

*Topic in Action 1*  
**Metacognition**  
Part 4 of 4

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Worry and rumination in mental health

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## Clinical problems in which worry and/or rumination play a role

**Generalised anxiety disorder**  
Uncontrollable worry

**Depression**  
Rumination key feature

**Transdiagnostic**  
Social anxiety disorder,  
panic disorder, psychosis

McEvoy, Watson, Watkins & Nathan (2013), Abramowitz, Whiteside, Kalsv & Tolin (2003), Morrison & Wells (2007)

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Topic 4: Metacognition

3 of 18

## Impact of worry

Decrease in positive mood and increase in anxiety

Exacerbates negative thinking

Depletes executive functioning resources

This in turn leads to problems with concentration

Hirsch & Matthews (2012), Hirsch & Hayes & Matthews (2009), Stefanopoulou et al (2014)

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Topic 4: Metacognition

4 of 18

## Impact of rumination

- Depressive rumination in response to stress -> prolonged periods of depression
- Rumination predicts onset of future episodes
- Predicts symptoms of depression
- Linked to over-general thinking
- Problems with problem solving and memory biases

Arditte & Joormann (2011), Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco & Lyubomirsky (2008), Ehrling & Watkins (2008)

## What keeps worry and rumination going?

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#### Last lecture

- Cognitive processes related to negative thinking
- Also attentional bias and anxiety

#### Mentation style

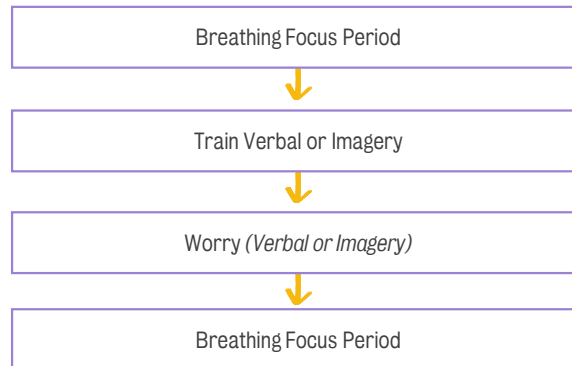
- Worry and rumination -> verbal, abstract thoughts with little imagery
- Verbal-abstract mentation maintains negative thought

Hirsch, Mathews, Lequeriter, Permer & Hayes (2013), Leigh & Hirsch (2011)

## Does the verbal nature of worry maintain worry?

**Participants:** High worriers

**Design:** verbal worry vs. worry in imagery



Strokes & Hirsch (2010)

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Topic 4: Metacognition 7 of 18

## Impact of verbal nature of worry

- Worry in verbal form increases negative intrusions
- Verbal worry perpetuates uncontrollability
- Rumination is verbal and abstract – will it similarly promote rumination?



Strokes & Hirsch (2010)

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Topic 4: Metacognition 8 of 18

## Abstract thinking and rumination

Does abstract thinking have a role in promoting rumination?

Concreteness training in dysphoric participants:

- use of mental imagery

### Finding

Concreteness training

- rumination and
- depressive symptoms and
- concrete thinking than control conditions

Strokes Watkins, Baeyens & Read (2009)

## Rumination

How different cognitive processes may influence each other

### Task:

- Attention
- Interpretation
- Memory

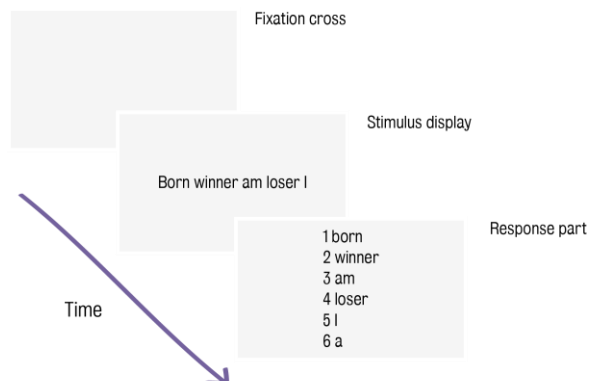
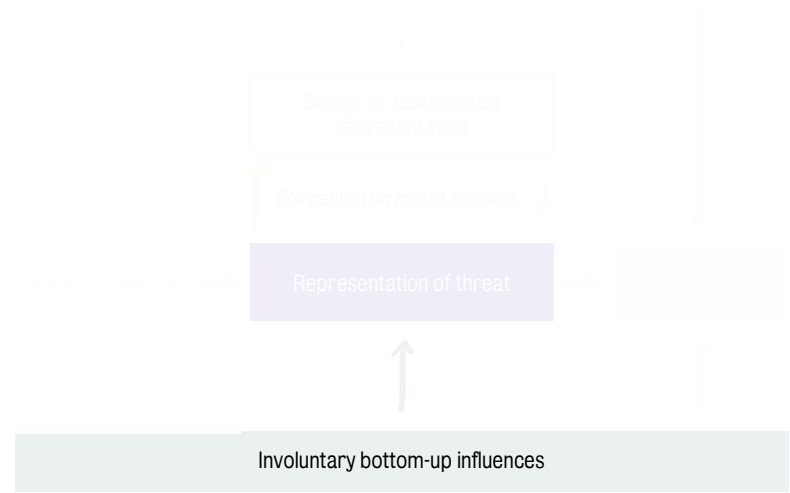


Figure 1. Example trial display

## Model of Pathological Worry



Hirsch & Matthews (2012)

## Potential applicability to rumination

### Does worry model apply to rumination?

- Attentional control
- Bottom up processing biases
- Mental style abstract



Watkins & Brown (2002), Joorman, Waugh & Gotlib (2015), Stöber (1998)

## Response style theory of rumination

Rumination prolongs depression through:

Enhancing negative thinking

Interfering with effective problem solving

Interfering with instrumental behaviour

Eroding social support

Nolen-Hoeksema (1991), Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco & Lyubomirsky (2008)

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Topic 4: Metacognition

13 of 18

## Psychological treatment for worry and rumination

CBT = main treatment for depression and anxiety disorder

Clinical approaches = disorder specific

Worry at core of GAD -> reduce processes that maintain worry

Depression treated using CBT -> thought challenging techniques

Newer approaches target rumination more directly

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Topic 4: Metacognition

14 of 18

# Conclusion

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