



Cognitive Distortions

Our minds are incredibly complex computers that are constantly interpreting internal and external information to make decisions. In order to do this efficiently, the brain groups information together and uses assumptions and logic to make spontaneous decisions. However, like all computers, sometimes the assumptions and "logic" are faulty, leading to a distorted and incorrect view of our world. The American Psychological Association defines Cognitive Distortions as "faulty or inaccurate thinking, perception or belief."

For some of us, distorted thinking is a momentary blip. We get upset when we fail a math test. We briefly reason that we're bad at math, instead of realizing we need to study more. But we typically move on and try again. For others, cognitive distortions are a pattern of thinking that interferes with their lives and relationships. In these cases, distorted thinking can lead to chronic anxiety, depression, and behavioral problems such as misuse of substances.

	POLARIZED THINKING When you have an "All-or-Nothing," or "Black and White" thinking pattern. Desire to be perfect or you are a complete failure.	
	MENTAL FILTERING NEGATIVE MENTAL FILTERING Focuses on negative of a situation and filters out positives. Negative details are magnified.	DISQUALIFYING THE POSITIVE Acknowledges positive, but refuses to accept it and turns it into a negative one.
	OVERGENERALIZATION Focuses on a single event and makes a conclusion based on a single piece of negative evidence. Incorrectly conclude all similar events going forward will result in the same negative experience.	
	JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS MIND READING Know what others are thinking. Assumptions of their intentions occur with no evidence.	FORTUNE TELLING Using minimal evidence to make negative predictions and conclusions.
	CATASTROPHIZING MAGNIFICATION Over exaggeration, leading to worries escalating to the worst-case scenario.	MINIMIZATION Minimizing and diminishing the importance of positive experiences.
	PERSONALIZATION Taking things personally, causing a direct and personal reaction to what others, even if unrelated. Assuming you are intentionally excluded or targets.	
	CONTROL FALLACY	
	EXTERNAL CONTROL FALLACY Belief that external factors control life, the individual has no ability to influence the world around them	INTERNAL CONTROL FALLACY Has control of themselves and surroundings, and is responsible for the pain and happiness of others.