



## The 'Worry Tree'

Many hours a day can be spent worrying and constant worry about anything and everything is unhelpful to us. The 'Worry Tree' is a guide to help us deal with worries effectively.

Worries can be separated into two categories;

### *Hypothetical Situations*

### *Current Problems*

#### **Hypothetical Situations**

These types of worries are based on 'What if...?' This type of worry occurs because we overestimate the possibility of something terrible happening and we then tend to imagine a future 'worst case' scenario that might possibly not occur.

An example of unhelpful thinking could be - *Being stuck in a traffic jam whilst on the way to work and worrying that you could lose your job as a result.*

Perhaps there is little or nothing much we can do about a situation, yet this type of worrying can cause a lot of anxiety and distress.

#### **Current Problems**

These types of worries relate to a real situation that we can possibly do something about. We then need to address the worry in a helpful way, rather than continually worrying about it. We can decide what to do about the worry, along with when and how to do it.

### **The Worry Tree**

The **Worry Tree** can help as a guide to control worrying.

Notice the worry, and then ask yourself;

*'What is the worry about?'*

Is it a **hypothetical situation**, one that you **cannot** do something about, but you can manage in some way?

Or

Is it a **current problem** that you **can** do something about?

If it is a hypothetical situation, one we **cannot** do something about, then let the worry go. Try to work on acting differently (See 'Managing Worry' resource).

If the worry is a current problem that you **can** do something about, then take the following action.

*Can you do anything about the worry **now** or **later**?*

If **now** decide on an action of how to deal with the worry, do it, then let the worry go.

If **later** first decide what to do and how to do it then schedule a time to deal with the worry. It may help to write the worry down in a note book, until the scheduled time to deal with it arrives.