

Common Thought Distortions

Thought Distortions are errors in our thinking that can cause us to behave in negative or unhelpful ways, can lead us to interact with others in ways that create conflict or distance, and prevent us from moving forward or making change.

Forecasting

Assuming that the future will turn out negatively and feeling convinced that this is true.

This project is destined to fail.

My family will fall apart.

Mind Reading

Assuming that another person is having negative thoughts or reactions to you without checking out your perception.

This teacher hates me.

My family blames me.

Negative Filter

Focusing on a single negative instance and disqualifying any positive experiences or evidence to the contrary.

Since I did not make a good meal tonight, I must be a bad cook.

Since my kids are frustrated with me, I must be a bad dad.

All or Nothing Thinking

Seeing things in extreme ways, as either/or, with no middle ground.

Because I feel sad, I'll never be able to feel happy again.

Because I did not get an A+ on my test, it means I am stupid.

Emotional Reasoning

Believing something is true, because it feels like it is true.

Because I feel like my boss does not like me, he must really not like me.

My children do not really want me around. I know because I can feel it.

Catastrophizing

Exaggerating the importance of an event or outcome.

Getting an F on my test is the WORST thing that could ever happen.

My family is terrible because we had an argument.

Should Statements

Having a rigid set of rules about how one should behave or think.

I should be more prepared.

I should not rely on others.

Personalization

Seeing yourself as the cause of an external negative event for which you were not primarily responsible.

If I had not driven my car that day, we would not have had an accident.

We would not have gotten lost if I was more organized.