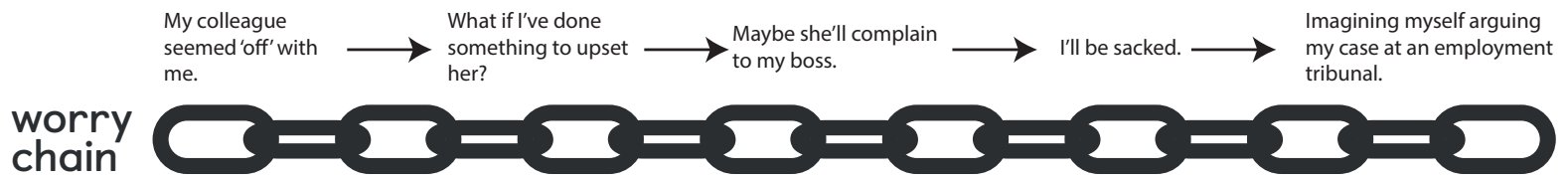


What Is Worry?

To worry means to think about problems that *might* happen in a way that leaves you feeling anxious or apprehensive. Worry is experienced as a chain of thoughts and images which can progress in increasingly catastrophic and unlikely directions. It is often experienced as uncontrollable and seems to take on a life of its own.



Why do people worry?

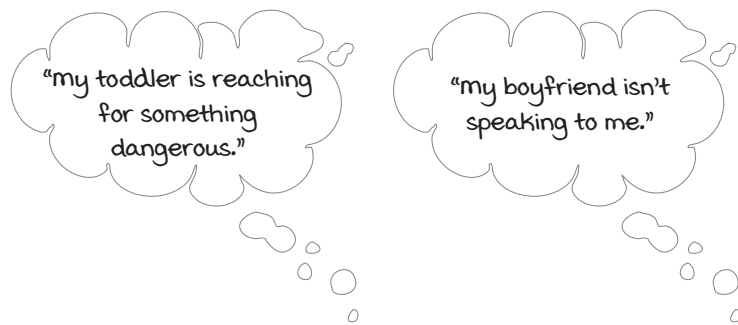
Most of us can foresee problems that might happen in our lives and spend at least *some* time thinking about what we could do to manage them. To the extent that this helps us to solve future problems worry is normal and useful. Psychologists think that worry is an attempt to manage and reduce *uncertainty*. Some people are more sensitive to (bothered by) uncertainty and they tend to do more worrying.

Real vs Hypothetical worry

Psychologists often distinguish between two types of worry:

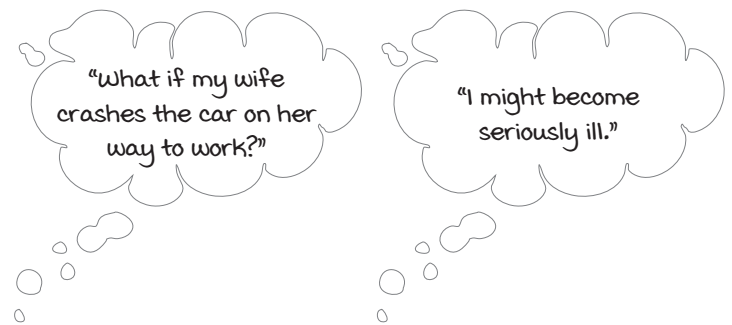
Real event worries

are about *actual* problems that are affecting you *right now*.



Hypothetical worries

are about things that do not currently exist, but which *might* happen in the future.



How do I know if my worry is a problem?

Everyone worries to some degree. Worry can become a problem when it stops you from living the life you want to live, or if it leaves you feeling demoralised and exhausted.



Relationships, health, work, finances, family, school

Content

Relationships, health, work, finances, family, school

Usually about more likely and relatively here-and-now events (real event worry).

Likelihood & timescale

Usually more about unlikely or remote future events (hypothetical event worry).

Worry often starts in response to a specific trigger.

Timing

Worry may be more habitual.

Feels like there is some control over the worry process.

Control

Feels like the worry is not controllable.

Spend less time worrying

Duration

Spend more time worrying.