

WHAT CAN I DO TO STOP CATASTROPHIC THINKING?



1. Avoid the urge to exaggerate

One of the most common errors associated with catastrophic thinking involves exaggerating the effect of something negative. When we engage in this type of thinking, our perspective is overshadowed by our negative outlook. To change our way of thinking, start small. Remind yourself of what parts of your life feel safe, make you laugh, bring you joy?

2. Sleep

We know that poor sleep impacts not only on our irritability the next day, but it significantly affects our mood, leading us to feel more anxious and worry more about things that we would not normally worry about. In fact there is evidence that sleep deprivation makes us more hypersensitive to threat, which leads us to more negative interpretations of things. If we are sleep-deprived our brains overcompensate and go on high alert. Unfortunately, this can do more harm than good.



3. Challenge negative thoughts

You may have noticed that when we have negative thoughts, we get upset because we start to think "The whole world is unsafe!", "Why do I always think like this? There is something wrong with me". These absolute thoughts cause us to worry even more. We all have thoughts that are disturbing at times, but are they true? Is the *whole* world unsafe *all* the time? Do you *always* think like this? Challenging these all or nothing statements and acknowledging them simply as thoughts that will pass. They are will therefore be less likely to affect you. Try listening to your thoughts objectively: "I'm having the thought that the world is hopeless and in danger". OK, I think that way sometimes, usually because of the mood I'm in. But like any thought, it will go eventually". I'm going to sit with it and let it pass."



4. Don't combine the present (or the past) with the future.

It's often is easy to assume that because things are a certain way now, they will always be that way. We may find it much more difficult to imagine what it will feel like when things change, like someone who's been sick for so long they don't believe they'll ever get better. Remind yourself of times that were challenged and how you overcame those difficulties. You can do this again!

5. Get physical.

Fresh air. Exercise. Gardening. Take the dog for a walk. A run. The Gym. Bake up a storm. Involve yourself in hobbies. These positive physical activities have all been shown to help people reduce distress. This is because they help us interact in the here and now, making it harder to dwell on the past or the future. When we enjoy ourselves in these physical actions, we feel more satisfied and calmer and the more present and in the moment we can be, the more we will benefit.



WHEN TO REACH OUT FOR HELP

If you find your anxiety or fear about the coronavirus is building to the point that intruding on your thoughts or preventing you from getting on with your daily life, seek assistance. That is where we can potentially help.

Converge offers 24-hour, 7 day a week counselling support. The great thing is, because we offer phone and videoconferencing facilities, we can provide that support for you, even if you're at home.

To access the EAP services, simply call 1300 OUR EAP (1300 687 327) to make a time to speak with one of our team.

MORE
INFORMATION

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