

Common Thinking Errors

The situations we find ourselves in don't cause our depressed feelings — our ways of perceiving the situations do. Here are some distorted ways of thinking that often increase depression. Check the ones that most relate to you.

FILTERING

Everyone's life has negative aspects. If you focus only on the negative and filter out all positive or neutral aspects, your life will indeed seem depressing. (ie. when someone compliments you and you assume they are lying and immediately reject the compliment and then focus on what you *don't* like about yourself instead)

EMOTIONAL REASONING

"I feel it so it must be true." remember feelings are not facts. Emotions are based on subjective interpretations, not hard evidence. i.e. "It feels like I'm not prepared enough for this test, so I will fail it"

OVER-INCLUSIVE

You think of one problem or demand, then another and another, until you feel completely overwhelmed. i.e. "If I don't get my history homework in on time then I'll get a lower grade and then my GPA will fall and I won't be able to get into college/university and I will be stuck working at a fast food restaurant forever!"

BLACK OR WHITE THINKING

You think only in extremes or absolutes, forgetting that most things fall into shades of grey. i.e. "I thought I really liked Jennifer but she embarrassed me at lunch today. She's into emo music, and all emo kids are like this and can't be trusted"

JUMPING TO CONCLUSIONS

You predict a negative outcome without adequate supporting evidence. i.e. "People are going to hate me because I broke up with my boyfriend and none of his friends will talk to me."

MIND READING

You believe that others are thinking and feeling negatively about you and you react as if this is true. i.e. "I know Darren is talking about me because he wouldn't throw me the ball today at gym class. I shouldn't have made us lose last time"

PREDICTING THE FUTURE

You anticipate that things will turn out badly and you feel convinced that your predictions are true. i.e. "No matter how much I study, I'm just not going to pass math this year."

CATASTROPHIZING

You blow things out of proportion and imagine the worse case scenario. This intensifies your fear and makes it difficult for you to cope with the actual situation. i.e. "I can't believe I forgot to buy Matt a birthday present. Everyone else has brought something and he's going to hate me. I might as well just go home."

SHOULD

You make rigid rules for yourself and others about how things "should" be. When these rules are not followed you become depressed and angry. i.e. Everything must always be in the same spot in the bathroom, no one should move anything around because this is the right way."