

Catastrophizing

Assuming the worst possible outcome will happen, even when the situation is not that bad.

1. What is Catastrophizing?

- Catastrophizing means **imagining extreme negative outcomes**, even from small problems.
 - The brain jumps from a simple worry to the worst-case scenario.
 - Common in **anxiety, stress, overthinking, and low confidence**.
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2. Types of Catastrophizing

1. Future Catastrophizing

- “Something terrible will happen.”

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Expecting failure, danger, or loss even without evidence.

2. Present Catastrophizing

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Overreacting to current problems.

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Turning small issues into big ones.

3. Self-Catastrophizing

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Blaming yourself or thinking you can't handle anything.

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"I will mess up everything."

3. Common Symptoms

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Constant overthinking

- Difficulty calming down
 - Jumping to negative conclusions
 - Feeling unsafe or worried all the time
 - Trouble making decisions
 - Anxiety and physical tension
 - Expecting bad outcomes automatically
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4. Common Causes

Biological

- High stress hormones

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Overactive fear centers in the brain

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Family history of anxiety

Psychological

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Anxiety disorders

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Low self-esteem

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Previous traumatic experiences

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Negative thinking patterns

Lifestyle Factors

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Sleep deprivation

- Continuous stress
 - Overworking
 - Isolation
 - Lack of emotional support
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5. How It Feels (Simple Words)

- “Everything feels like a disaster.”
- “I’m scared something bad will happen.”
- “Even small problems feel huge.”
- “I always assume the worst.”

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“My mind jumps to negative outcomes instantly.”

6. Is Catastrophizing Dangerous?

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Not dangerous physically,

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but emotionally draining, and can lead to:

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Severe anxiety

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Panic attacks

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Insomnia

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Avoiding tasks

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Low confidence

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Repeated catastrophizing increases long-term stress.

7. How to Cope (Practical Steps)

Self-Help

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Challenge the thought: “What is the actual evidence?”

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Replace “What if it goes wrong?” with “What if it goes right?”

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Practice slow breathing

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Write down worries to reduce mental load

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Break big problems into small steps

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Reduce caffeine and screen time

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Talk to someone you trust

Professional Support

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Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT)

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Thought-restructuring techniques

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Anxiety management exercises

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Medication (if recommended by a doctor)

8. When to Seek Help

Seek help if catastrophizing:

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Happens daily

- Affects your studies, work, or decisions
 - Causes panic or physical symptoms
 - Makes you avoid normal activities
 - Comes with constant anxiety or low mood
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9. Quick Summary

- **Catastrophizing = Jumping to the worst possible outcome**
- Caused by **stress, anxiety, trauma, or negative thinking habits**
- Affects **emotions, decisions, and confidence**
- Manageable through **thought correction, relaxation, and therapy**

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Very common — and changeable with practice