

Common examples of catastrophic misinterpretations

When someone starts to panic they can mistake the strong physical signs of anxiety as evidence that something terrible really is happening.

It's common to think that a fast-beating heart is the sign of a heart attack starting, for example. Or someone can misinterpret the symptoms of anxiety (feeling dizzy or wobbly) as proof that they are about to faint. Other people fear they are going to be sick, lose control or might do something 'crazy'.

This is known as '**catastrophic misinterpretation**'.

Common examples include:

Symptom of anxiety	Common misinterpretations
Fast beating heart/palpitations	I'm having a heart attack
Dizziness and feeling wobbly	I'm going to faint or collapse
Shallow breathing	I'm going to stop breathing
Racing thoughts	I'm losing my mind
Feeling detached from reality	I'm going 'crazy'
Numbness or tingling sensations	I'm having a stroke
Need to go to the toilet	I'm going to wet myself and embarrass myself in public
Reduced vision	I'm going blind