

WORRY

The word 'worry' has been a part of human vocabulary for decades, and it pops up in conversation fairly frequently. Some people refer to themselves as 'worrywarts' or that they 'worry all the time, and even worry about not having something to worry about if there's nothing going on.' This may apply to you or to someone in your family or at work; we all know a chronic worrier.

If you worry about your loved ones when they are away from home or dealing with an issue, you worry about the state of the planet and where it could all be going, or you worry about the economic situation in this country and actually the world, you are not alone.

Functional worry

There is another type of worry though, and it is important to know how to deal with each. As explained in the article about when anxiety can be functional or not, a degree of worry can be functional – think of it as 'functional fear'. This type of 'worry' would be realistic, and would result in a rational action. For example, a degree of worry will make you aware of what you spend every month, also make you plan for your retirement. You can also go through a phase of worry when something unexpected and significant has or is happening in your life – a relocation, promotion, marriage, birth of a child or new responsibility. In fact, a big change of any kind. In the case of trauma, worry is just part of the symptoms and the trauma should also be dealt with.

Clinical worry

The other kind of worry – what you can think of as 'clinical worry' because it becomes dysfunctional if left untreated – is one of the core features in a recognised anxiety condition known as generalised anxiety disorder (GAD).

This should formally be confirmed by a clinical psychologist or psychiatrist.

This kind of worry becomes a dysfunctional mental habit, which becomes your default setting and affects how you function at work and in your relationships. Clinical worry is like a vicious cycle of over-thinking – usually assuming the worst case in any real or imagined scenario. It is exhausting and uncontrollable, when it becomes an actual disorder (GAD).

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