

The Worryspace

Explanation: If you find that you are spending a lot of time worrying about what's happening or feeling very negative and anxious, it's not always easy to turn these thoughts off. Giving them space but also boundaries can help. By giving your brain a dedicated time when you are allowed to worry – the worryspace – it can often be easier to dismiss the worries the rest of the time, saving them up for the worryspace. In repeating this exercise time and again it may be that when we get to our worryspace we find some of those things aren't so very worrisome anymore.

How to do it: Allocate a time in your week – maybe about 20-minutes, but no longer than an hour – when you are allowed to worry. During this time, think about the things that are making you worry and feel anxious – you can write them down, you can cry about them, you can feel overwhelmed, you can tell someone else about them. But only for that allocated timeframe. If you start to have these thoughts at other times, tell your brain that you will think about them in the worryspace. Make a note if you need to and then turn your thoughts to something else. If your brain knows that you will give it time then it will be more able to turn away from the worry when you don't want it there.

When it's useful: Any time when sad or worrying thoughts are stopping you from being able to get on with the things you need or want to do. Giving yourself dedicated time and permission to worry makes it easier to turn our thoughts to more useful things the rest of the time.

