My Catastrophizing Map

Catch the worst case story, see how it grew, and check it against the facts.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 What set it off

Facts only: what happened, when, where, who was involved

What happened:

How upset did I feel (0 to 10)? 0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

2 My "what if" chain

Follow the story my mind told, one step at a time

First thought:

Then, what if...

Then, what if...

Then, what if...

The worst outcome my mind landed on:

Right now, how likely does it feel? ☐ 0 to 10% ☐ 10 to 50% ☐ 50 to 90% ☐ 90% +

3 Signs I was catastrophizing

Tick any that fit. These are habits of thinking, not facts about you.

- ☐ Jumped straight to the worst outcome
- ☐ Treated a feeling as proof
- ☐ Assumed I could not cope
- ☐ Felt helpless, like nothing would help
- ☐ Made it bigger than it is
- ☐ Each "what if" led to the next
- ☐ Forgot times it turned out fine
- ☐ Could not stop thinking about it
- ☐ Body alarm: racing heart, tight chest
- ☐ Other:

4 What the thought made me do

Checking, asking for reassurance, avoiding, losing sleep, snapping at people

What I did:

What it cost me later:

5 Check it against the facts

What would a fair minded friend or a judge say about the evidence?

Facts that fit the worst case:

Facts that do not fit it:

A time something like this turned out better than I feared:

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My Decatastrophizing Plan

Widen the picture, plan how I would cope, and test my predictions.

Name: _____ **Date:** _____

1 Worst, best and most likely

Write all three, then give each a realistic chance out of 100

Outcome	What could happen	Chance %
Worst		
Best		
Most likely		

2 If the worst did happen, how would I cope?

People, skills, money, time and past experience I could lean on

First thing I would do: _____

Who I could ask for help: _____

What I have handled before: _____

What would still be OK: _____

Would this matter in 1 week? ☐ Yes ☐ A little ☐ No

Would this matter in 1 year? ☐ Yes ☐ A little ☐ No

3 A more balanced thought

Accurate and fair, not forced positive. Then rate again.

What I can tell myself now:

_____

_____

Chance of the worst now: _____ %

How upset I feel now (0 to 10): _____

4 My prediction log

Write the feared outcome now, check what happened later

Date	What I feared would happen	Chance %	What actually happened	Came true?

Good to know

1. Not a test or a diagnosis. This page is not the Pain Catastrophizing Scale and gives no score.
2. The goal is accuracy, not positive thinking. Bad things do happen, but many feared ones never do.
3. If catastrophic thoughts are constant, or about health or panic, talk to a doctor or therapist.

In the US: call or text 988 in a crisis. In immediate danger, call 911.

Someone I can talk it through with: _____

I will review this plan on: _____

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