious and even tearful while you are writing, keep at it! Experiencing these feelings means you are on the right track. Even though it may be difficult, the more you face your fears and worries, the more likely they will eventually fade.

My Worry Script

Date: _____ Beginning Time: _____ Ending Time: _____

Summarize what you are worrying about in a sentence:

Describe your worry in vivid detail:
