The “Worries Survey” Checkup!

Below is a list of common worries taken from interviews and surveys with students. Please read each statement carefully and place a check mark in the blank next to the items about which you worry occasionally or regularly. Answer honestly and candidly without spending too much time thinking about any one item.

1. I worry about being able to get into the classes I need or want. ____
2. I worry about spending more time alone that I prefer (e.g. not having someone to date or friends to spend time with) _____
3. I worry about maintaining a desirable body weight _____
4. I worry about whether I have really chosen the right major _____
5. I worry about having too much to do and too little time to do it _____
6. I worry about not studying effectively _____
7. I worry about not being able to break bad habits (e.g. quit smoking or drinking, etc.) _____
8. I worry about being liked by my friends _____
9. I worry about not having enough money for both essentials and recreation ____
10. I worry about spending too little time with people I care about _____
11. I worry about making existing relationships (e.g. marriage, romantic relationship, other relationships) successful ____
12. I worry about not eating properly and/or exercising regularly ______
13. I worry about not being successful in my major ______
14. I worry about not having enough money to pay for my education ______
15. I worry about finding a job in my major field upon graduation ______
16. I worry about getting along with my professors ______
17. I worry about not knowing how to manage money wisely ______
18. I worry about my grades ______
19. I worry about coping with the end of a serious relationship ______
20. I worry about not having enough time, quiet time, for myself ______

If you placed a check mark next to some/most of the worries listed above you may benefit from talking with a professional counselor to develop positive coping strategies for dealing with worry. Worrying is a common behavior, but when it becomes excessive it may impede on your personal and academic life. IUN Counseling Services offers free and confidential services to all IUN students who are enrolled on at least a part-time basis. The IUN Counseling Office has licensed professional social workers and counselors who are trained to meet the specific needs of college students!
Productive vs. Unproductive Worry

First, reevaluate your positive beliefs about worry. Here are some common false beliefs about worry:

1) Worry helps me find solutions to my problems.
2) Worry motivates me to do things.
3) Worry protects me from negative emotions.
4) Worry prevents negative outcomes.
5) Worrying means I’m a conscientious, responsible person.

Next, distinguish whether your worry is:

**Productive worry**: is present-oriented, controllable, leads us to make decisions, make changes in our lives, better prepares us for tasks/situations.

**Unproductive worry**: is focused on things we can’t control or problems that don’t even exist and may never occur. This type of worry is generally future-oriented.

Worry behaviors reduce anxiety and temporarily make you feel better. However, in the long run they maintain your worry by validating your fears and by preventing you from discovering that your worries probably won’t come true even without them.

**Common types of worry behaviors:**
- **Checking**: repeatedly checking to lessen your anxiety.
- **Repeating**: doing something over and over as a response to worry. An example of this could be a compulsive behavior.
- **Excessive preparation**: using excessive time to prepare for something that causes you anxiety and worry.
- **Excessive conscientiousness**: taking extreme measure to avoid offending other people or violating moral code.
- **Reassurance-seeking**: you are trying to eliminate doubt by asking for reassurance from people in your life, books, internet, etc.
- **Avoidance**: key feature of chronic worry and anxiety. The belief behind avoidance is that if you stay away from your fears, they won’t come true.

Do you engage in any of the above worry behaviors?

Eliminate worry behaviors:
The next time you catch yourself worrying, refuse to do anything about it. You might feel your anxiety rise higher and higher. Be stubborn and don’t give in! Eventually, your anxiety will decrease and you will realize that your worry was not valid. When this happens, congratulate yourself, you’ve taken an important step in conquering your worry.

Adapted from: *10 simple solutions to worry.* (Gyoerkoe & Wiegartz, 2006).