



## Coping with Worrying About What Might Happen

Use these ideas to stay in control

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### I just feel like I'm dying



Sometimes concerns about “what might happen” or negative feelings and thoughts seem to appear out of no

-where. Have you ever thought how did all this start? The first step in learning a new way to do things is to think back about how things start.

Ever come across a situation like this?

Walk into supermarket



Heart beats faster, start to breathe harder



Think must be having a heart attack, making a fool of myself



Leave supermarket



Get breathing back under control



Don't go to supermarket again

Or, has this ever happened to you?



Have to wake up early



Worry about not getting up on time



Don't sleep very well



Get out bed feeling tired



Don't have any energy



Start to worry about not coping



Go to the Doctor



Once this pattern starts, it keeps going like a downward spiral.

Next time it all happens try this

Walk into supermarket



Heart beats faster



Stop



Tell yourself you are in charge



Slow down your breathing



Stay with the feelings until they stop

Taking charge of your worry and panic means accepting that no matter how bad you are feeling, you are not having a heart attack or making a fool of yourself. By standing and facing your thoughts and feelings, rather than avoiding them, you find them fading away.

You can also take charge of your worrying before and when you are in bed and still wake up on time. Try this or come up with a better one.

Set two alarms, one 5 minutes later



Have a warm milk before bed



Go to bed earlier than usual



Start to worry



Tell yourself you are in charge and will wake up on time

### So what else can I do?

#### 1. Write in a diary every day

Keeping a daily diary allows you to keep track of how you are getting better at taking charge. Writing down your worries and what you did to get them under control allows you to think through what has been happening. You can then go back a week later and see how you are going. (con't over page)

## So what else can I do? (con't)



Sometimes there are things that you don't want anyone else to know about, write these down on another piece of paper and then rip it up and put in the bin.

### 2. Slow down your breathing

When things aren't going okay you tend to breathe faster and from the chest and not the diaphragm. To get everything back under control, it is important to stop and consciously slow down your breathing.

Keeping your breathing to one every 6 seconds will help. That is, breath out for 3 seconds and then in for 3 seconds. Try saying out-out-out as you breathe out and in-in-in as you breathe in. Keep breathing slowly until your heart stops pounding. If you are in a shopping centre walk outside and sit down and concentrate on your breathing. Then return to the supermarket and continue with your shopping.



Practise slow breathing every day, so that when you are feeling totally out of control, you will be able to do it.

### 3. Control your thinking



Taking charge of your thinking means replacing all those negative thoughts with positive ones. This means believing that you are in control and that using positive thoughts can make things better.

Try these for a start:

- I am only feeling stressed and I can cope with these feelings.
- I will focus on what is happening and not what might happen.
- I will control my thinking and not add to my worry or fears.
- I will sit quietly until it fades away.
- These feelings cannot harm me.
- Nothing awful is going to happen to me.
- I will stay here and practise my breathing until I feel better.



If those ideas don't work, try this. Look around and find five things that are red or count how many light fittings are close by. You could probably come up with some better

## So what else can I do? (con't)

ones than these. Like everything else you will only get better at this if you practice every day.



### 4. Relaxation

There are many different ways to relax from deep muscle relaxation to yoga and meditation. Take the time to look in your local library, bookshop or on the web for books or audio tapes. Set yourself a goal to practice relaxation for at least 20 minutes each day. The more you do it, the more able you will be to use it when you need it. Practice is the key to success.

### 5. Be Active

Check out the Fun Time list attached. The more active you are, the more able you are to cope with things when they go wrong. Remember, a half hour of activity at least 3 days per week is also good for your heart.

You are now ready to complete the My Taking Charge Plan on page 7.

*Remember: if it doesn't work  
"Try Another Way" ©*

## My Story

### I will get there

Frances has been treated for agoraphobia for the past 11 years and says, "I realised I was trying to be what I used to be, but I couldn't be what I used to be."



*I realised then this is where I am. I am fighting a big fight here and the people that are close to me know about it and if the other people can't accept me like this, that is too bad, because this is where I am at. I started to believe in myself and realised, I am not perfect. I take myself for myself now. This is how I am and have confidence in myself that I will get off the Valium<sup>®</sup>. I will be great. That's one of my main aims, and I don't care how long it takes, I won't do it in a hurry".*



To keep track of how she is going, Frances has been writing down bits and pieces in a book.

**Fun Time List**

Some of these activities you would never dream of doing. Be daring, be honest, be frugal, but give some of them a go. Tick the ones you might be interested in. Come up with some of your own. Put your plan on next page of this newsletter. Give it a go and have fun. Remember, practice is the key. You won't feel better unless you do something every day and make it part of your daily routine. For the next 2 weeks use the fun time record sheet and track the activities you tried.

Physical Activities		Creative Activities	
Tai Chi		Hobbies	
Yoga		Writing a journal/poetry/songs	
Exercise classes		Painting/drawing	
Jogging		Reading	
Kick boxing		Making jewellery	
Swimming		Sewing	
Walking/bushwalking		Learning a musical instrument	
Running		Art/Craft classes	
Playing a team sport		Writing letters	
Tennis/ squash		Learn to dance	
Mowing the lawn		Cooking	
Bike riding		Photography	
Bowls (indoor, tenpin, lawn)		Pottery	
Recreational Activities		Pampering Yourself	
Fishing		Hot bath/bubble bath/ spa	
Bird watching		Therapeutic massage	
Spending time at the beach		Relaxation exercises	
Going camping		Meditation	
Gardening		Listening to music/ radio	
		Improving your appearance	

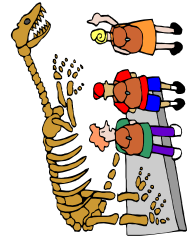
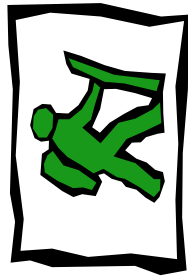
Religious involvement		Entertaining Activities	
Going to church		Visiting museum/ art gallery	
Reading sacred scripts		Watching a video/DVD	
Talking to a religious person		Seeing a play/ movie	
Praying		Reading a book	
Mental Exercise		Other Activities	
Crossword puzzles		Volunteer work	
Playing cards		Attending a self help group	
Playing chess		Doing a TAFE course	
Jigsaw puzzles		Exploring one's community	
Playing a computer game/using the internet		Exploring natural environment	
Learning to use a computer		Planning a holiday	
Board games		Collecting objects eg stamps, coins	
Social Activities		Visiting neighbourhood centre	
Meeting a friend for coffee/ lunch		Joining the library	
Having a BBQ/ picnic		Redecorating/rearranging the unit/ house	
Joining a social/ community club			

## Fun Time Record Sheet

Over the next 2 weeks record all the activities that you have tried. It is okay to try something and never do it again. There is always something we would like to do if we had the time or money. Now is the chance to give it a go. It doesn't matter what others think or say. Most of us hate recording what we do or putting everything down on paper. Record every day the active things that you have done and by the end of the fortnight you may be pleasantly surprised.

*Remember: Give it a go.*

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Week 1</b>							
<b>Morning</b>							
<b>Afternoon</b>							
<b>Evening</b>							
<b>Week 2</b>							
<b>Morning</b>							
<b>Afternoon</b>							
<b>Evening</b>							





## My Taking Charge Plan

When you have worry or panic, your body reacts as if there is danger, and you tend to focus on how bad things are and how much worse it might get. Taking charge means staying with the feelings until they fade away and replacing negative with positive thoughts.

### 1. What happens when I worry or panic?

Think about what happens to you when you worry or panic. Write it down.

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### Flip the Coin Over

### 2. My Taking Charge Plan

The first step in making a plan work is to write it down. The next one is to put it into practice. Put this sheet somewhere where you can see it everyday, so that you can practice how you will cope with feelings and thoughts in the future. Learning a new way of doing things isn't easy but with practice it gets much easier.

#### Tasks

#### When are you going to do it?

Write in my diary

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Practice slow breathing

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Practice positive self-statements

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Try to relax

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Be active at least 3 times a week – go back and check you're Fun Time List

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Congratulations on developing a Taking Charge Plan  
Practice it every day



“Try Another Way” © Program