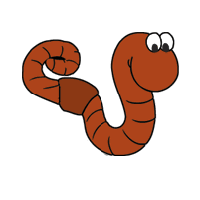
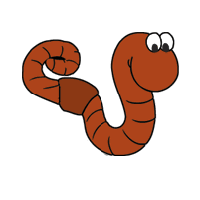
**Help………….**

**I have worms in my head**

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**Anjula Sharma-Smith**

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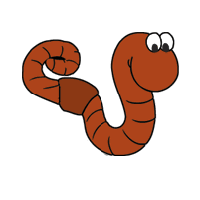
Sometimes, do you ever wonder why you cannot get that niggling thought out of your head?

The same thought, over and over again – almost like a little worm, that sits in the dark depths of your brain, and once in a while it rears it squiggly ugly head up, and then can’t find its way back down again? A bit like that really annoying song, that keeps on playing in your head over and over again?? (Because I’m happy, clap along if you feel like a room without a roof, because I’m happy …….that is so annoying!!!!)

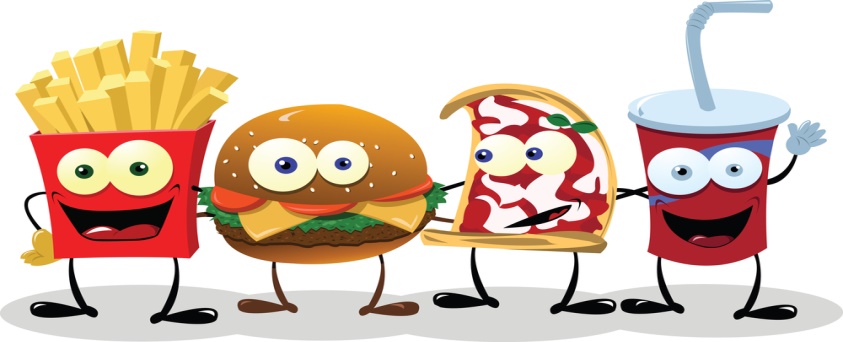
Sometimes the thought can also be a person – hey and guess what? People can also be annoying too!

Annoying isn’t it? That’s enough about the word annoying now……

Sometimes, when we can’t control these thoughts, it can disturb our sleep, or stop us from focussing and revising for that all important exam. We have difficulty shutting off and think of the worst thing that can happen to us, and it runs at 100 miles per hour!

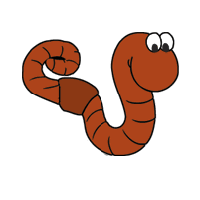
Then when it gets too much, we may try to block it out in unhealthy ways, and this could lead to low mood, or depression or anxiety symptoms such as racing heart, sweating, breathlessness - and sometimes it just gets too much that we need to talk to someone about it.

**Let me explain this in another way –**

Number 1 - Our body is a tank and sometimes we just fill that tank with lots of unhealthy snacks (or thoughts!) – Such as too much junk food such as burgers, fried chicken, pizza, cake etc. And then our body begins to feel a bit rubbish, and this food can come out in unhealthy ways – vomiting, diarrhoea, farting, burping (get the picture?). 

We then think, “I must eat healthier food, so that I begin to feel better (better thoughts). When we fill our tank up with at least 80% good stuff, then when we eat the “not so good stuff”, our tank will be able to cope and manage without feeling so overwhelmed, as we have the space in our tank!

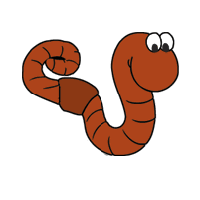
In other words, when the not so good days come, we will be able to cope better.



Number 2 - Imagine our brains are sponges – because our brains take a lot of information in. Put a sponge into a bucket of water. Now, the sponge can only take so much water, before it becomes too full and leaks out. We then have to dry the sponge out, so that it is able to soak up more water. A bit like our brains, when we become too overloaded, we need to take a break and switch off, before allowing ourselves to take more information in.

Makes sense?

Don’t forget, we are not born or designed to be happy all the time – we will have boring, mundane, unhappy and very difficult times as well, but we just must try our best to cope with them, with some help, if need be.

Well, guess what – you can do something about it, so I hope that this quick fact sheet below can help you…..

(ps – you can always give your worm/thoughts a name! I quite like squirmy…..but you can call it something nicer or whatever you would like, for example slimy, muddy, poo drops – ok going too far now….).

**Here are my top tips to help you –**



1. Writing – not a diary as such but a thoughts and feelings journal – put pen to paper - doesn’t matter what your writing looks like, what words you use, or if you draw or scribble – be honest - it’s yours and no one else’s. Imagine that you are on the motorway full of congestion, and you know that you are coming off the next exit into the countryside, and it’s a relief – writing will help to clear that congestion, and hopefully, eventually, be a relief for your mind.
2. Talking to a friend – someone that you can trust – who will not break your confidence!
3. Talking to a trusted adult eg a teacher – that’s what they are there for – to guide the younger person!
4. Talking to a counsellor – if you can access one. They are there to hear what you are really saying and help you to help yourself
5. Keeping a happy journal – you will have good days as well! Write these down, as a reminder that not all days are bad. Or keep a big jar, and write down the good days and the date it happened. Then on New Years Eve, open it up, and look back at the amount of days that were brilliant.
6. Working through setting boundaries – get a big (I mean big!) sheet of paper and write down what you are happy with or will accept or are ok with, and the opposite as well. And put these into practise.
7. Deep breathing (I know that old cliché – but it works!!) deep breath in, and long breath out – preferably sitting down, as you really don’t want to pass out….Your muscles will relax, as when deep breathing there is absolutely no way you will remain tense! Or, imagine that your whole body is wobbly like a jelly – that could work too!
8. Social media….the do’s and don’t’s – set yourself a time limit on how much time your spend on your phone/ipad/laptop etc. If someone is upsetting you on social media – BLOCK THEM! SIMPLES! Or come off the app! Switch it off at least an hour before bedtime, and chillax……………….zzzzz
9. Get a jar, box or something similar and write down certain scenarios that have troubled you, and then write down how you coped/dealt with it. When you come across a similar situation, dig it out and remind yourself what worked for you. Different things work for different people!

I hope this helps in some way…….

Don’t forget that there are numerous apps you can use and phone lines that you can call as well if you need any further help:

[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)

www.nspcc.org.uk

nspcc and childline helpline 0800 1111 – this number will not show up on your mobile phone bill!

[www.tootoot.co.uk](http://www.tootoot.co.uk)

[www.kooth.com](http://www.kooth.com)