

Common Thinking Errors

Change Thoughts → Change Actions

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy - CBT

COMMON COGNITIVE “Thinking” DISTORTIONS

- **“Should” Statements/Perfectionism** – *belief that things should always be a certain way*
- **Catastrophizing** – *seeing only the worst possible outcomes of a situation*
- **Overgeneralization** – *making broad interpretations from a single or few events*
- **Mindreading** – *interpreting thoughts/feelings without evidence*
- **Disqualifying the Positive** – *seeing only the negative, ignoring the positive, “glass half empty”*
- **Black and white** – *all or nothing, horrible/perfect - always/never, “Gray is okay.” Tolerance of ambiguity*
- **Forecasting/Fortune Telling** – *expectation that things will turn out badly without adequate evidence*
- **Feelings are facts/Emotional Reasoning** – *assuming emotions reflect reality*
- **Magical Thinking** – *belief that acts will influence unrelated situations*
- **Filtering/Personalization** – *belief that what others do or say is a direct reaction to self. Comparing self to others who are seen as smarter, better looking, etc.*
- **Fallacy of Fairness** – *judging every situation with the measuring stick of “fairness,” feeling resentful and negative when things don't work out*
- **Blaming** - *holding other people responsible for our problems and pain or self-blaming*
- **Always Being Right** - *going to any length to demonstrate our rightness, continually on trial to prove that our opinions and actions are correct*
- **Heaven’s Reward Fallacy** – *expecting sacrifice and self-denial to pay off as if someone is keeping score, feeling bitter when the reward doesn’t come*



*As a man thinketh...
so is he.*

ICC

1. **IDENTIFY** - thinking errors, negative self-talk, negative self-narratives, codependent thinking
2. **CHALLENGE them** - restate the facts, only truths with evidence
3. **CHANGE** - replace them with true, positive thoughts/actions

EXAMPLES

- **SITUATION: LATE FOR WORK**

- **AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS**

- My supervisor thinks I'm irresponsible. (*Mindreading*)
- I'm an idiot. (*Labeling*)
- I should never be late. (*Polarization, Perfectionism*)
- I'm going to get fired. (*Forecasting*)
- This is awful. (*Catastrophizing*)

- **REALISTIC POSITIVE REPLACEMENT THOUGHTS *CHANGE***

- ✓ I'll talk with my boss about my plans to improve. (*Plan to Respond*)
- ✓ It's been two months since I was late. (*Reality Testing*)
- ✓ I am going to improve my attitude about my job. (*Positive attitude*)

1. After sending a text to a friend, you don't get a response.

- **AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS**

- "She is ignoring me. She never takes me seriously." (Black & White)
- "She is always texting everybody else." (Black & White)
- "It isn't fair that she treats me this way. I'm always the one who texts first." (Fallacy of Fairness, Black & White)

2. Spouse comes home with a scowl on his/her face.

- **AUTOMATIC THOUGHTS**

- "I always do things to upset him." (Black & White)
- "I should have cleaned up before he came home." ("Should" statements/Perfectionism)
- "I didn't do anything but take care of the kids, pay bills and be the family bus driver today - I'm always doing for everybody else. When is my turn for a break." (Heaven's Reward Fallacy)