

Examples of Common Cognitive Distortions:

All or nothing/ black and white:	This type of polarized thinking leaves no room for middle ground. People or situations get placed in categories of “either/or” “always/never” “success/failure” “good/bad” with no room for shades of grey or allowance for the complexity of life.
Jumping to Conclusions:	We interpret a situation with little or no evidence... convincing ourselves that our predictions are an established fact. Mind Reading: Assuming we know what someone is thinking based off of their behaviors or interpreting others thoughts without adequate evidence Fortune Telling: Predicting the worst or expecting things to turn out badly.
Emotional Reasoning:	Listening to our emotions as fact. Assuming our emotions reflect the way things really are. Emotions are information, but they do not always expose the true nature of things.
Should Statements:	This is the list of rules in our heads that dictate the way things “should” or “shouldn’t” be. We expect the world to be different than it is. We might try to use this distortion to motivate (or guilt) ourselves, as if we have to be punished in order to do something. We may also get mad at others if they break those rules in our heads.
Personalization:	The belief that what others do or say is a direct response or personal reaction to us. Or the belief that we are responsible for events or situations that are out of our control.
Blaming:	This one is the opposite of personalization. We may hold others responsible for our pain, despite only being able to control our own emotions and reactions. This could also look like tendency to blame others or avoid taking responsibility. Fallacy of Change: Expecting other people to change to better suit us or make us happy. This distortion also refers to believing that it is fair to pressure someone into changing for their benefit or having a vision of how someone ‘should’ be as if love, happiness, and trust are dependent on the changes are made (sometimes seen in abusive relationships).
Magnification and Minimization:	Exaggerating or shrinking the magnitude of events, for example downplaying our achievements or exaggerating the importance of a mistake. Expecting the worst and disaster to strike (also known as catastrophizing).
Labeling:	This is when we attribute one or two qualities/ behaviors to someone’s character (usually a negative global judgment) rather than allowing for grace in the interpretation. We attach an unhealthy label to things instead of describing the attribute in the context of a specific situation.
Overgeneralization:	We come to a conclusion on something based on one single incident or piece of evidence. We might make broad interpretations of situations, if because something happened once, it will happen again and again.
Disqualifying the Positive:	We object positive experiences, insisting that they do not count. Or we use a “mental filter” to recognize only the negative aspects of a situation. For example, placing more weight on one piece of negative feedback than seven pieces of positive feedback.