

Cognitive Distortions

We tend to experience distorted thoughts (cognitions) that are unreasonably negative especially after an upsetting event. These distortions can occur so rapidly that we hardly notice them let alone challenge their logic. Yet they affect our mood and sense of worth so profoundly.

The following is a list of 12 Cognitive Distortions categories. Check the ones you tend to engage in often:

1	Catastrophizing: Automatically assuming the worst possible outcome.	7	Dwelling on the Negative: Focusing on the negative aspects of a situation, while ignoring the positive ones.
2	Shoulds (Musts/Oughts): Rigid demands and expectations we set for ourselves.	8	Rejecting the Positive: While dwelling on the negative overlooks the positive, to reject the positive is to actually negate it.
3	The Fairy-Tale Fantasy: Demanding and expecting the ideal from life.	9	Unfavorable Comparisons: Magnifying our faults and/or the strengths of others and minimizing our strengths and/or the faults of others.
4	Polarized Thinking: (also called all-or-nothing, or black and white thinking) Thinking in extremes.	10	Personalization: Blaming ourselves for circumstances that are not really our fault or that are beyond our control.
5	Overgeneralizing: Deciding that a negative experience describes our life completely.	11	Blaming: While personalizing puts all the responsibility on yourself, blaming puts it all on something outside of yourself.
6	Labeling: Giving ourselves a label, or name, as though a single word can describe us completely.	12	Emotional Reasoning: This is when we turn feelings into facts. (e.g, "I feel worthless. I must be worthless.")

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