

## Cognitive Distortions Questionnaire (CD-Quest)\*\*

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All of us have thousands of thoughts a day. These thoughts are words, sentences and images that pop into our heads as we are doing things. Many of these thoughts are accurate, but many are distorted. This is why they are called cognitive errors or cognitive distortions.

For example, Paul is a competent journalist who had his ten-page work assessed by John, the editor of an important local newspaper. John amended one paragraph and made a few other suggestions of minor importance. Although John approved Paul's text, Paul became anxious and found himself thinking: "This work is not good at all. If it were good, John wouldn't have made any correction."

For Paul, either the work is good or it is bad. This kind of thinking error is sometimes called dichotomous thinking. As this thought returned to Paul's mind several times from Friday to Sunday (3 days), and Paul believed it at least 75%, he made a circle around number 4 in the fourth column of the grid below.

1. **Dichotomous thinking (also called all-or-nothing, black and white, or polarized thinking):** I view a situation, a person or an event in "either-or" terms, fitting them into only two extreme categories instead of on a continuum.

EXAMPLES: "I made a mistake, therefore my performance was a failure". "I ate more than I planned, so I blew my diet completely"

Paul's example: *This work is not good at all. If it were good, John wouldn't have made any correction.*

<b>Frequency:</b>	<b>No</b> (It did not occur)	<b>Occasional</b> (1-2 days during the past week)	<b>Much of the time</b> (3-5 days during the past week)	<b>Almost all of the time</b> (6-7 days during the past week)
<b>Intensity: I believed it...</b>	0			
A little (Up to 30%)		1	2	3
Much (31% to 70%)		2	3	4
Very much (More than 70%)		3	4	5

Please, turn the page and assess your own thinking style.

# Cognitive Distortions Questionnaire

## CD-Quest

Irismar Reis de Oliveira, MD, PhD

Global score: _____
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Name: .....

Date:.....

Please, make a circle around the number corresponding to each option below, indicating cognitive errors or distortions that you have made during this past week. When assessing each cognitive distortion, please, indicate how much you believed it in the exact moment it occurred (not how much you believe it now), and how often it occurred during this past week. Please, give your own examples in the items you mark 3 or more.

### DURING THIS PAST WEEK, I FOUND MYSELF THINKING THIS WAY:

1. **Dichotomous thinking (also called all-or-nothing, black and white, or polarized thinking):** I view a situation, a person or an event in “either-or” terms, fitting them into only two extreme categories instead of on a continuum.

EXAMPLES: “I made a mistake, therefore my performance was a failure”. “I ate more than I planned, so I blew my diet completely”

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2. **Fortune telling (also called catastrophizing):** I predict the future in negative terms and believe that what will happen will be so awful that I will not be able to stand it.

EXAMPLES: “I will fail and this will be unbearable.” “I’ll be so upset that I won’t be able to concentrate for the exam.”

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3. **Discounting the positive:** I disqualify positive experiences or events insisting that they do not count.

EXAMPLES: “I passed the exam, but I was just lucky.” “Going to college is not a big deal, anyone can do it.”

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4. **Emotional reasoning:** I believe my emotions reflect reality and let them guide my attitudes and judgments.

EXAMPLES: “I feel she loves me, so it must be true.” “I am terrified of airplanes, so flying must be dangerous.” “My feelings tell me I should not believe him.”

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5. **Labeling:** I put a fixed, global label, usually negative, on myself or others.

EXAMPLES: "I'm a loser." "He's a rotten person." "She's a complete jerk."

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6. **Magnification/minimization:** I evaluate myself, others, and situations placing greater importance on the negatives and/or placing much less importance on the positives.

EXAMPLES: "I got a B. This proves how bad my performance was." "I got an A. It means the test was too easy."

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7. **Selective abstraction (also called mental filter and tunnel vision):** I pay attention to one or a few details and fail to see the whole picture.

EXAMPLES: "Michael pointed out an error in my work. So, I can be fired" (not considering Michael's overall positive feedback). "I can't forget that a small peice of information I gave during my presentation was wrong" (not considering its success and the audience great applause).

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8. **Mind reading:** I believe that I know the thoughts or intentions of others (or that they know my thoughts or intentions) without having sufficient evidence.

EXAMPLES: "He's thinking that I failed". "She thought I didn't know the project." "He knows I do not like to be touched this way."

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9. **Overgeneralization:** I take isolated negative cases and generalize them, transforming them in a never-ending pattern, by repeatedly using words such as "always", "never", "ever", "whole", "entire", etc.

EXAMPLES: "It was raining this morning, which means it will rain during the whole weekend." "What a bad luck! I missed the plane, so this will interfere in my entire vacation". "My headache will never stop".

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10. **Personalization:** I assume that others' behaviors and external events concern (or are directed to) myself without considering other plausible explanations.

EXAMPLES: "I thought I was disrespected because the cashier did not say thank you to me" (not considering that the cashier did not say thank you to anyone). "My husband left me because I was a bad wife" (not considering that she was his fourth wife).

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11. **Should statements (also "musts", "oughts", "have tos"):** I tell myself that events, people's behaviors, and my own attitudes "should" be the way I expected them to be and not as they really are.

EXAMPLES: "I should have been a better mother". "He should have married Ann instead of Mary". "I shouldn't have made so many mistakes."

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12. **Jumping to conclusions (also called arbitrary inference):** I draw conclusions (negative or positive) from little or no confirmatory evidence.

EXAMPLES: "As soon as I saw him I knew he would do a lousy work." "He looked at me in a way that I immediately knew he was responsible for the accident."

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13. **Blaming (others or oneself):** I direct my attention to others as sources of my negative feelings and experiences, failing to consider my own responsibility; or, conversely, I take responsibility for others' behaviors and attitudes.

EXAMPLES: "My parents are the only to blame for my unhappiness." "It is my fault that my son married a selfish and uncaring person."

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14. **What if?:** I keep asking myself questions such as "what if something happens?"

EXAMPLES: "What if my car crashes?" "What if I have a heart attack?" "What if my husband leaves me?"

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15. **Unfair comparisons:** I compare myself with others who seem to do better than I do and place myself in a disadvantageous position.

EXAMPLES: "My father always preferred my elder brother because he is much smarter than I am." "I can't stand she is more successful than I am."

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