

COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS TOOLKIT FOR WELL BALANCED MEN



 Well
Balanced
Men



MAXIM ARBUZOV LCSW/LICSW

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COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS



Throughout the day, men experience numerous automatic thoughts, which can be positive (leading to emotions like happiness or excitement), negative (resulting in feelings such as sadness or anxiety), or neutral (having little emotional impact).

These automatic thoughts are not always accurate. When they are biased or distorted, they can contribute to emotional struggles like anxiety and depression. Mental health professionals refer to these biases as "unhelpful thinking styles" or "cognitive distortions." Recognizing these patterns can provide insight into shifts in mood and behavior, allowing men to assess whether their thoughts are realistic and beneficial.

This guide introduces some of the most common cognitive distortions and will help you identify which ones may be influencing your thoughts and emotions.



How will this form help me?

You will gain insight into the most common cognitive distortions.

- You will be able to recognize the specific distortions you frequently experience.
- Understanding these biases will help you identify and challenge them in the moment.
- Awareness of unhelpful thinking patterns can lead to more accurate thinking and a better mood.



- Review the list of cognitive distortions and identify those that resonate most with you.
- Since people don't always recognize their own unhelpful thinking patterns, your therapist may assist you in this process.
- As you become more aware of these distortions, make an effort to spot them as they arise in your daily life.



Keep in mind!

- Men often experience various cognitive distortions depending on the situation. You might notice that several unhelpful thinking patterns apply to you.
- Keep a list of cognitive distortions handy. When you feel a shift in your mood or behavior, refer to the list and consider whether any of these distortions may be influencing your thoughts.
- Check off the distortions relevant to you and bring to therapy session.

COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS PG. 2

Labeling

This occurs when you assign a single, often rigid and negative, word to yourself, others, or your experiences. These labels tend to be extreme and unchanging, triggering strong emotional reactions and preventing you from recognizing other important aspects of the situation.

Should Statements

This thinking style revolves around rigid expectations, using words like “should,” “must,” “ought to,” or “have to.” It creates strict rules for how you, others, and the world are supposed to behave, often leading to frustration or disappointment when reality doesn’t align.

Social Comparison

This involves evaluating yourself in relation to others. It often becomes problematic when the focus shifts toward your shortcomings and imperfections instead of recognizing your strengths and positive qualities.

Jumping to Conclusions

Making quick decisions or forming opinions without having all the facts. This can include assuming you understand what someone else is thinking or relying too heavily on gut feelings instead of evidence.

Fortune Telling

This is when you assume you know what will happen in the future, usually expecting the outcome to be negative, even without clear evidence.

Permissive Thinking

This is when you justify doing something harmful by giving yourself a mental green light. You might minimize the negative impact, convince yourself you’ve earned it, or reassure yourself that it’s just a one-time thing.

Magnification and Minimization

This is when you amplify the negative parts of yourself, others, or a situation, making them seem worse than they are. At the same time, you shrink or dismiss the positive, treating it as if it barely matters. As a result, the bad feels overwhelming, and the good feels insignificant.

All or Nothing Thinking

This is when you view situations, yourself, or others in extreme, black-and-white terms. Things tend to feel either completely right or totally wrong, with no middle ground. Your actions may also reflect these extremes, swinging between giving maximum effort and doing nothing at all.

Catastrophizing

This is when your mind immediately leaps to the worst-case scenario. You find yourself asking “What if...?” and imagining disastrous outcomes, often believing that these extreme possibilities are likely to happen.

Disqualifying the Positive

This happens when you overlook or downplay your strengths and accomplishments. Compliments or positive feedback may feel awkward or undeserved, so you instinctively brush them off or dismiss them.

Externalizing

This involves shifting blame onto others when things go wrong and steering away from owning your part in the situation. It can be a way to protect your self-esteem, rationalize your behavior, or manage uncomfortable emotions like shame.

Hindsight Bias

The tendency to believe, after something has happened, that it was more predictable than it actually was. You may feel like you should have known or done something differently, even though it wasn’t clear or obvious beforehand.

About Maxim Arbuzov LCSW / LICSW

Maxim Arbuzov LCSW/LICSW is a licensed clinical psychotherapist, specializing in Men's Mental Health.

- Maxim provides **telehealth** psychotherapy clinically in **MA, CT, TX, ME, FL, ID, and SC**
- **Most major health insurances accepted**
- **\$180** for an Initial Assessment
- **\$150** for 55 minute psychotherapy



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