



## ACTIVITY: 'WORRY BUCKET'

**TIME:** 15+ minutes  
**SIZE:** Large groups  
**SPACE:** Room to sit in a circle  
**RESOURCES:** Hat or bucket, slips of paper, pens

**The aim** is for students to use prioritising, problem-solving, and perspective-taking skills to reach a desired goal.  
**The result** should be discussion about the thinking skills that help build and maintain a healthy Sense of Control.

1. Conduct a brief discussion about worries and how many of them are about things we may think we have no control over. We all have worries, but sometimes keeping them inside can be stressful.
2. Students write on a slip of paper something they worry about. They do not sign the slip, so it can remain anonymous. Students not comfortable writing down a worry of their own might choose, instead, to write down something they know other people may worry about (e.g. doing well at the next exam).
3. Students fold and place their slips of paper in the hat/bucket as it is passed around.
4. Mix the slips of paper around in the hat/bucket, and then give the hat/bucket to a student. He/she will reach in, pick out one slip and read the worry written on it aloud (students who feel comfortable doing so can claim authorship).
5. Discuss the worry as a group (see suggestions below) then the hat/bucket is passed to the next student who selects a slip of paper to read a new worry.

NB: slips of paper that have been read aloud do not go back into the bucket, but should be thrown in the bin. If students have felt comfortable claiming authorship of their worries, they might like the task of screwing up the slip with their worry written upon it and throwing that 'worry' away.

## DISCUSSION SUGGESTIONS



- Brainstorm as a class what the worrier might be thinking or saying to him/herself in order to cause their feelings of worry or anxiety.
- Brainstorm some alternative thoughts/self-talk that the worrier might use to reduce their feelings of worry or anxiety.
- How does it feel to have worries spoken aloud? Is it helpful to share concerns with others? Who are good people to speak with about things that cause you anxiety? Brainstorm a list.
- Does having this worry/anxiety reduce your Sense of Control? Why might that be? What thinking skills are important for dealing with worries that seem outside our control (e.g. perspective-taking, problem-solving, prioritising, making choices)?
- What common elements are emerging from the worries read aloud so far? What common thinking strategies are emerging that can help reduce anxiety and build a strong Sense of Control?