

Examples of Cognitive Distortions



1. **Black-and-White Thinking**: We see things, events, and people as perfect or terrible, all good or all bad. We say "always" or "never" often, not seeing the "grey zone" that is almost always there.
2. **Catastrophizing**: We react to a disappointment or failure as though it means the end of the world.
3. **Jumping to Conclusions**: We assume the worst without checking the evidence. We decide that someone dislikes us, but we don't check it out; or we predict that terrible things will happen even when there is no evidence for this.
4. **Ignoring the Positive**: We don't pay attention to positive experiences, or we reject them or say they somehow "don't count."
5. **"My Fault!"**: We take blame or responsibility for things outside of our control, or are not our job.
6. **"Shoulds:"** We criticize ourselves or other people with ideas about what absolutely "should" be done without considering where we get this idea. We ignore the reasons we might have done what we did, or think we could have had knowledge we couldn't have actually had. "Shoulds" sometimes leave us feeling inadequate despite our attempts to be self-motivating.
7. **Magnifying and Minimizing**: We define ourselves by our shortcomings and minimize our strengths.
8. **Labels**: Instead of focusing on peoples' behaviors, we make blanket statements: "I am such an idiot" or "He's such a jerk."
9. **Perfectionism**: We believe that all mistakes are bad and to be avoided. Because of this, we don't take the necessary risks to be successful. We may also try to control all circumstances and make them fit what we think is right.
10. **Reasoning From Our Emotions**: We believe that because we feel a certain way, that indicates the truth about a situation, and we may even act accordingly even if it hurts us in the long run.