



TOPIC IN FOCUS

RUMINATION

WHAT, WHY, HOW...



WHY DO PEOPLE RUMINATE?

When something significant happens, it is natural and normal to ruminate to help us to understand what happened. We ruminate because it feels helpful and it shows that we care. However, rumination is only helpful to a degree. If we continue to go over past or future issues without solving any problems or learning from past events this is unhelpful.



**ANXIOUS
DISTRESS
DISTRACTED
SADNESS**



WHAT ARE THE NEGATIVE IMPACTS OF RUMINATION?

Some of the negative impacts of engaging in excessive rumination include: disrupted sleep; a high level of distress about something that has already happened and therefore cannot be changed; feeling sad leading to withdrawal of activities; getting caught up in past events without learning from mistakes; being distracted in class; and getting symptoms of anxiety that impacts on performance in assessments, social situations and sports.

HOW AS PARENTS CAN YOU HELP YOUR SON IF YOU NOTICE THEM CONSTANTLY RUMINATING OVER AN ISSUE?

Explore the issue and express empathy. Guide your son through the issue and work out what aspects of the situation can be changed and what can't. Point out what aspects they have no control over and encourage them to focus on things within their control. Explain the differences between problem-solving (which is active and helpful) and rumination (which is passive and unhelpful when it is prolonged). Encourage your son to engage in distracting activities e.g. sport.



**EXPRESS
EMPATHY**

WHAT IS RUMINATION?

Rumination is when a person focuses on an issue or event, yet the person does not reach a solution. Rather, the person goes over the negative aspects of the issue again and again, sometimes going around in circles. Problem solving is a process of working through the advantages and disadvantages of an issue to reach a solution. It is an active process through which an outcome can be reached and acted upon.

Here is an interesting article on how ruminating about upcoming social events (because it feels helpful) can ironically have negative impacts on social performance:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/au/blog/fulfillment-any-age/201810/the-latest-way-conquer-social-anxiety-uses-new-mindset>

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