

Types of Cognitive Distortions¹

- A. Overgeneralization** - From one isolated event, you make a general, universal rule.
- key words: *never, always, all, every, nobody, etc.*
 - includes **Polarized Thinking** - You lump things into extreme categories, with no middle ground.
- B. Inflammatory/Global Labeling** - You make sweeping, negative labels.
- C. Magnifying/Catastrophizing** - You think things are worse than they really are.
- D. Demanding/Commanding** - Making rules out of your preferences.
- key words: *should, ought, must, have to, need, etc.*
 - Common themes:
 1. Perfectionism
 2. Other people should love me.
 3. Other people should not dislike me.
 4. Life should be fair and just.
 5. Bad things shouldn't happen to me.
- E. Blaming** - You blame others (or yourself) for things that may not really be their (or your) fault.
- G. Mind Reading** - You jump to conclusions, focus on a single negative explanation, and do not consider alternate reasons.

¹From:

McKay, M., & Fanning, P. (1987). Self-Esteem. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.

Deffenbacher, J. L., & McKay, M. (2000). Overcoming situational and general anger. Oakland, CA: New Harbinger.