

# COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS IDENTIFICATION



Recognizing and Overcoming Cognitive Distortions

## Spot the Thinking Traps

### Understanding Unhelpful Thinking Habits (Cognitive Distortions)

#### What Are Thinking Traps?

Sometimes our minds jump to conclusions that aren't fully true. These are called unhelpful thinking habits or cognitive distortions. They can:

- **Increase stress**
- **Lower confidence**
- **Make situations feel worse than they are**

The good news? You can learn to spot and challenge them.

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### Common Thinking Traps

- **All-or-Nothing Thinking**  
Seeing things as completely good or completely bad  
*"If I fail once, I'm a total failure."*
- **Overgeneralization**  
Assuming one experience applies to everything  
*"This always happens to me."*
- **Mind Reading**  
Believing you know what others think  
*"They think I'm awkward."*
- **Catastrophizing**  
Expecting the worst possible outcome  
*"This is going to be a disaster."*
- **Personalization**  
Blaming yourself for things outside your control  
*"It's my fault they're upset."*
- **Filtering (Negativity Bias)**  
Focusing only on the negative  
*"Nothing went right today."*

- **“Should” Statements**  
Rigid rules about how things must be  
*“I should always be perfect.”*
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## **Step 1: Describe the Situation**

What happened?

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## **Step 2: What Was Your Thought?**

What went through your mind?

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## **Step 3: Identify the Thinking Trap**

Which unhelpful thinking habit shows up?

- All-or-Nothing
  - Overgeneralization
  - Mind Reading
  - Catastrophizing
  - Personalization
  - Filtering
  - “Should” Statements
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
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## **Step 4: Challenge the Thought**

Ask yourself:

- Is this 100% true?
- What evidence supports this?
- What evidence does NOT support this?
- What would I tell a friend in this situation?

Write a more balanced thought:

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## Step 5: Reframe It

Turn your thought into something more realistic and helpful:

New Thought:

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## Reflection

How do you feel after reframing your thought?

- Less stressed
  - More balanced
  - Still unsure
  - Other: \_\_\_\_\_
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## Reminder

Your thoughts are not always facts.

You have the power to question them and choose better ones.

***“Progress, not perfection”***