

COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

Catastrophizing: You tell yourself that the very worst is happening or is going to happen.

Overestimating Probabilities/ Underestimating Coping Response: You overestimate difficulty or danger while underestimating your ability to cope with the situation.

All-or-Nothing (Black-and-White) Thinking: You view a situation in extremes rather than on a continuum.

Over-generalizing: You generalize from one situation to the next, believing that future experiences will be similar or identical to past experiences.

Self-Confirmatory Bias: You find “evidence” that helps you justify or maintain your belief system.

Emotional Reasoning: You think something must be true simply because it “feels” true.

Overvaluing Thoughts: You ascribe credibility and meaning to senseless or random thoughts.

Overvaluing Sensations: You misinterpret bodily sensations as being exaggerated, life-threatening or dangerous.

Worrying as Superstitious Thinking: Continuing to worry helps you feel that you will not be caught off-guard. It also feels like constant worrying could ward off the dreaded situation.

Foreclosure: You focus on the possible ways that a situation might end, because it feels too hard to be in a state of uncertainty.

Mind Reading: You guess what others are thinking, and refrain from checking to see whether your impressions are correct.

Should Statements: You think in terms of how you, others, or the world “should” be. This type of thinking usually accompanies perfectionism and/or a rigid style of thinking.

Discounting the Positive: You minimize or discount any positive feedback or perspective while maintaining a familiar, negative outlook.

Beck’s Negative Triad: You have a negative view of the self; negative view of the world; and negative view of the future.

Note to reader: This list is a compilation of some commonly used terms that have been originated, modified and/or re-stated by many cognitive-behavioral therapists. Dr. Stone therefore does not claim authorship to these terms.