**Worry**

Most clinicians and researchers agree that worrying is a central feature of generalised anxiety disorder. One of the common things that people with generalised anxiety disorder

experience is chronic worrying. The aim of this task is to provide an overview of what worrying is and what triggers worrying for you.

**Understanding Worrying**

You can think of worrying as a self-talk activity, where we ‘talk to ourselves' about possible future negative events that might happen and of which we are afraid. We discuss the event with ourselves and we think about how we might deal with it should the event happen. As such, worrying is a type of vigilance for threat, and an ‘attempt’ at mentally ‘solving problems’ that haven’t yet happened.

We say ‘attempt’ because often a good solution is not found, and people are left thinking they will not be able to cope should their worst fears happen. We say ‘solving problems’ because people often think that worrying is problem-solving, when in fact effective problem-solving is a very different type of activity.

“What If…” Worries

People with generalised anxiety are often having an internal conversation about things they fear might happen. In this way, worrying often occurs in the form of “What if…” questions. The questions play in your mind like a song and the words may sound like these:

“What if I can’t get to my appointment on time?”

“What if I fail my exam?”

“What if I can’t do the job?”

“What if I can’t provide for my family?”

“What if something happens to my child?”

“What if my husband/wife/partner has an accident?”

“What if I get anxious during my interview?”

“What if my face turns red?”

“What if I get sick?”

As you will have noticed, the above examples of worrisome thoughts are about external things (e.g., work, family, etc) or internal physical things (e.g., illness).

What are the “What if…” questions you often ask yourself? (What external things or internal

physical things do you tend to worry about?).

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