

COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS EXAMPLES

Examples of 15 Common Cognitive Distortions that Influence Your Thinking Patterns



1. POLARIZED THINKING

A student who gets an A- on an exam feels like a failure because they are used to getting A+ grades only. They have the mentality, "If I am not successful at everything I do, I am a complete failure".



2. MENTAL FILTERING

NEGATIVE MENTAL FILTERING

An employee receives a good performance review but focuses on one negative comment their manager made about them.

DISQUALIFYING THE POSITIVE

A student gets a good grade but overlooks it and tries to explain their good grade as simply luck or fluke instead of hard work.



3. OVERGENERALIZATION

A student receives a bad grade on one exam, based on this they think they are stupid and a failure and believe that all future exams they will get a bad grade as well.



4. JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

MIND READING

A friend you are spending time with seems distracted or uninterested. You jump to the conclusion it has to do with you.

FORTUNE TELLING

You have a date but you predict that the date will go bad. You make assumptions about the date before it has occurred.



5. CATASTROPHIZING

MAGNIFICATION

A person's lunch date is running late and assumes the worst. Their worries escalate quickly & thoughts become exaggerated.

MINIMIZATION

An athlete wins an award but does not acknowledge their accomplishment. They minimize the importance of the award.



6. PERSONALIZATION

You attend a party but all your friends are busy engaging with other people. You feel like they do not have any interest in being your friend and engaging in conversation with you. This makes you think you don't belong or are unfairly excluded.



7. BLAMING

Placing blame for relationship issues on your partner instead of sharing the responsibility for actions taken by both partners. You assume the victim mentality and think everything they do is to hurt you.



8. LABELING

You ask a colleague for help with a task you are working on. Your colleague quickly dismisses your attention and does not help you. Based on this you assume they are a selfish jerk. They react negatively to you asking for help but you do not realize the pressure and stress they are under.



9. ALWAYS BEING RIGHT

Two people at work have a disagreement. One person believes it should be done their way because that's how it's always been done. But the other argues based on facts that there are industry-standard procedures that need to be followed. The person completely ignores these facts and argues their opinion to any extent.



10. SHOULD STATEMENTS

Statements like, "I should be exercising more," create expectations that are not likely to be met. The pressure created from the "should" statements makes it difficult to meet those expectations and when the failure occurs there is guilt and frustration which makes you less likely to make another attempt.



11. EMOTIONAL REASONING

You might feel lonely because at this moment you are by yourself and your friends are off doing something fun. However, from this feeling, you assume no one loves you or wants to be around you.



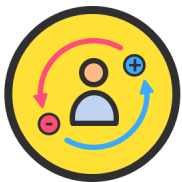
12. CONTROL FALLACIES

EXTERNAL CONTROL FALLACY

A person cheats on their partner when they leave they feel it's the person's fault and fail to see their actions were the cause.

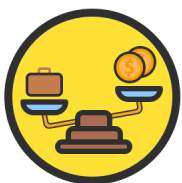
INTERNAL CONTROL FALLACY

A coworker made a mistake on a task. You feel guilty and responsible because you reviewed their work and missed it.



13. FALLACY OF CHANGE

A person might pressure their partner to change a few of their manners. They believe their partner is perfect in every other way except those few minor things and expects those changes will make them even happier.



14. FALLACY OF FAIRNESS

A person who struggles with low income might feel anger and resentment towards others who make more money than them. They might feel that they work just as hard if not harder than other people but are not rewarded the same.



15. HEAVEN'S REWARD FALLACY

You were expecting to get a promotion this year because of your hard work. You believe you worked harder than the rest of your colleagues but you didn't get the promotion. You feel resentment because you believe you should have been rewarded for your hard work.