

Cognitive Distortions

All or Nothing Thinking

You put things into black or white categories.

If a situation falls short or perfect, you see it as total failure.

I will never be able to succeed. I am a total failure.

Overgeneralization

You see a single negative event as a never-ending pattern of defeat by using words such as always or never.

I messed up. I always mess up.

Mental Filter

You dwell on a single negative detail. For example, you receive many positive comments on a presentation, but one mildly critical comment becomes the "filter" through which you view the whole presentation. You obsess about this, ignoring the positive.

Everyone who sees me is thinking of my failure.

Disqualifying the Positive

You reject positive experiences by insisting that they don't count.

I did well today, but that was just good luck. It won't happen again.

Jumping to Conclusions

You interpret things negatively when there are no facts to support your conclusions.

John was staring at me. He was, no doubt, thinking about what a fool I am.

Mind Reading- Without checking it out, you conclude that someone is reacting negatively to you.

Fortune Telling- You predict that things will turn out badly.

Magnification (Catastrophizing) or Minimization

You exaggerate the importance of your own problems.

You minimize the importance of your own desirable qualities or performances.

Jane doesn't like me. No one ever will.

I am a loyal friend, but that doesn't count for anything.

Emotional Reasoning

You assume that negative emotions reflect the way things really are.

I feel dumb, so therefore I am. I feel lazy, therefore I must be lazy.

Should Statements ("Must"erbation)

You tell yourself things should (or must) be the way you hoped or expected them to be.

I should be successful by this time in my life.

Labeling and Mislabeling (Generalizing)

Instead of saying "I made a mistake" you say "I am a loser."

I misjudged that situation. I am a loser.

Personalization

You blame yourself for something you weren't entirely responsible for.

You blame other people and overlook the way that your own attitudes and behavior might contribute to the situation.

The firm had a bad month. It is my fault.