# Decatastrophizing Your Anxiety

Anxiety is a normal, healthy emotion – it tells us there is a problem or that we may be in danger. However, sometimes anxiety can grow out of control and can prevent us from engaging in effective problem solving. Often, excessive anxiety can lead to irrational/ineffective thoughts. One style of ineffective thought is "catastrophizing" – jumping to and focusing on the worst possible outcome. We do this because our brain feels like it is effective to "plan for the worst." However, this strategy distorts our perception of the likelihood that the worst-case scenario will happen. As a result, we enter situations anticipating something terrible to happen (making us less effective in that situation).

Below, we will practice *CATCHING* ourselves when we start to catastrophize.

1. Describe the situation that triggers your anxiety and may lead to a catastrophic thought:

2. Next, we will let your brain "run wild" and think about the worst-case scenario. This will free up mental energy by dropping the fight with our brain. Below, write down what the worst that can happen…

3. Now that we have that out of the way, we need to look towards the best possible outcome. Be careful though! The "best outcome" is not the same as the "most likely outcome." We need to think of the most unrealistic, optimistic, best outcome possible. Get weird and ridiculous with it.

4. Now that we have the full spectrum of possibilities, let's write out what will most likely happen.