

Flexible Thinking Worksheet

A
Activating Situation

What is the Situation?



B
Belief

What are my beliefs and thoughts?



C
Consequence

Resulting feelings:
Resulting behaviors



D
Dispute

Cognitive distortions (check all that apply):

| | | |
|---|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> tunnel vision | <input type="checkbox"/> all-or-nothing thinking | <input type="checkbox"/> "should" or "must" statements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Worst case scenario thinking | <input type="checkbox"/> Personalization | <input type="checkbox"/> disqualifying or discounting the positive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Overgeneralization | <input type="checkbox"/> emotional reasoning | <input type="checkbox"/> mind reading |
| <input type="checkbox"/> labeling | <input type="checkbox"/> mental filter | <input type="checkbox"/> magnification/minimization |

What evidence is there that the belief is accurate or not?



E
Entirely New Thought or Behavior

New thought?
New behavior?
What should I do next?



A Better Way to a Better Life

Cognitive Distortions

| TYPE | DEFINITION | EXAMPLE |
|---|---|---|
| Tunnel vision | Focuses only on the negative characteristics of something, not the positive ones. | "My boss is awful. She's demanding, judgmental, and opinionated." "My life is terrible. Nothing is going well." |
| All-or-nothing thinking | Looks at things as falling into only two extreme categories ("black or white") instead of on a continuum ("shades of gray"). | "My boyfriend doesn't want to live together so we should break up!" "The table looks messy—my house is a disaster!" |
| "Should" and "must" statements | Are based on predetermined ideas about how things are supposed to be, not on how things really are or could reasonably be. | "I should be more willing to take risks." "I must stop feeling afraid all the time." "I shouldn't make mistakes." |
| Worst-case-scenario thinking | Predicts that the absolute worst, most awful outcome will happen. This can make a small problem seem like it will turn into a catastrophe. | "What if someone breaks into my house and rapes me?!" "What if I yell at my son and he hates me forever?!" |
| Personalization | Leads you to believe that you're responsible for things that are actually out of your control, such as how others behave, think, or feel. | "My therapist was late because I said the wrong thing last week." "My husband only hits me when I'm a bad wife." |
| Disqualifying or discounting the positive | Leads you to minimize or downplay positive events because you believe they don't count (anyone could do it, you got lucky, or it wasn't that good). | "I've been sober for a week, but anyone can last a week." "I passed my certification. but it was just dumb luck." |
| Overgeneralization | Takes a single bad situation and concludes that it will continue to happen over and over and will probably get worse. | "That man raped me, men will always take advantage of me." "I had a bad dream. I'll never get a good night's sleep." |

Corporate Address:

1211 Puerta Del Sol, San Clemente, CA 92673
www.sovhealth.com



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Cognitive Distortions

| TYPE | DEFINITION | EXAMPLE |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| Emotional reasoning | Assumes that because you feel a certain way, that's how it must be in reality. | "I am scared, therefore something bad is about to happen." "I feel angry, so obviously you have treated me terribly." |
| Mind reading | Happens when you believe you know what someone else is thinking or feeling, even if you haven't thought about other plausible explanations. | "He thinks I'm stupid because I didn't know the answer." "She didn't look at me. She doesn't like me anymore." |
| Labeling | Assigns an overarching characteristic to someone based on one thought, feeling, or action, usually in a very negative way. | "She's such a loser." "I'm an idiot." "What a jerk." "He's stupid." |
| Mental filter | Ignores the many good characteristics and focuses only on one or two bad characteristics. | "When I spoke at the AA meeting at first, I was really nervous and dry-mouthed, but I got more comfortable as I kept talking. I am sure people only remember the first part and think I am a basket case." |
| Magnification/ Minimization | Emphasizes the negative parts of something and downplays the positive parts. | "I'm a bad mother. I yell at my kids at least once a week." "My kids are doing well in school. They must get it from their dad." |

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