



# Cognitive Distortions

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# What are cognitive distortions?

- Irrational, inflated thoughts or beliefs that distort a person's perception of reality, usually in a negative way
- Create adverse feelings that may lead to a negative self image or sense of worthlessness
- Automatic thoughts that have been learned over time
- Might lead to stress, depression, or anxiety



# Common Cognitive Distortions

1. All-or-nothing thinking
2. Overgeneralization
3. Mental filter
4. Discounting the positive
5. Jumping to conclusions
6. Magnification and minimalization
7. Emotional reasoning
8. Should statement
9. Labeling and mislabeling
10. Personalization



Find more information on pages 166 & 167 of your text

# All-or-Nothing Thinking

- Tendency to evaluate oneself, one's experiences, people and things either in black or white, or as good or bad
- Person does not see anything in between
- Person focused on the failure and weakness
- Common problem in weight loss therapy, and in those with eating disorders



"I shouldn't have eaten those cookies. I'm a failure."

# Magnification and Minimization

- Magnification of the negative called "catastrophizing"
  - you see an unpleasant occurrence as the worst possible outcome
  - things are exaggerated

"Everyone will hear I goofed up. I'm ruined."



- Minimization of positive
  - you minimize the importance of your desirable events

"Yes, I got a raise, but it wasn't very big and I'm still not very good at my job."

# Mental Filter

- Dwelling on the negatives and filtering out the positives
- Focusing only on the negative turns the entire situation into a negative
- Prevents clarity

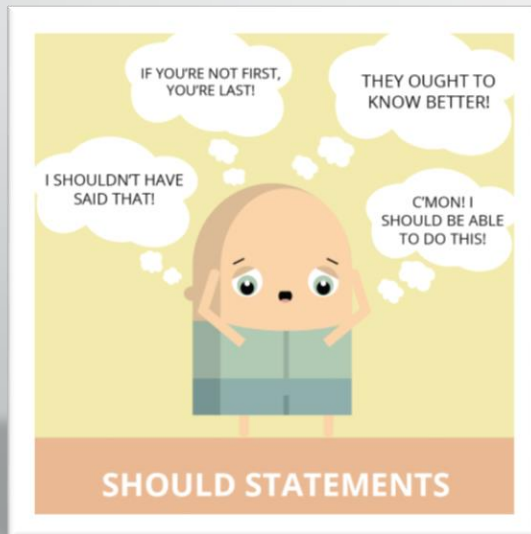


"If I can't eat whatever I want at the party, the party won't be any fun."  
Following a food plan for six days, but focusing on the one day you didn't.



# Should Statements

- Individuals try to motivate themselves with "should," "must," and "shouldn't" statements
- When self behavior falls short, guilt results
- When other's behavior falls short, anger and frustration result
- Opposite behavior possible when asserting independence over "should" statements



" I should eat fruit and vegetables."

"I should be thinner."

"I shouldn't eat cake."

"I shouldn't have made so many mistakes."

# Video: Overcoming

The Triple-Column Technique

☹ Negative	☹ Distortion	😊 Positive / Possible
I'm a fat cow. I should be thinner.	Labeling  Should statements	I want to lose 20 pounds I know how to do it. I can be thinner.

How Do We Stop Automatic Thoughts?



# Relevance

- These are distortions we battle with ourselves
- We will encounter these with clients
- Important to be able to recognize & overcome





**Questions?**

# References

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