

Adapted from: *Treatment Plans and Interventions for Depression and Anxiety Disorders*, by Leahy and Holland.

Examples of Problem Patterns of Thinking

1. Mind Reading – The tendency to believe you know what someone else is thinking without them having said so: “She thinks I’m aggressive.”
2. Fortunetelling – The belief that you can foretell the future: “I won’t get the job.”
3. Catastrophizing – Expecting the worse and expecting that you won’t be able to handle it.
4. Minimizing Positives – Tendency to overlook positives
5. Maximizing Negatives – Expands and focuses on negatives: “focusing on the one error”
6. Unwillingness to Disconfirm – Unwillingness to accept reason: “I know it doesn’t make sense but I still should have done something.”
7. Overgeneralizing – assuming a global pattern based on a few incidents: “Everything I touch turns to shit.”
8. Labeling – broadly classifying things: “He is a rotten person.”
9. Black/White Thinking: Seeing only two possibilities without anything in between: you’re either with me or against me.”
10. Judgment Focus - “It’s either good or bad”
11. Shoulds – rigid rules about how things should be that is not reality-based
12. Personalizing – Taking things personal
13. Externalizing Responsibility – “She made me angry. She made me hit her.”
14. Comparing Apples with Oranges – “Why aren’t you as good as your brother?”
15. Unfair Regret – “It was my fault.”
16. What If – “If I had only done this instead of that.”
17. Emotional Reasoning – “I’m angry at her, therefore she is no good.”
18. Arbitrary Conclusions – drawing conclusions based on weak or no evidence
19. Selective Attention – focusing on some details while ignoring others
20. Problem Beliefs
 - a. “I should be successful at everything I try”
 - b. “If I am not successful, then I am a failure.”
 - c. “If I fail, then I am worthless.”
 - d. “Failure is not an option.”
 - e. “I must have the approval of everyone.”
 - f. “If I am not approved of, then I am being persecuted.”
 - g. “I should be certain before I move forward.”
 - h. “If I am not certain, then the outcome will be bad.”
 - i. “I should never be depressed or anxious.”
 - j. “If I let my guard down, something bad will happen.”
 - k. “If people see the real me, they will think less of (reject, humiliate, ..) me.”
 - l. “Things should be wonderful and easy all the time.”