

Catastrophising / Decatastrophising

Catastrophising is when the mind jumps to the worst possible outcome, often without considering other possibilities. It can increase anxiety and make situations feel more overwhelming. Decatastrophising helps you slow down, look at the evidence, consider more balanced perspectives, and respond more calmly and realistically.

1 NOTICE THE THOUGHT

What am I telling myself?

e.g. "This is going to be a disaster."

2 EXPLORE THE CATASTROPHE

What is the worst-case scenario I'm imagining?

e.g. "Everything will go wrong and I won't be able to cope."

3 CHECK THE EVIDENCE

What do I know for sure? What else could be true?

e.g. "What evidence do I have? Have I been in a similar situation before? What happened then?"

4 FIND A BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

What is a more realistic and balanced way of looking at this?

e.g. "This might be challenging, but I can cope. There are other possible outcomes."

5 NOTICE THE SHIFT

How do I feel now? What do I want to do next?

e.g. "I feel calmer and more in control. I can take a helpful next step."

COMMON CATASTROPHISING THOUGHTS EXAMPLES		DECATASTROPHISING THOUGHTS MORE BALANCED PERSPECTIVES
"This is going to be a disaster."	→	"This might be difficult, but I can handle it."
"I won't be able to cope."	→	"I've coped with hard things before."
"What if the worst happens?"	→	"What else could happen? What's more likely?"
"It's all my fault."	→	"This is a shared situation, not all my fault."
"I'll be embarrassed."	→	"I might feel uncomfortable, and that's okay."
"People will think badly of me."	→	"Most people are focused on themselves."
"I'll never be able to fix this."	→	"I can take one step at a time."
"It will be unbearable."	→	"It will be challenging, but it won't last forever."

REFLECTION

What situation do I tend to catastrophise about most?

HELPFUL REMINDERS

- Thoughts are not facts.
- The worst-case scenario is just one possibility.
- I can handle uncertainty.
- I have coped with difficult situations before.
- A more balanced perspective helps me feel calmer and make better decisions.
- I can choose where to place my attention.

MY TAKEAWAY

What is one balanced thought I want to remember?

SOURCES

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