



**Healthy London  
Partnership**

# **Coping Well During Covid:** *Managing Anxiety*

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# What to expect



- Toolkit of **evidence-based resources, ideas and tools**
- The content of these webinars is based on Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).
- CBT focusses on making changes to our thoughts and behaviour to improve our mood.

## Objective of this webinar

- Understanding excessive worry, and how worry can be maintained.
- Knowledge of several techniques which can be used to help reduce your anxiety and worry.



**What do you hope to get out of the Webinar?**

## You said...

*“Tools and techniques for managing mental health during this time and talking about it with family/friends/colleagues”*

*“How to manage anxiety around COVID-19”*

*“Some strategies how to deal with friend who is anxious”*

*“Reassurance and tools to help my mental health.”*

*“Some techniques to help manage anxiety”*

*“Techniques for COVID-19 anxiety management”*

*“Managing anxiety more effectively”*

*“Some ideas/resources about managing anxiety, especially whilst working from home”*

*“Build on prior knowledge in managing my anxiety, which often impacts on my relationships.”*



**It's OK to not feel OK**

## If you need urgent support right now...

Don't struggle by yourself. The Samaritans are here to listen at any time of day or night. You can talk to them about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult. Call free on **116 123**.

- **Fight or Flight response**
- **Adrenaline**
- **It is automatic and normal**

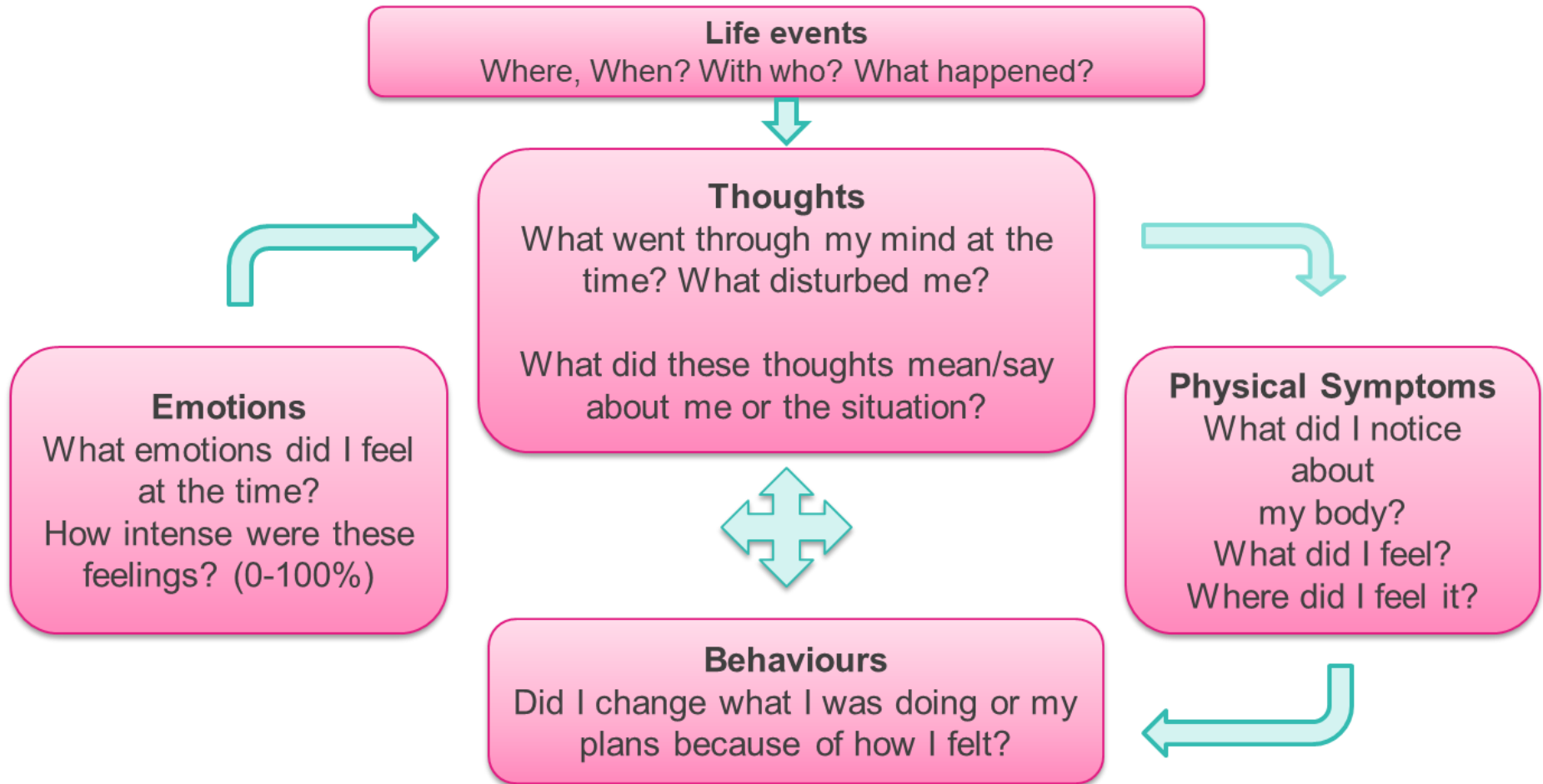




# Modern Anxiety

- Anxiety is a healthy bodily response to threat
- It makes sense when there is a clear threat
- You may find that modern day threats are different
- You may find the fight and flight response kicks in when there is no obvious threat

# The Five Areas Model



# Example





**What are some of the things that you are worrying about?**

## You said...

*“The future. Money”*

*“Worrying about productivity and impact on my work”*

*“Catching coronavirus”*

*“My relationships and the impact on my family.”*

*“Getting seriously ill or dying from COVID-19”*

*“Losing my job/getting furloughed, catching the virus, being alone for a long time, life not returning to normal for a long time”*

*“My anxiety/depression leading to more time off work, leading to the thought of being sacked.”*

*“Catching the virus - I already suffered from health anxiety so the pandemic has made it a lot worse”*

*“Unable to make plans and uncertainty”*

*“Losing everyone around me.”*

*“Not in control of things for example not able to see my family lives out of country”*

*“Things will never be the same again”*

# What is worry?

- Worry is a mental process which is future focused. We can worry to problem solve, think about possible obstacles, ways around it and plan solutions.
- This process can be adaptive and helpful when there's an actual problem we're trying to solve.

## Excessive worry

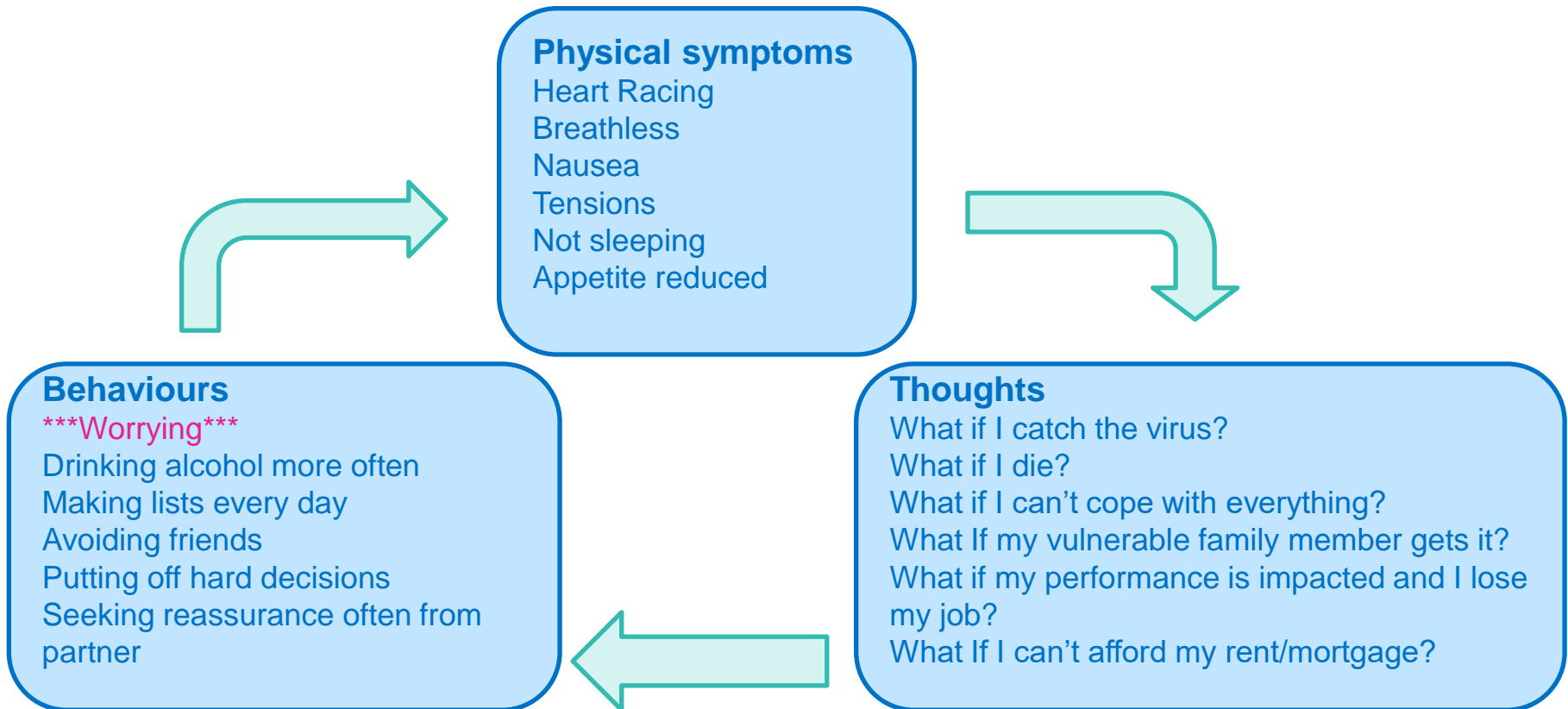
When life presents us with uncertainty, we might start worrying about events that we don't have any control over, worry can become excessive and unhelpful. It can cause us to have:

- Muscle tension or aches and pains.
- Restlessness and an inability to relax.
- Difficulty concentrating.
- Difficulty sleeping.
- Feeling easily fatigued and demoralized.





# Breaking the cycle



# Record your worries

Day and Time	Situation (Where are you? What's happening? Are you with anyone?)	Worrisome Thought	Anxiety Rating (out of 10)	Practical or Hypothetical?
e.g. Tuesday 8am	Eating breakfast with my family	What if I lose my job and can't pay my rent/mortgage?	8/10	Hypothetical

# Categorising Worries

## Practical Worries

*Worries about current problems or difficulties, which require some kind of action*

### Examples:

- I have a cough, this could be the coronavirus?
- My performance at work has decreased
- I have been furloughed but it's not enough
- I am unable to pay my rent/mortgage
- My child's school is re-opening, do I send her back?
- A family member is struggling financially

## Hypothetical Worries

*Worries about potential problems or future circumstances where there is no current or possibly even prospective solution.*

### Examples:

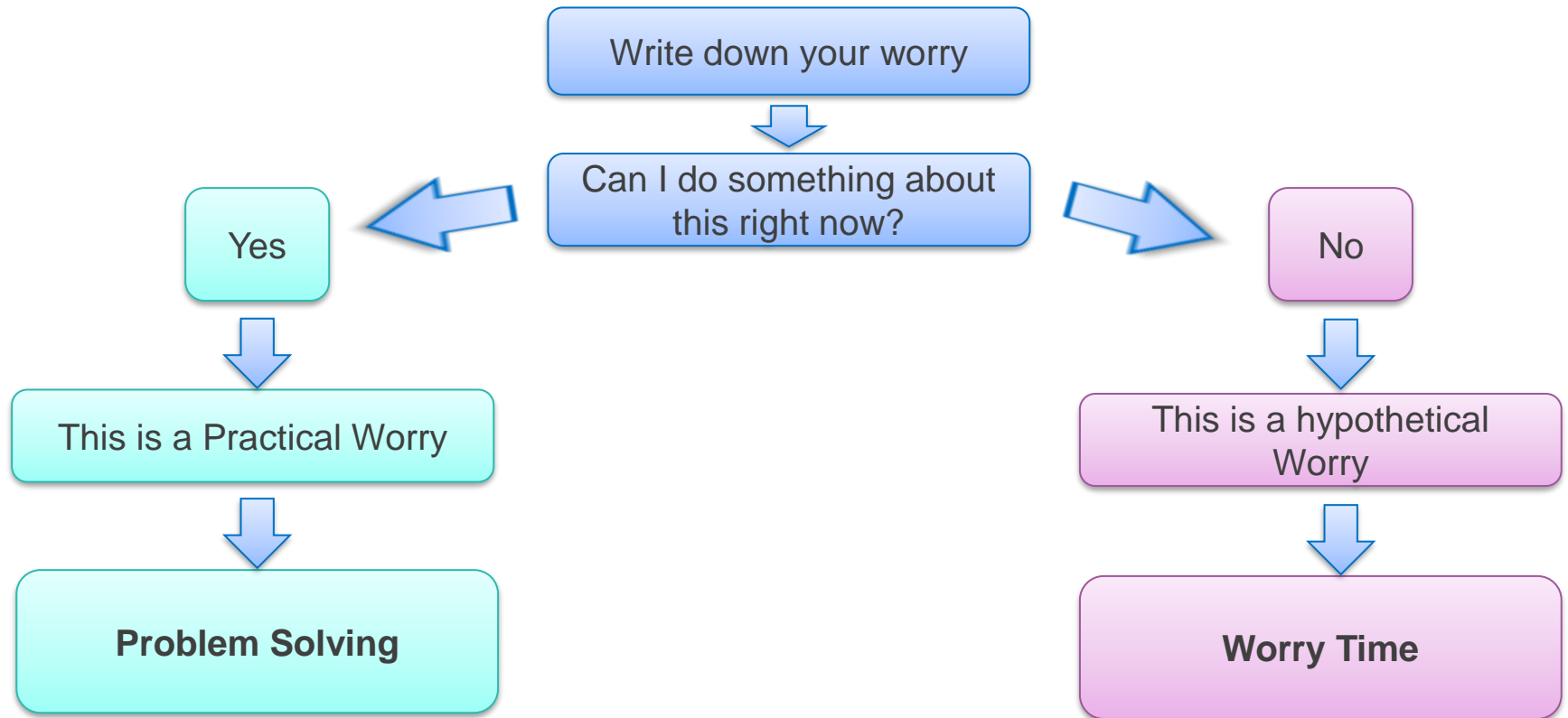
- What if I catch the virus?
- What if I die?
- What if my vulnerable family member gets the virus?
- What if I lose my job?
- What if there is no job to go back to?
- What If I can't afford to pay my rent/mortgage?

# Write them down

**Practical Worries**

**Hypothetical Worries**

# Worry Tree



# Problem Solving



1. Clearly identify the problem
2. Brainstorm solutions
3. Strengths and weaknesses analysis
4. Select a solution
5. Plan how to carry out the solution
6. Put the plan into action
7. Review your progress

# Problem Solving - Finance Example

**1. Clearly Identify the problem** – As I have been self-employed for less than a year I do not qualify for the **Self-Employment Income Support Scheme**, I am unable to work because of the virus, I do not have enough income.

**2. Brainstorm solutions** – apply for benefits, get a loan from a family member/friend, apply for a loan from the bank, speak to Citizens Advice, work out a new budget, apply for a new job temporarily, do nothing/enjoy your free time.

**3. Strengths and Weaknesses analysis** – I weighed up the pros and cons of my top three solutions: apply for benefits, apply for a new job temporarily, speak to Citizens Advice.

## Problem Solving - Finance Example Cont.

**4. Select a solution** – I have decided that as I am unable to work right now, I need to see what benefits I am entitled to

**5. Plan how to carry out the solution** – As I am unsure what benefit to apply for I will speak to citizens advice tomorrow at 10am, following their advice I will then apply online for the appropriate benefit.

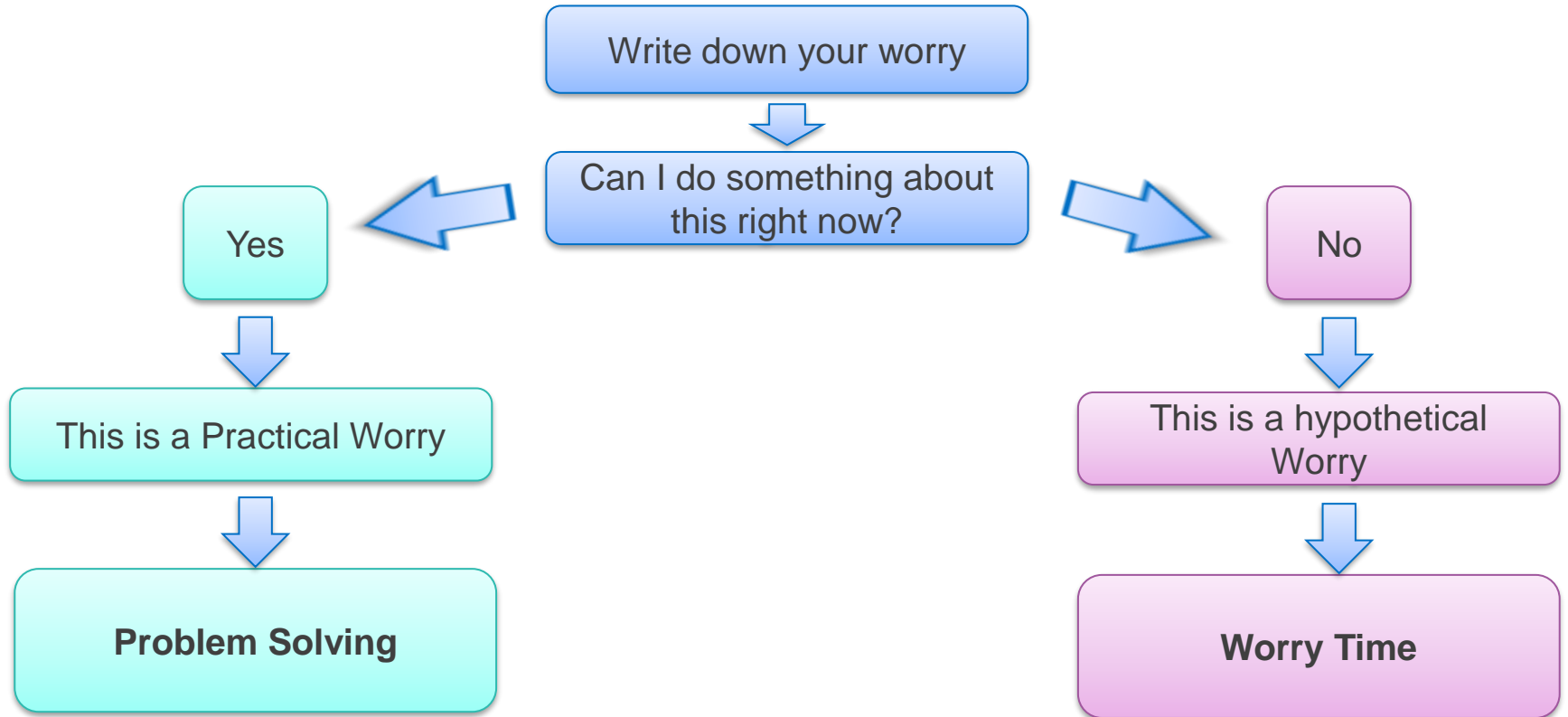
**6. Put the plan into action – carry out the steps in your plan and keep a note of how each step goes.**

**7. Review your progress**

Citizens Advice were really helpful and suggested I apply for **Employment Support Allowance (ESA)**, Following the call I sat down and applied for ESA. I haven't heard back yet but have decided to start working on part two of my plan and look at applying for a new job temporarily.



# Worry Tree





Group Experiment:  
For the next few moments,  
**DO NOT** think about a pink elephant.

# Experiment



# Where you able to not think about the pink elephant?

Supressing worries doesn't work

What's the alternative?

For hypothetical worries, a useful technique is using **'worry time'** to **postpone worries rather than just push them away.**

# Worry Time

## Step One:

### Plan your worry time

- 1) Same time every day
- 2) No longer than  $\frac{1}{2}$  an hour
- 3) Set a reminder for start and finish time
- 4) Have it in a separate room that you can leave

## Step Two:

Write down your hypothetical worries in the day

## Step Three:

Refocus on the present moment

## Step Four:

### Your scheduled worry time - Now worry!

Has the thing you were worrying about happened?

How did you deal with it if it has?

Were there any worries that when you have come back to them during your worry time are no longer a problem?

# Why worry time?

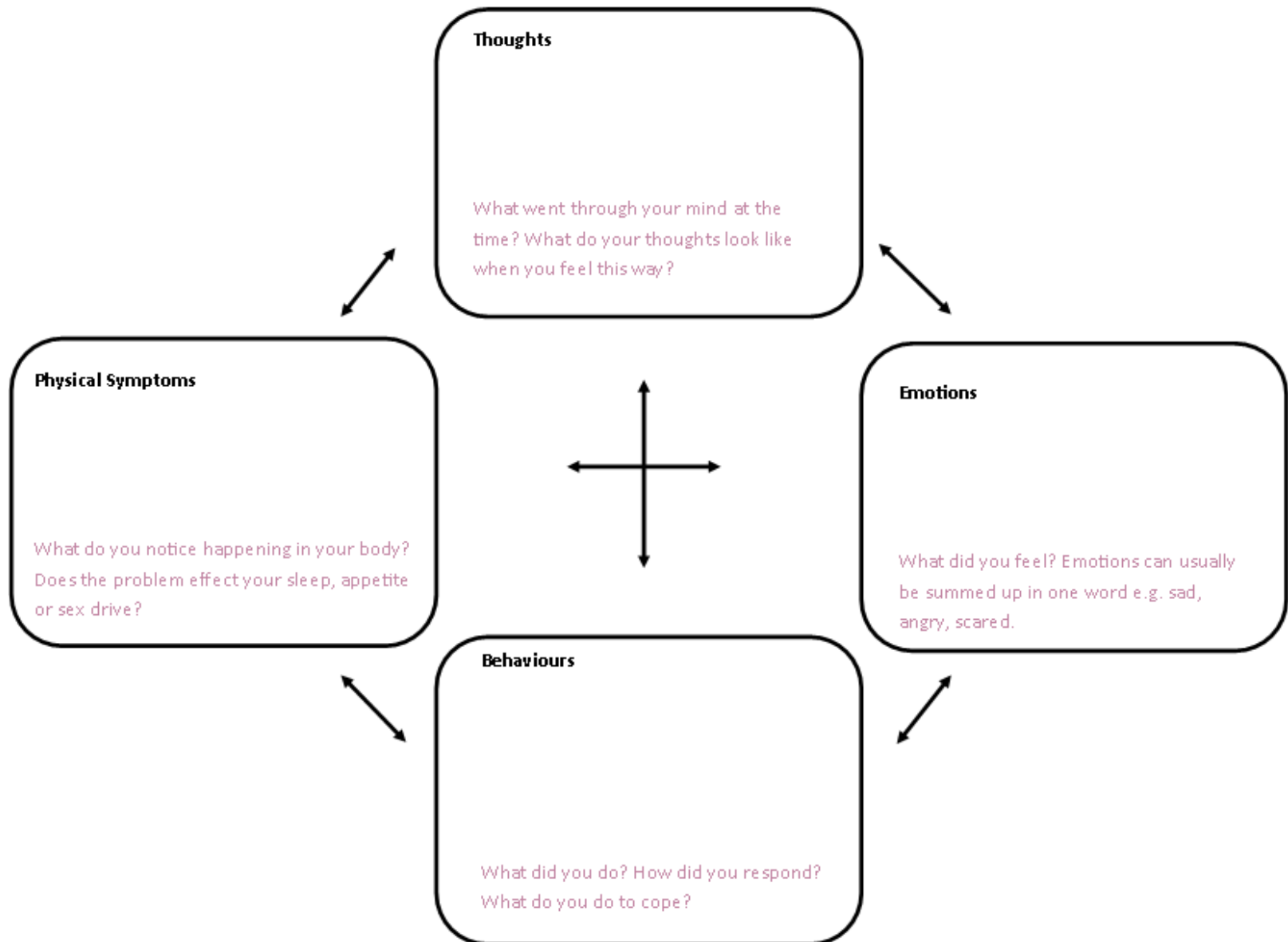
- Gain back control
- Enjoy the present
- Contain our worries
- Tolerate the uncertainties in life
- Gain perspective
- 'Desensitise' to worries
- Get's easier with practise



## Take home messages

- Anxiety is inevitable, normal and healthy.
- Record your worries, writing them down can get them out of our heads
- Categories your worries into hypothetical vs. practical
- Problem Solving can give us clarity on our problems and help us work out what our options are
- Use Worry Time postpone worries rather than just push them away.

# Try it for yourself....





# Problem Solving - Childcare Example

**1. Clearly Identify the problem** – I am working from home and my children are unable to attend school or preschool, I am struggling to fit all of my work in.

**2. Brainstorm solutions** – speak to my manager about my concerns, share childcare with partner who is also working from home, reduce working hours, let them watch TV all day, quit my job, encourage my partner to quit their job, start work at 8am, do some work after the children have gone to bed, ask a family member to move in and help out.

**3. Strengths and Weaknesses analysis** – I weighed up the pros and cons of my top three solutions: speak to my manager about my concerns, share childcare with partner, reduce working hours

**4. Select a solution** – I have decided that to start with I will speak to my manager to see what the options are.




## Problem Solving - Childcare Example Cont.

**5. Plan how to carry out the solution** – plan what to write in an email to arrange a time to discuss challenges of working from home, agree a time, plan some key points, come up with some helpful suggestions to discuss with manager.





**6. Put the plan into action** – carry out the steps in your plan and keep a note of how each step goes.

**7. Review your progress** – I arranged to speak with my manager and he was really helpful and highlighted that so many of us are in the same boat, he also has children at home and shared that he was struggling to still do everything that he used to be able to do. He encouraged me to come up with a routine and block out some time to look after my children and time where I will work and advised me to not try to do both at the same time, to be present with my children when I am not working. This put my mind at rest and gave me some ideas on how to manage.

## Getting more help and information

-  IAPT Psychological Therapy Services are available and free if you need more help.
-  IAPT stands for Improving Access to Psychological Therapies. These NHS funded national services offer free access to evidence based therapies for low mood, anxiety and depression across England. They offer treatment over the telephone, via online platforms and video links. If you think that you or someone you know needs support for low mood, sleep problems depression or anxiety you can self refer to your local IAPT Service.
-  Local IAPT services are listed on the NHS website and you can search with your postcode here: [https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Psychological%20therapies%20\(IAPT\)/LocationSearch/10008](https://www.nhs.uk/service-search/other-services/Psychological%20therapies%20(IAPT)/LocationSearch/10008)

## Getting more help and information

-  If you need **urgent** help for your mood, are having thoughts of suicide, are harming yourself or have thought about self-harm, it's important to tell someone. Don't struggle by yourself. Contact your GP if you can. If you cannot wait to see a doctor or feel unable to cope or keep yourself safe, you can contact the organisations below to get support right away.
-  The Samaritans are here to listen at any time of day or night. You can talk to them about anything that's troubling you, no matter how difficult. Call free on **116 123**.
-  Shout offers confidential 24/7 crisis text support for times when you need immediate assistance. Text "**SHOUT**" to **85258**
-  NHS urgent support guidance - <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/urgent-support/>

## Other useful resources and links

- i NHS Every Mind Matters - [https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/?WT.tsrc=Search&WT.mc\\_id=Brand&gclid=EAlaIqobChMlkjMo-Di6QIVnIBQBh01HQQFEAAYASAAEgKXUfD\\_BwE](https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/?WT.tsrc=Search&WT.mc_id=Brand&gclid=EAlaIqobChMlkjMo-Di6QIVnIBQBh01HQQFEAAYASAAEgKXUfD_BwE)
- i Mental Health Helplines - <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mental-health-helplines/>
- i The NHS information about COVID-19 is available here: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/>
- i CALM have lots of advice and information about mental health - <https://www.thecalmzone.net/>
- i Mind are a mental health charity with a wide range of information about mental health - <https://www.mind.org.uk/>
- i Citizens Advice offer support and financial advice, if you have problems with your rented home or you need to find out what benefits you can get - <https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/>
- i National Debtline is a charity offering free and independent advice over the phone and online - <https://www.nationaldebtline.org/>
- i Money Supermarket have collated the latest information and advice with how coronavirus might impact your financial situation - <https://www.moneysupermarket.com/money-made-easy/coronavirus-and-family-finances/?from=onsite-banner>

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