

Script – Broadcast – Wired for worry

INTRO

The clock ticks past midnight. Your eyes are open, your body still – but your mind is anything but quiet. From bills to health scares to family stress, worry shows up, unpacks, and overstays its welcome.

When it comes to worry, there's no shortage of things that keep us up at night – some of it probably has us tossing and turning at times.

According to experts like Ashley Pratt, a psychotherapist with OSF HealthCare, most of what we fret about never comes to fruition. But that doesn't stop us from experiencing a few anxious moments.

But why do we worry?

(((SOS))) Ashley Pratt, psychotherapist, OSF HealthCare

"It's actually part of our human nature. Our brain is designed to help us protect ourselves from danger or unpleasant experiences. So, worry is kind of our brain's way of helping us navigate or prepare for those things." (:12)

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But some worrying can serve a purpose, Pratt says. For example, if you're worried about skin cancer, you might be more diligent when it comes to protecting your skin. If you're worried about money, you might become thrifter when it comes to spending.

Pratt says the best way to get a hold of worry is to concentrate on what you can control.

Still, life happens and that means some things we worry about do come true. Pratt recommends meeting those fears head on.

(((SOS))) Ashley Pratt, psychotherapist, OSF HealthCare

"I think we can learn that we can get through it, first and foremost. Even if our worries do come true occasionally, we can cope with it. Worry gives us opportunities to learn about how we handle those situations." (:16)

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Instead of worrying, Pratt says to trust yourself **IF** something negative does happen. It's better to remain calm than distressed when trying to solve a potential problem.

But if you are having a tough time navigating those worries, there are ways you can calm your nerves. For example, stay off your phone, where you can find news that may be upsetting. Check in with people in your inner circle that you trust and can talk to. Finally, Pratt suggests starting the practice of gratitude.

Trying to worry less takes time and lots of work. If you can't seem to find any relief on your own, Pratt recommends seeking professional help.