1. My Experiences with Math Anxiety

Math anxiety has been a significant part of my academic journey. I often felt overwhelmed when solving complex problems, particularly during exams. Despite feeling confident during lectures and while doing homework, I frequently blanked out during tests. For example, I remember preparing thoroughly for a calculus exam, only to panic when faced with a challenging question. This anxiety affected my performance, leaving me frustrated and questioning my abilities. Reflecting on this, I realize my anxiety stemmed from the fear of failure and the pressure to perform well.

2. Automatic Negative Thoughts and Possible Reframes

I have often experienced automatic negative thoughts during math work, such as:

"I’m just not good at math."

Reframe: "Math is a skill, and with consistent practice and effort, I can improve."

"If I make one mistake, the entire problem is wrong."

Reframe: "Mistakes are part of learning. Each error helps me understand what I need to work on."

"Other people find math easy; I must not be smart enough."

Reframe: "Everyone has different strengths, and I can develop my math skills with patience and persistence."

By identifying these thoughts and consciously replacing them with positive outlooks, I’ve begun to approach math problems with a calmer mindset.

3. How I Will Assist in Relieving Math Anxiety for Those I Tutor

As a tutor, my goal is to create a supportive and positive environment for students dealing with math anxiety. Here’s how I plan to help:

Build Confidence Through Encouragement: I will acknowledge students' efforts and celebrate their progress, no matter how small. This can help them see their potential and reduce feelings of inadequacy.

Break Problems into Manageable Steps: To prevent students from feeling overwhelmed, I will teach them to tackle math problems step by step. Simplifying tasks makes the process less intimidating.

Normalize Mistakes as Part of Learning: I will share examples of how making mistakes has helped me grow in math. Encouraging students to view errors as opportunities for growth can shift their mindset.

Teach Relaxation Techniques: I will recommend deep-breathing exercises and mindfulness strategies to help students stay calm during challenging tasks or tests.

Provide Resources and Practice Opportunities: I will offer additional practice materials tailored to their needs, focusing on concepts they find difficult. Regular practice builds familiarity and reduces anxiety.

By adopting these strategies, I hope to help students not only improve their math skills but also develop a positive and confident attitude toward learning math.