

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.

Intensified Focusing:

Intensified Thoughts: You ascribe credibility and meaning to senseless or random thoughts. (This often goes with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.)

Intensified Sensations: You misinterpret bodily sensations as being exaggerated, life-threatening or dangerous. (This often goes with Panic Disorder.)

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. (This often goes with Generalized Anxiety Disorder.)

Foreclosure: You focus on the possible ways that a situation might end, because it feels too hard to be in a state of uncertainty. (This often goes with Generalized Anxiety Disorder.)

Mind Reading: You guess what others are thinking, and refrain from checking to see whether your impressions are correct. (This is often goes with Social Anxiety Disorder.)

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. (This often goes with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, or anger.)

Beck’s Negative Triad: You have a negative view of the self; negative view of the world; and negative view of the future. (This often goes with depression.)

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, except: “foreclosure” and “intensified focusing.”