Welcome to this Choose Your Own Adventure Activity.

Read through the story and make decisions along the way about when and how to use your cognitive coping skills. Once you have gone through the story, go back and try it again. This time make different choices and see how that impacts the outcome.
PAGE 1

Your friends are talking about the auditions for the school play this afternoon. You want to spend time with your friends and you also have an interest in theater. But you’re afraid of making a mistake. You have the thought: “I’m too anxious; I’ll just embarrass myself.”

You:

(a) Ruminate on the thought
(b) Decide to try cognitive coping

If you chose (a) go to PAGE 3, if you chose (b) go to PAGE 2
You decide to use cognitive coping strategies to challenge your anxious thoughts.

You remember previous times that you’ve auditioned for things, and you realize: “Even though I may feel nervous, I can tolerate my nerves and they may not affect my performance at my audition”

Go to PAGE 4
The more you think about auditioning, the more you feel like you will screw up. You begin to notice that your heart is racing, your stomach feels sick, and your mouth is dry. You have the thought: “this is terrible; I can’t handle this.”

You:

(a) **Step outside of your class for a moment**
(b) **Tell the nurse you’re not feeling well and ask to be excused to go home for the rest of the day**
(c) **Decide to challenge your thought using cognitive coping**

If you chose (a) **go to PAGE 5**, if you chose (b), **go to PAGE 7**, if you chose (c) **go to PAGE 2**.
As the audition time approaches, you that your adrenaline is through the roof. You are jumpy, your heart is racing, and your palms are sweaty. You have the thought: “My anxiety is too much, I need to back out.”

You:

(a) Use mindfulness strategies to notice and tolerate your symptoms
(b) Use a relaxation technique to slow down your heart rate and manage your physical symptoms.

If you chose (a) go to PAGE 6, if you chose (b), go to PAGE 8.
You have the thought: “I feel like I’m having a heart attack” and request to leave school for the day. Your parent picks you up and you go home. You feel a sense of relief when you get home.

Go to PAGE 9
You observe and describe your symptoms and find that they are tolerable. You find one of your friends who makes a joke about also being nervous about auditions. As you still feel very nervous as you enter the auditorium, you challenge your ANT “I’m going to embarrass myself and fail terribly” with the following coping thought:

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Go to PAGE 10
You have the thought: “I feel like I’m having a heart attack” and request to leave school for the day. Your parent picks you up and you go home. You feel a sense of relief when you get home.

Go to PAGE 9
You slow your heart rate using breathing techniques and notice the ANT: “I’m going to embarrass myself and fail terribly.” You challenge this thought with the following coping thought:

_____________________________________________________________________________________

Go to PAGE 10
You play video games for the rest of the day and have the thoughts: “I’m never going to amount to anything” and “my friends are all having fun without me.”

(Extra Practice: What thinking traps do you notice here?)
You approach the auditorium with your friends and watch them audition. You nervously get on stage and as you start to audition you have the thought: “I feel so embarrassed; other people must think I’m doing terribly!” You decide that this falls into a thinking trap: which one?

Go to PAGE 12
PAGE 11

You notice that you feel tired, heavy, and down. You eat junk food and go to bed early.

Your alarm goes off in the morning and you:

(a) Get ready and go to school
(b) Skip school

If you chose (a), go to PAGE 13; if you chose (b) go to PAGE 15
You challenge your ANT with the thought: “I feel embarrassed and I can tolerate this feeling. It may not be affecting my performance as much as I think and everyone else likely feels anxious and embarrassed too.” Everyone claps after your audition and you feel happy and proud.

Go to PAGE 14
You go to school and meet up with your friends. They are talking excitedly about the auditions and say that they wish you would have tried out. You have the thoughts: “I always miss out on things” and “they think I’m lame.” You avoid your friends for the rest of the day and go to the library at lunch instead of spending time with your classmates.

(Extra Practice: What thinking trap did you fall into here?)

Go to PAGE 17
A person approaches you from the audience and tells you that she recruits actors for Hollywood and is interested in having you meet with her another day to potentially discuss some roles for movies/television shows. You have the thought: “I’m not good enough for that!”

You:

(a) Go talk to your friends to see what they think

(b) Challenge your ANT with the following coping thought:

_____________________________________________________________________________________

If you chose (a) go to PAGE 16; if you chose (b), go to PAGE 18
You feel a sense of relief when you choose not to go to school. You begin to think about returning to school the next day, however, and start to feel down and anxious as you are worried about meeting up with your friends and catching up with work you missed in class.

Go to PAGE 17
PAGE 16

Your friends say “go for it!” and you tell the recruiter you are interested.

Go to PAGE 19
In the evening, you have the thought: “everyone is going to have fun without me in the play and there is no sense in going to school because my friends won’t want to talk to me.” You decide to stay home from school the next day, and the day after that. You feel down, lethargic, and frustrated. You ask your mom if you can be homeschooled from now on.

THE END.
You use Cognitive coping to challenge your ANT, and ultimately decide to tell the recruiter that you’re interested.

Go to PAGE 19.
PAGE 19

You take Hollywood by storm! You get cast in a leading role in this year’s big drama. You are nominated for an Academy Award. You show up to the Red Carpet, and everyone wants to interview you. They ask: what’s your secret to success? You tell them:

___________________________________________________________________________
_____________________________________________________________________________________

THE END!