



# Cognitive Distortions



**Remember:**  
We can't  
control what  
thoughts we  
get; just what  
we do with  
them when we  
get them!

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## What are Cognitive Distortions?

Cognitive distortions are irrational or biased thought patterns that can negatively influence a person's emotions and behaviors. These distortions often lead individuals to perceive situations in a skewed way, contributing to anxiety, depression, and other psychological issues.

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## How do I know what my cognitive distortions are?

Assessing for cognitive distortions can involve a few key steps:

-  **Journaling**
-  **Thought Log**
-  **Categorizing Thoughts**
-  **Challenge Thoughts**

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## What are the types of cognitive distortions?



### Emotional Reasoning

Interpreting feelings as facts. I.e. "I feel like I'm a bad friend, so I must be a bad friend."



### Fortune Telling

Predicting future events or outcomes. This may present as an expectation that something will turn out badly.



### All or Nothing Thinking

Seeing things in extreme terms without any middle ground.



### Personalizing

Attributing external events to yourself, believing you are the cause of negative outcomes or events that are actually outside of your control.



### Disqualifying Positives

Dismissing or overlooking positive experiences, achievements, or compliments. I.e. "I got a 95 on my test but I still got 3 wrong."



### Magical Thinking

Belief that your thoughts, wishes, or actions can influence unrelated events or outcomes in ways that defy logical reasoning.



### Mind Reading

Assuming you know what others are thinking or feeling without any actual evidence.



### Should's

Imposing unrealistic or rigid expectations on oneself or others. I.e. "I should be doing more."



### Magnifying or Minimizing

When you exaggerate or downplaying aspects of a situation. I.e. making an error at work and believing you will be fired; or receiving praise for something and not believing what your being praised for is 'not a big deal.'



### Catastrophizing

Anticipating the worst possible outcome in a situation, often exaggerating the severity of potential consequences.