



taking control

When your brother or sister lives with IBD, life can be unpredictable. You don't know when they might get ill, how bad it will be or what will happen to your family when it does. It can make you feel like you have too many thoughts in your head or that you are not in control.

Feeling that way can make you act differently. Some people might not be able to stop thinking about bad things that might happen. Others might try to ignore it completely. It can make you feel angry, lonely or sad.

It can also make you think differently. Do you worry about things all the time? Do you find yourself not wanting to go out or enjoy time with your family? Well, you are not the only one.

But with the help of your family and friends, you can take control of your life and your feelings.

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hints and tips

- **Take a step back.** Try to focus on the things you enjoy, so you can forget about your worries for a bit. Do you play football or are you a massive music fan? Do you belong to a local club or enjoy spending time with your friends?
- **Have you tried mindfulness?** It means being in the here and now rather than thinking about the past or future. It can help us stop getting lost or tangled up in our thoughts or feelings. Try sitting quietly with your eyes closed for a few minutes. What can you hear? What can you smell? If you like it, there are links to apps you might enjoy at the bottom of this worksheet.
- **Get more involved by asking your sibling what you can do to help.** They might need someone to talk to sometimes, or some help remembering to take their medicine. If they are off school or college, they might ask you to keep the school updated on their condition. It is different for everyone, so just ask the question – it might help you feel more in control.
- **Knowledge is power!** Try going onto the [CICRA website](#) to find out more about your brother or sister's condition.
- **Notice when things are getting too much.** Sometimes, people can't stop worrying about something bad happening. Try to catch yourself if this happens to you. Think: Is this thought useful to me? Try imagining a balloon with your worry inside it – then let it go!



“My daughter was diagnosed at 14, my son was only 8. He has suffered terribly emotionally. He is like a roller coaster. Every time my daughter has a bad day, he is in tears, because he is sad for her.”

Shirley, mother of a child with IBD

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activity one

Are you a disaster forecaster?

If you feel as though you have lost control of your life, it can affect the way you think. Some young people can find themselves thinking that something awful is going to happen. But they probably have very little to back up their ideas.

Next time that happens to you, try asking yourself:

- Am I thinking I can predict the future?
- How likely is it that the thing you are worried about might really happen?
- Is what I am thinking very helpful to me?
- What's most likely to happen?
- What if the thing I am worried about does not happen?



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activity two

Spotting negative thoughts

We all have negative thoughts sometimes. They are automatic, meaning they come out of nowhere. We cannot stop ourselves from getting them, but we can control how we react to them.

I can't control automatic thoughts
but I can control if they stay

recognise them
disagree with them
disprove them
let them go
think positively

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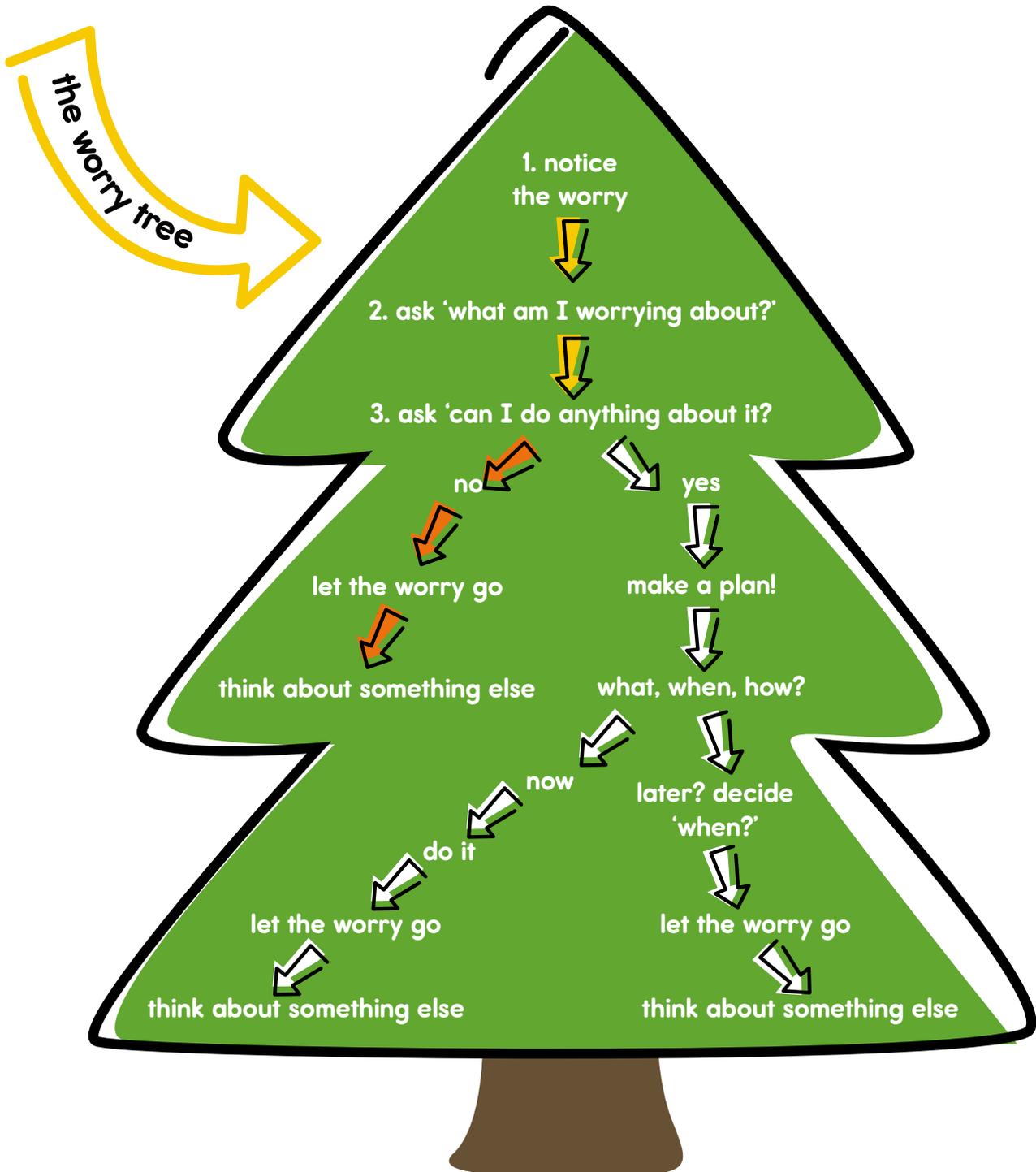
emotional wellbeing



activity three

Climbing down the worry tree

People might say 'don't worry'. But how do you do that?
Try climbing down the worry tree.



If you are still finding it difficult to 'let the worry go',
think about asking for help or talk to CICRA.

Adapted from Butler and Hope 2007

cicra 
better lives for children with crohns and colitis

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more ways to get help or support

- Read [more about IBD](#) on CICRA's website
- Speak to other siblings in your situation at a CICRA [Family Day](#)
- Speak to Laura, CICRA's [Family Support Worker](#)
- [Watch](#) Dr Kate Blakeley talk about living and coping with IBD
- [MIND](#) has lots of tips for young people who want to open up to friends and family
- If you like mindfulness, check out [Calm](#), [Cosmic Kids](#), [Headspace](#) or [Smiling Mind](#).
- See the emotional wellbeing kit [resources library](#) for lots more ideas and support

do you need a little more help?

We designed this kit to help you and your family cope with some of the common ways IBD can make you all feel. But sometimes, you might need a little more help – and that is OK.



Lots of people feel that way.

If you spot any of the following signs, it might be a good idea to ask your brother or sister's healthcare team if they can offer any extra psychological support, or at least point you in the right direction of services in your area:

- Feeling like you cannot cope
- Struggling to use the tools in this kit
- The tools in this kit do not seem to be working for you
- A lack of interest in the things you usually enjoy
- A feeling of sadness that does not go away
- Thoughts of harming yourself or others