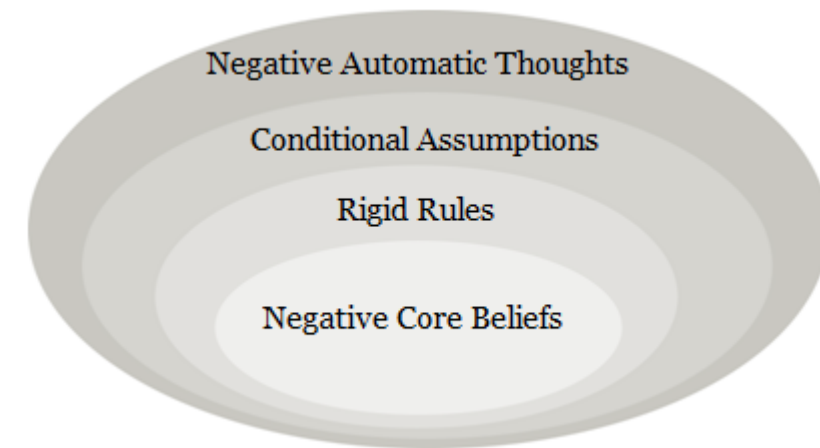


Layers of Cognition

Negative thoughts, also called cognitions, can be described on four levels:

1. Negative Core Beliefs,
2. Rigid Rules,
3. Conditional Assumptions, and
4. Negative Automatic Thoughts.

Negative thoughts influence our perceptions, feelings, and behavior. Challenging and changing our negative thoughts (cognitive restructuring) can profoundly shape the way we feel and behave.



1. Negative Automatic Thoughts

Negative Automatic Thoughts form the internal monologue and fleeting thoughts that can negatively influence how we automatically feel, interpret situations, and react.

The following are some common examples of negative automatic thoughts, check the ones you relate to and add ones of your own:

- I can't cope.
- They don't like me.
- I look stupid.
- I hate it.

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2. Conditional Assumptions

Conditional assumptions are dysfunctional and engrained thinking reflexes. They are often expressed as conditional “if then” statements.

The following are some common examples of conditional assumptions, check the ones you relate to and add ones of your own:

- If I am not in control, then something awful will happen.
- If I am criticized, then I am no good.
- If I don't get attention, then I am unworthy.

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3. Rigid Rules

Rigid rules are irrational rules that we automatically apply in daily life and rarely challenge. They are often expressed in terms of “musts” and “shoulds.”

The following are some common examples of rigid rules, check the ones you relate to and add ones of your own:

I should not be anxious.

I must always be strong.

People can't be trusted.

4. Negative Core Beliefs

Negative core beliefs are fundamental, generalized beliefs that we hold about ourselves, other people, and the world. They usually develop in response to early life experiences.

The following are some common examples of negative core beliefs, check the ones you relate to and add ones of your own:

I am undesirable,

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- I have nothing to offer.
- I am weak,
- I am flawed, weird, not normal.
- I am incompetent,
- I am inferior,
- I am worthless,
- I deserve punishment, pain, suffering.

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