

# Worry Cards

## 32-Card activity to help children profile their anxiety and explore solutions

These cards are designed to help a variety of anxious children to learn more about their condition and begin to examine solutions. The various characters cover a range of cognitive, somatic and sensory issues associated with anxiety. The cards were designed with children on the autism spectrum in mind but may be used with neurotypical children if you remove certain cards from deck.

### How to use them

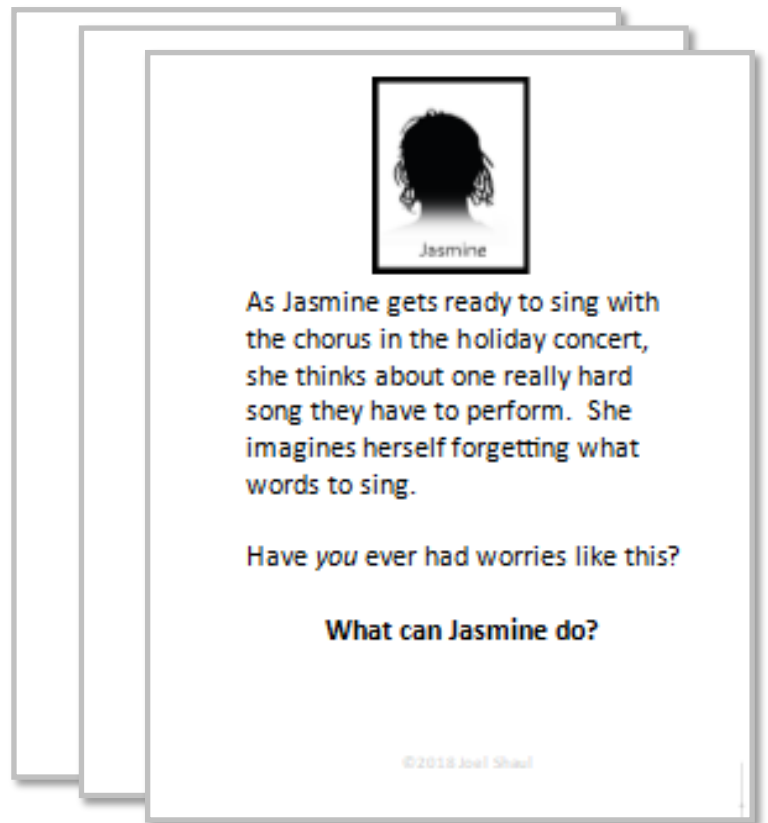
Print them on cardstock and cut them out. You can also print on paper if you laminate the paper.

Also print out page 2 of this pdf, and display it while you are using the cards. It gives the profile of the different characters featured in the cards.

You can use the cards in a game-like activity with up to five players, or you can use them in counseling with just the therapist and the child.

It's strategic to employ play money or tokens when using Worry Cards. You can give these out when the child achieves special insights or notices that he/she has some issue in common with the worry card characters.

I suggest you use this resource in combination with other free CBT resources I offer, such as:  
<http://bit.ly/MNsdYZ>



**Joel Shaul, LCSW**

# Help these kids with their **WORRIES.**



Afraid people are saying bad things about her.



Worried the same bad thing will keep happening.



Feels the world is a very dangerous place.



Hates certain sounds, touches and smells.



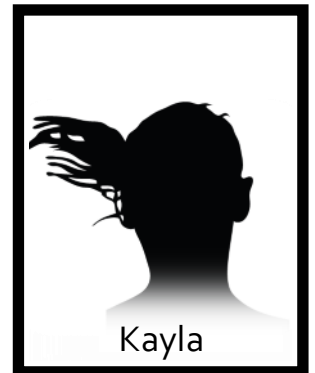
Gets upset when things don't go as he expects.



Expects that things will be too hard to deal with.



Breathing and body change when he is upset.



Thinks she can't cope away from family and home.

Help yourself too.  
Learn about your own worries with  
**WORRY CARDS.**



Jasmine didn't really want to do the exercise class after school, but her mom signed her up anyhow. Jasmine is worried that it will be far too difficult for her.

Have *you* ever felt really worried that something would be too hard?

**What can Jasmine do?**

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As Jasmine gets ready to sing with the chorus in the holiday concert, she thinks about one really hard song they have to perform. She imagines herself forgetting what words to sing.

Have *you* ever had worries like this?

**What can Jasmine do?**

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Jasmine's family is looking forward to the big family reunion. But not Jasmine. She loves her relatives, but when she sees them all at once it's hard for her. They ask so many questions and Jasmine feels like she needs to hide.

Have *you* ever felt like big family get-togethers are hard in some ways?

**What can Jasmine do?**

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Jasmine lies awake in her bed, thinking about the math test the next day. She wonders if she will even remember how to do long division without a calculator.

Have *you* ever worried you would do bad at school?

**What can Jasmine do?**

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Mary's classmates are excited about their whole class getting to take a ride in a big boat on the river. But Mary decides she probably will not go. What if the boat ran into another boat, or sank?

Has feeling really afraid ever kept *you* from doing something others enjoy?

**What can Mary do?**

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Mary passed her swimming test at the pool. But she won't go into the deep end. She gets really frightening thoughts about drowning whenever her feet cannot touch the bottom.

Has feeling really afraid ever held *you* back from doing something hard?

**What can Mary do?**

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They showed Mary the summer day camp in May. Mary saw something really bad there: a wasp nest right under the picnic table. Mary decides she can never go to a camp like this.

Has something scary ever made *you* not want to go somewhere?

**What can Mary do?**

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At baseball practice, Mary's friend Eve is up to bat. Eve gets hit by the ball! Mary walks up to her dad and says, "There's no way *I'm* going to get hit by that ball. I want to go home!"

Have worries about getting hurt ever made you stop doing something?

**What can Mary do?**

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Once, when Rick was in the restroom at the pool, two boys pushed him down and stole his money. Two years later, Rick still will not use the pool restroom, even though it's really hard to wait for hours without using the bathroom.

Have *you* ever worried that the same bad thing would happen again?

**What can Rick do?**

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At the last Boy Scout campout, Rick's friend James seems to be hanging out with the other boys much more than with Rick. Rick thinks, "I'll be lonely at the next campout, just like now."

Has one bad experience made *you* think that it would happen again?

**What can Rick do?**

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Last year, when Rick's dad was on a business trip in Texas, a bus ran into his father's car and he ended up in the hospital. Now, Rick's dad has to travel to Texas again. Rick is afraid something awful will happen there once more.

Have *you* ever worried the same bad thing might happen again and again?

**What can Rick do?**

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At the church Christmas party last year, they played Musical Chairs and Rick lost every time. Rick knows that this year's party will also be terrible.

Has a difficult party ever made *you* feel like other parties would be bad?

**What can Rick do?**

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Jeremy can't stand the very loud talking in his school lunch room. He is afraid that his birthday will be the same way—just a lot of kids making noise that he can't stand. When Jeremy thinks about his birthday party coming up, he feels worried.

Have *you* ever worried about being in loud places?

**What should Jeremy do?**

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For some reason, the smell and look of soup, and the sound of people slurping it, is hard for Jeremy to take. In Math class, Jeremy finds out they are serving soup at lunch today! He feels nervous and upset.

Does anything bother *you* the way soup bothers Jeremy?

**What should Jeremy do?**

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When Jeremy's dad takes Jeremy to see "Disney on Ice," the bright strobe lights and loud music are more than he can stand, and they have to leave. Jeremy's dad asks Jeremy if he can think of something else fun to do.

Are there some kinds of big, loud places that make *you* feel bad?

**What should Jeremy do?**

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Thinking about the upcoming trip to the Dinosaur Museum, Jeremy is excited but also really nervous. He is afraid that, in the crowded museum, a person might bump into him. He just hates that feeling of having someone bump against him.

Do crowded places make *you* feel uncomfortable?

**What should Jeremy do?**

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Lisa recently found out that some girls in the school were saying awful things about how she threw up in gym class. As Lisa walks into her church, she wonders how many people here are also saying bad things about her.

Do *you* sometimes worry about what people are saying about you?

### What should Lisa do?

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Lisa is standing in front of the class, about to start her report on snakes. She notices one boy, Philip, smiling. Lisa thinks, "He's thinking my report is going to be stupid!"

Have you ever assumed that someone was thinking bad things about you?

### What should Lisa do?

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In the hallway, Lisa sees two girls talking to each other and laughing. She can't hear what they're saying. Lisa thinks, "There's two more people talking about how I invited Ron to the dance and he said no!"

It's hard to know what people are thinking. How can you tell when people are being mean?

### What should Lisa do?

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Lisa hears her mother in the next room say loudly to herself, "Oh, good grief!" Lisa thinks, "That must mean mom has gotten another email from school about how bad I'm doing in Reading."

Ever worry what *your* parents think?

### What should Lisa do?

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Ted is getting ready for his first horse riding lesson and he feels pretty nervous. He notices that he is breathing kind of fast, almost as if he has been running.

What is *your* breathing like when you are nervous or scared?

**What should Ted do?**

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Ted is sitting outside the principal's office. He is waiting to tell the principal about the boy who hit him on the playground. Ted looks at his hands and notices he is making tight fists.

What does *your* body do when you are angry?

**What should Ted do?**

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As Ted is getting ready to fly in an airplane for the first time, he notices that he is sweating and shaky and his stomach feels upset.

What does *your* body do when you are upset?

**What should Ted do?**

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Ted has just moved to a new neighborhood. As he walks towards new kids he has never met, he feels tight in his chest and his hands are sweaty. His mom asks, "How do you feel?" He answers, "Fine."

How do *you* think Ted feels? Do *you* ever feel like Ted?

**What should Ted do?**

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Kayla is going to summer camp for the first time. As she imagines being away from her mom, dad and computer for a week, Kayla feels very unhappy.

Do *you* ever feel nervous and uncomfortable away from home?

**What should Kayla do?**

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Kayla is invited to sleep over at a friend's house and she is worried about it. The last time Kayla tried a sleepover, she missed her own bedroom so much she had to call her mom to come pick her up.

What do *you* miss most when you are away from home?

**What should Kayla do?**

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Kayla used to sleep in her mom's bed when there were thunderstorms. Kayla thought she had gotten over this. But tonight the thunder is really loud. Kayla walks down the hall towards her mom's room.

What scary things make *you* want your parents?

**What should Kayla do?**

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When Kayla was in first grade, she went through a time when she was afraid of school and refused to go. Now, in ninth grade, Kayla is starting to feel the same way all over again.

Have *you* ever been fearful of going to school?

**What should Kayla do?**

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At Tony's school, the Standardized Tests are starting in two weeks. Tony is already worried about this. What will the schedule be? Will lunch be at a different time? It seems like more than he can stand.

Do changes in schedules bother *you*?

**What should Tony do?**

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Tony loves his special, daily TV show and he hates to miss a single episode. His mom set the DVR to record it today so she could take Tony out to get his haircut. In the barber's chair, he worries: "What if it doesn't record?"

What is something *you* like the same way every time?

**What should Tony do?**

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Tony just hates hip-hop music. It bothers him that this music might be playing anywhere—the store, a restaurant, the amusement park. Tony asks his dad, for the fifth time, if they will sometimes have to hear hip-hop while they are on vacation.

Sometimes you don't know what might happen when you go somewhere. Does that bother *you*?

**What should Tony do?**

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Tony is arguing with his Dad. Tony wants to take along all his own toys to play with at the new friend's house. Dad says "no" and puts Tony in the car without the toys. Tony imagines how bored and unhappy he will be on this play date.

What things do *you* find hard to get used to in someone else's house?

**What should Tony do?**

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