



## Cognitive Therapy: The Downward Arrow Technique

Sometimes our automatic catastrophic thoughts are only the surface layer. Beneath them lies a deeper core fear that fuels anxiety. The Downward Arrow technique helps you uncover these core fears so you can address them directly.

### Step 1: Pick a Recent Catastrophic Thought

Choose one thought from your last worksheet:

Catastrophic Thought: \_\_\_\_\_

### Step 2: Ask the Downward Arrow Question

Keep asking yourself: "If that were true, what would it mean?" Each answer becomes the next step down.

Step	My Thought/Answer
Surface Thought	_____
If true, then what would it mean?	_____
And if THAT were true, then what?	_____
Keep going until you reach a core fear	_____

### Step 3: Identify Your Core Fear

Write your final 'bottom of the arrow' thought here:

Core Fear: \_\_\_\_\_

Examples of Core Fears: - "I won't be able to handle it." - "People will reject me." - "Something terrible will happen and I'll be helpless."