

Worries

Learning Coping Tools

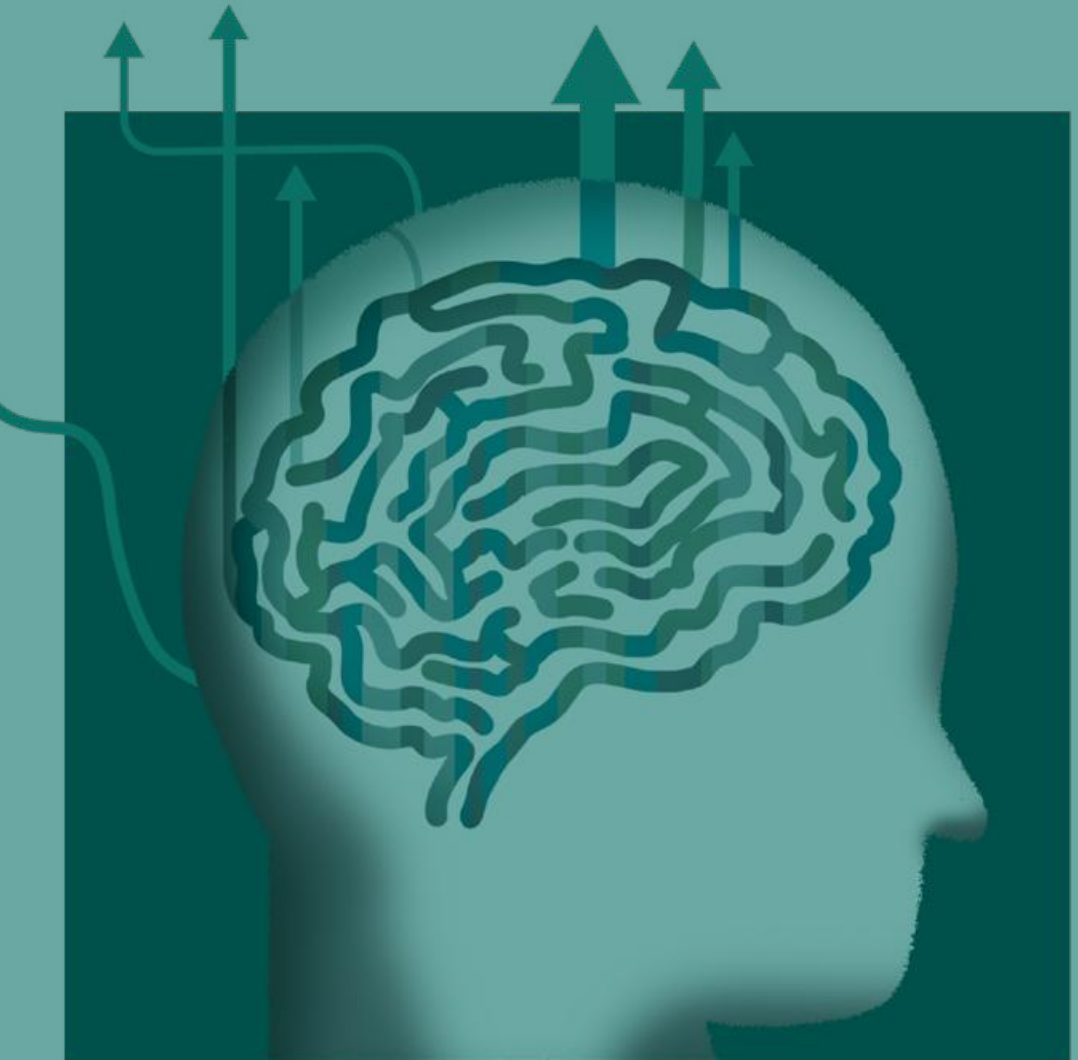


Table of Contents

03 Who Is This Booklet For?

04 What Is Worry?

05 Did You Know You Can
Manage Worry?

07 When Overthinking Becomes a
Problem

12 Do You Focus Only on What
Went Wrong?

13 Reflect on Your Thoughts

14 Where to Seek Help

15 References

Who Is This Booklet For?

Have you ever felt like your mind can't rest, even when everything seems fine? No matter how hard you try, your thoughts keep circling **worries**, as if something bad is always about to happen. If you relate to this, know that you are not alone. This material was created especially for you!

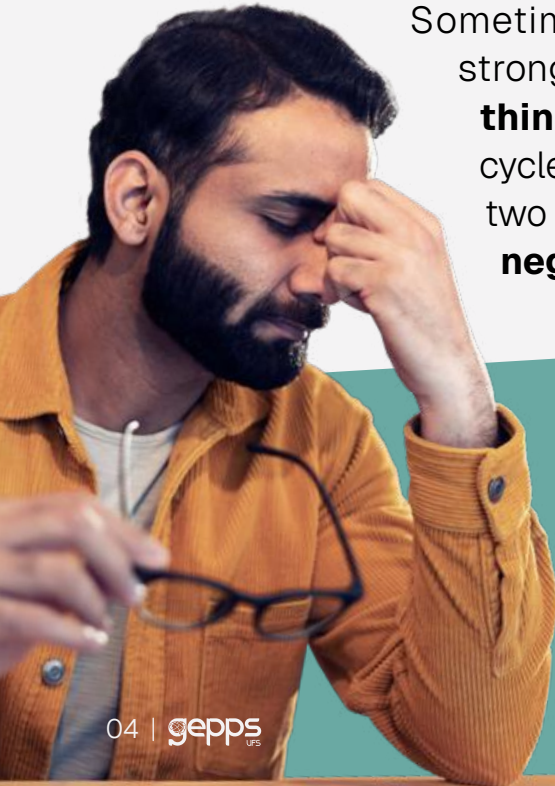
What Is Worry?

Who hasn't found themselves thinking about bills, an important exam, or a tight work deadline? These repeated thoughts about the future, especially about what could go wrong, are what we call **worries**.

Everyone worries sometimes — it's part of life. The problem begins when these thoughts become more **frequent**, **seem endless**, and **start interfering with daily life**. Our mind imagines the worst-case scenarios, increasing **anxiety** even more.

Sometimes this pattern becomes stronger due to certain **ways of thinking** that keep the anxiety cycle going. Next, we'll talk about two of them: **rumination** and the **negative filter**.

And don't worry
— we will explain
everything in a
clear and
simple way.



Did You Know You Can Manage Worry?

When we understand how our mind works, we can find healthier **strategies** to deal with thoughts that insist on showing up.

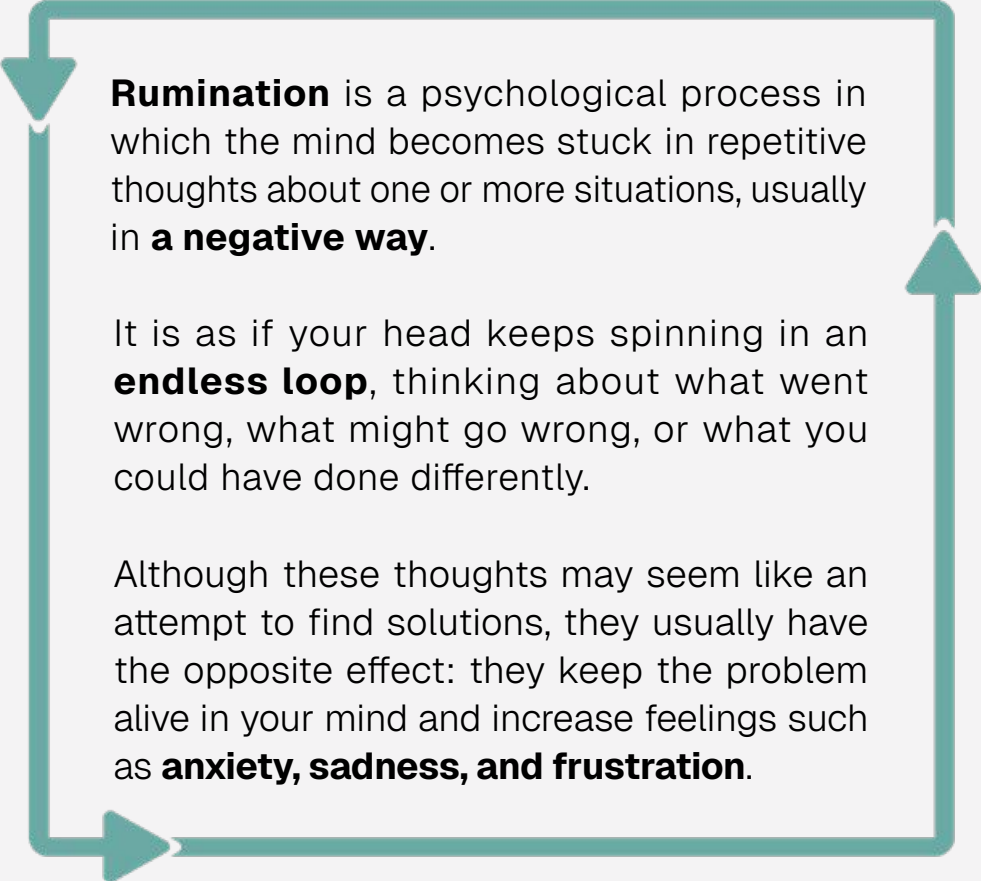
FIRST...

We will learn what **rumination** is and how **to handle it**. Then, we will talk about the **negative filter**. Ready to begin? Let's do this together!





When Overthinking Becomes a Problem



Rumination is a psychological process in which the mind becomes stuck in repetitive thoughts about one or more situations, usually in **a negative way**.

It is as if your head keeps spinning in an **endless loop**, thinking about what went wrong, what might go wrong, or what you could have done differently.

Although these thoughts may seem like an attempt to find solutions, they usually have the opposite effect: they keep the problem alive in your mind and increase feelings such as **anxiety, sadness, and frustration**.

Rumination is related to anxiety because it traps you in worries about what may happen in the future, increasing a **sense of danger and lack of control**.

IN OTHER WORDS...

Rumination happens when you keep thinking about the same problem **over and over**, without reaching a solution. You dwell on situations repeatedly. Instead of helping, this pattern only increases worry.

For example:

After an argument with a friend, you spend days replaying what happened and criticizing yourself for not having said or done something differently. This leads you to imagine negative scenarios, such as the friendship ending or the person distancing themselves from you.



Have You Ever Felt Something Like This?

Maybe this can help you...

MINDFULNESS

Mindfulness is a strategy to interrupt the cycle of repetitive thoughts, bringing your attention back to the present moment and letting go of worries that insist on returning.

If you notice your mind wandering and the thoughts returning, simply guide your attention back to the here and now — without judgment or blame.

Let's Practice?

A graphic for the 'Cloud Visualization Exercise'. It features a light blue background with several stylized, soft-edged white clouds. The text 'Cloud Visualization' is written in a large, white, sans-serif font with a subtle drop shadow, and 'EXERCISE' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font below it.

Cloud Visualization EXERCISE

In this exercise, you observe your thoughts and feelings as if they were clouds moving across the sky while you float along with them.

Start>>

1 Choose a calm environment

Sit in a quiet place.
Close your eyes and take a deep breath to relax.

2 Visualize a serene sky

Imagine a peaceful blue sky with white clouds moving slowly.

3 Observe your thoughts

Bring to mind the thought that is bothering you the most. Acknowledge its presence without judging it or reacting to it.

4 Associate the thought with a cloud

Imagine this thought as one of the clouds and allow it to drift with the wind, slowly floating across the sky.

5 Let the cloud move away

Picture this cloud being carried by the wind, becoming smaller and smaller until it disappears. Do not try to bring it back — simply watch it drift away.

6 Return to the present moment

After the thought moves away, return your attention to your breathing and the sensations in your body. Notice the lightness, keeping your focus on the here and now.

If you are not able to complete the exercise on the first try, try again.

Don't give up!



Do You Focus Only on What Went Wrong?

The **negative filter** is a thinking pattern in which you focus only on the negative side of situations, ignoring the positive aspects.

This is common among people with **anxiety disorders**, and it can increase distress by reinforcing feelings of failure.

IN OTHER WORDS...

It's like wearing “dark sunglasses” that distort the way you see reality: you notice the problems or obstacles, but ignore the successes and opportunities.

For example:

You submit a report that is praised by your boss, but you keep focusing on a typo that was overlooked. Even though your work was good, you still feel like you failed.



Reflect on Your Thoughts

Let’s say you start with a negative thought, and then you notice you’re seeing negative aspects everywhere. We call this pattern **“confirmation bias”**.

Shall we evaluate these thoughts?		
1) Negative emotion List the emotion in this field of the table.	2) Negative interpretation Write your interpretation of what happened.	3) How would someone else see this? Describe how a person with a different perspective would interpret what happened.
4) Is there any pattern in the way you see situations?		
★ In the end, reflect on your current thoughts and how you can change them. ★		

Where to Seek Help?

Worries do not need to control your life. You can use this booklet whenever you need support.

If worry becomes too intense or starts affecting your daily life, there are places where you can find support:

Primary Care Clinics: First point of access for medical and mental health concerns. Doctors or nurses can evaluate your symptoms and refer you to specialized care if needed.

Community Mental Health Centers: Provide free or low-cost mental health services, including therapy and crisis support, especially for people with limited financial resources.

University Training Clinics: Located at universities, these clinics offer care provided by graduate students under professional supervision, usually at a reduced cost.

Social Services and Support Programs: Offer assistance to individuals and families experiencing social or economic vulnerability, connecting them to health, housing, or community resources.

Therapists with Sliding-Scale Fees: Some psychologists and counselors adjust the cost of sessions based on a person's financial situation, making therapy more accessible.

REFERENCES

Abramowitz, J. S., & Blakey, S. M. (2020). *Clinical handbook of fear and anxiety: maintenance processes and treatment mechanisms*. American Psychological Association.

American Psychiatric Association. (2023). *Manual Diagnóstico e Estatístico de Transtornos Mentais*. (5ª ed.). Artmed.

Barlow, D. H. (2021). *Clinical Handbook of Psychological Disorders: A Step-by-Step Treatment Manual*. (6ª ed.). The Guilford Press.

Clark, D. A., & Beck, A. T. (2012). *Terapia Cognitiva para os Transtornos de Ansiedade: Tratamentos que Funcionam - Guia do Terapeuta*. Artmed.

Hoffmann, S. G. (2020). *The anxiety skills workbook: simple CBT and mindfulness strategies for overcoming anxiety, fear, and worry*. New Harbinger Publications.

Leahy, R. L. (2018). *Técnicas de Terapia Cognitiva: Manual do Terapeuta*. Artmed.

AUTHORS

Gessica Leal

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/8418622234458948>

Laiza Xavier

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/6545852984805337>

SUPERVISION

André Faro

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/2097923788649486>

TRANSLATE

Dandara Palhano

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/0312931099564000>

LAYOUT AND DESIGN

Daniella Etinger

Lattes: <http://lattes.cnpq.br/7841139532382433>

How to cite

Leal, G., Xavier, L., Etinger, D., Palhano, D. & Faro, A. (2025). *Worries: Learning Coping Tools*. [Digital booklet] Health Psychology Laboratory – GEPPS (Federal University of Sergipe, UFS, Brazil).

 www.geppsufs.com

 [@gepps_ufs](https://www.instagram.com/gepps_ufs)



Scan the QR code
to explore more booklets.

