

# Catastrophising



## What is Catastrophising?

A term described by therapist Jay Stringer as: "An exaggerated, automatic physical stress response to perceived threats."

- The amygdala (emotion centre of the brain) reacts before we consciously assess if a threat is real.

## Why Do We Do It?

It's an evolutionary survival response.

Think: Ancient danger.

You see a shadow—assume it's a predator—run for safety.

- This quick reaction once kept us alive.

### But today?

We catastrophise modern stressors:

- An unhappy boss
- A tough email
- A bad test result



## Signs of Catastrophic Thinking

Do any of these sound familiar?

- Anxious feelings
- Negative self-talk
- Pessimistic worldview
- Racing thoughts or overthinking
- Fear or anger



## How to Break the Cycle

- **Notice it.**

Awareness is the first step.

- **Evaluate from a new angle.**

What else could be true?

- **Slow down with mindfulness.**

Breathe. Ground yourself in the present.

- **Journal it out.**

Come back to your thoughts later with fresh eyes.

- Sit with the emotion.

Ask: *Where is this coming from?*



## Catastrophising is instinctual

But with awareness, we can respond rather than react.