



The Healing Collective

Decatastrophizing



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Cognitive distortions are irrational thoughts that have the power to influence how you feel. Everyone has some cognitive distortions—they're a normal part of being human. However, when cognitive distortions are too plentiful or extreme, they can be harmful.

One common type of cognitive distortion is called catastrophizing. When catastrophizing, the importance of a problem is exaggerated, or the worst possible outcome is assumed to be true. By learning to question your own thoughts, you can correct many of these cognitive distortions.

Decatastrophizing is a cognitive skill used in therapy to help people challenge the belief that the worst possible outcome is inevitable. When someone catastrophizes, they jump straight to the most extreme, negative conclusion, often without considering more realistic possibilities. Decatastrophizing slows that process down and helps the mind return to a grounded, balanced perspective.

In practice, it often involves questions like:

1. What's the actual evidence for this fear?
2. Has the worst-case scenario ever happened before?
3. If it did happen, how would I realistically cope?
4. What's a more likely or manageable outcome?

The goal isn't to dismiss real concerns. It's to reduce anxiety by replacing catastrophic automatic thoughts with clearer, more reasonable ones. It helps people feel more in control, more capable, and less overwhelmed. By learning to question your own thoughts, you can correct many of these cognitive distortions.

What am I worried about?

How likely is it that my worry will come true? (Give examples of past experiences, or other evidence, to support your answer):

If my worry does come true, what's the worst that could happen?





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GRRRAAGH!

If my worry does come true, what's most likely to happen?

In one week? _____ %

In one month? _____ %

In one year? _____ %

Is there anything measurable I can do to mitigate this concern to focus on instead (list possibilities)
Do I need to seek help?