



Cognitive Distortions



1 Over-personalizing

When people attribute all blame to themselves (self-blame).

2 Blaming/denying

We blame others for things that are going wrong around us, or we deny what is happening around us.

3 Over-generalizing

When we say something is true all of the time, when it is only true some of the time.

4 Double standard

An idea that favors one group or person, but not everyone.

5 Mind reading

Assuming what others are thinking without having other things to go on OR expecting others to know what I am thinking.

6 Catastrophising

Overestimating negative outcomes and underestimating coping skills.

7 Fallacy of fairness

Measuring every behavior or situation on a scale of fairness (I think I know what is fair, but others don't agree with me. While we should always be considering fairness and equity, it is important to take turns and remember that fairness does not mean equal - it means everyone gets what he or she needs.

8 All-or-nothing

Thinking in extremes. (I am either a success or I am a failure; I am good or I am bad.)



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9 Emotional reasoning

I feel it, so it must be true. (Our individual trauma will tell us lies much of the time!)

10 Negativity bias

The tendency to pay attention to or give more credence to the negative.

11 Labeling

To generalize by taking one characteristic of an individual and applying it to the whole person. (That person is not very smart).

12 Magical thinking

We believe that our thoughts or actions can somehow influence events that are beyond our control. (I'll meet my future spouse as soon as I lose 25 pounds. This depression will end if I make more money. People will respect me more if I buy a new car.)

13 Gaslighting

To manipulate another into questioning their own understanding of events.

14 Projecting

Unconsciously attributing your own issues to another person or displacing your emotions about something onto another person.

15 Emotional dumping

When we unload all that we are feeling onto another person and they are left feeling helpless to do anything for us.

