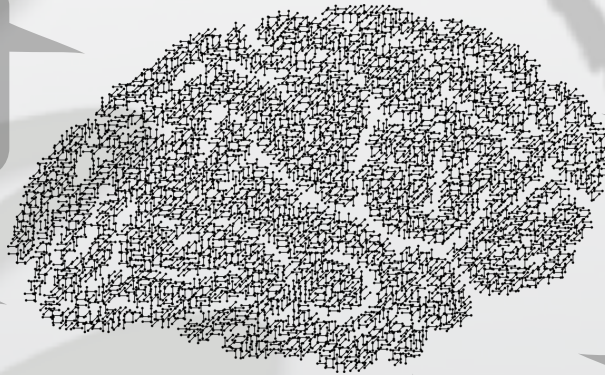


# NJ Recovery & Wellness

## Cognitive Distortions

"I always fail my test so I wouldn't be surprised if I fail."

"I am no good at this!"



"They didn't want to go out with me, something is wrong with me."

"I never can do that anyway."

"Why does this happen to me?"

### What are they?

Cognitive distortions are generalized as exaggerated patterns of thought that is not based on facts. These can happen in many different forms and typically lead you to view things more negatively than they really are. In simple terms this can be viewed as your mind convincing you to believe negative things about yourself and what is happening in the world that necessarily aren't true or have happened.

### History

Cognitive distortions were first listed and described by Dr. Aaron Beck and others in 1979. They found and identified 10 common thinking errors. These included ones like mind-reading, catastrophizing, all-or-nothing-thinking, and 7 others. Over the years there have been more that have been discovered and this has led the foundation for Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. More recent research has discussed the idea that these cognitive distortions might have developed as an evolutionary survival method, much like or flight or fight stress response.

# 10 Common Cognitive Distortions

## **1. Overgeneralization:**

Making broad interpretations from a single or a few events.

Examples include:

- "I wouldn't be surprised if I fail my test since I always fail my test when I study hard."
- "I was so awkward on that date, probably since I am just an awkward person."
- "I shouldn't have gone this way to work, I always hit the red lights."

## **2. Magical Thinking:**

The belief that acts will influence unrelated situations.

Examples include:

- "The reason this happened today was because I got up on the wrong side of the bed."
- "If I don't set the volume to an even number while driving I might get in an accident."
- "I didn't get likes on my photo, it must mean that nobody likes me."

## **3. All-or-Nothing Thinking:**

Thinking in absolutes such as "always", "never", or "every".

Examples include:

- "I never could get the job I want even if I work really hard."
- "I always get picked last when working in groups."
- "Every time I post before 10 am nobody interacts with it. "

## **4. Disqualifying the Positive:**

Recognizing only the negative aspects of a situation while ignoring the positive ones.

Examples include:

- "I got 91 out of 100 on my final and it brought my 3.98 GPA down to a 3.94, how could I do that?"
- "I was late to work and my boss told me that I was doing a great job, I don't know what to think. "

## **5. Personalization:**

The belief that one is responsible for events outside their own control.

Examples include:

- "I did everything my boss wanted on time and they still got upset with me."
- "When I asked my mom if I could help cook dinner she yelled at me, I must have done something to upset her."
- "When we went out last night they seemed as if they didn't have fun, maybe I picked a boring date? "

## **6. Jumping to Conclusions:**

Interpreting the meaning of a situation with little or no evidence.

**Mind Reading:** Interpreting the thoughts and beliefs of others without adequate evidence.

Examples include:

- "They didn't want to go out on a date with me, they must think I'm unattractive."
- "My boss didn't want to give me that raise, they must think I am lazy or entitled."

**Fortune Telling:** The expectation that a situation will turn out badly without adequate evidence.

Examples include:

- "I shouldn't even ask them out, they probably date people way better looking than me."
- "What is the point of asking for a raise, they are going to say no anyway."

**Catastrophizing:** Seeing only the worst possible outcomes of a situation.

Examples include:

Examples include:

- "They seemed like they were upset, I must have done something to upset them."

## **7. Emotional Reasoning:**

The assumption that emotions reflect the way things really are.

Examples include:

- "I feel bad saying no, I don't want to be a bad person."
- "If I take off work, then I am being lazy."
- "They seemed like they were upset, I must have done something to upset them."

## **8. Magnification and Minimization:**

**Magnification:** Exaggerating that their mistakes are overtly important.

Examples include:

- "I feel bad saying no, I don't want to be a bad person."
- "If I take off work, then I am being lazy."

**Minimization:** Minimizing the important of one's own achievements.

- "They seemed like they were upset, I must have done something to upset them."
- "They seemed like they were upset, I must have done something to upset them."

## **9. "Should" Statements:**

The belief that things should be a certain way.

Examples include:

- "I should have done this."
- "I shouldn't have said that."

## **10. Labeling:**

When something happens you call yourself names instead of saying what happen in the situation.

Examples include:

- Instead of saying "I made a mistake," you tell yourself "I'm such a jerk for that."
- When you fail a test or get in trouble at work you call yourself a "loser" instead of putting your attention to why these events aspired.