

CONSTRUCTIVE WORRY

- **Why is my mind racing at night?**
 - We are often so busy throughout the day that it is not until we are in bed without distractions that our minds are allowed to think through worries and problems. However, bedtime is the wrong time to be problem-solving.

- **How can I stop this mind-racing or worrying at bedtime?**
 - One way to stop this mind-racing is through constructive worry.
 - Other ways to stop mind-racing include practicing relaxation techniques and mindfulness meditation.

- **What is constructive worrying or worry scheduling?**
 - Constructive worry (or worry scheduling) is a method of designating a time before bedtime to think through and solve worries, concerns, and problems so that your mind is clear when you are in bed.

- **How to do constructive worrying:**
 - Schedule 15-30 minutes *every* evening at least 2 hours before bedtime.
 - Find a place where you are comfortable and can be alone without distractions, meaning no TV, computers, or phones on.
 - Get a blank sheet of paper and make 2 lists:
 - Make 1 list for problems or worries
 - Make 1 list for your tasks that you need or want to complete tomorrow (to-do list)
 - Think through the day and the previous evening. What worries or concerns have come about? What worries or thoughts have been keeping you awake at night?
 - Write down any problems, worries, or concerns that come to mind in your first list.
 - When you have collected most of the thoughts that are rumbling in your mind, start thinking through solutions. Focus first on those that are most likely to keep you awake at night.
 - If you can easily fix a problem or worry, write that solution down.
 - For complicated problems or worries, think about the *next* step that you can take tomorrow (even if it is a small step) that helps you work toward this problem.
 - Add the small steps for solutions to your to-do list for tomorrow.
 - Be sure to keep your tomorrow's to-do list small and achievable.
 - If you have a problem or worry that you cannot come up with a solution, think through ways that you may be able to reduce worry about the issue.
 - One example may be talking to someone about it.
 - Some worries are helpful to think through the worst case scenario, best case scenario, and then the most likely scenario. Often we find that the worst case scenario or what you are worried about is unlikely to occur.
 - For worries, it is also helpful to focus on what "is" and not the "what-ifs."
 - If you have any other tasks you want or need to complete tomorrow, add that to your to-do list.
 - Once you are done with your worry time for the evening, put away the sheet of paper and try not to think about the worries or problems the rest of the evening, especially when you are in bed.
 - If you begin to worry at bedtime, try to recognize those thoughts and let them pass. Tell yourself that you have already dealt with your problems in the best way you can while you were alert. Remind yourself that you will be working on them again tomorrow and that there is nothing you can do while you are tired.