

Unhelpful Thinking Styles

To understand where depression stems from, it is important to identify the underlying thought patterns that can worsen our depression. Below is a list of some of the thinking styles that are common with people suffering from depression.

While reading through the list, think about if you have ever experienced these kinds of thinking patterns and what the contents of the thoughts have been.

- **Black and White Thinking (All or Nothing Thinking):** Viewing the world or a situation in either/or terms, instead of acknowledging the variability that each situation can bring.
- **Mental Filter:** Only paying attention to specific kinds of evidence. More specifically, the evidence that an event should be viewed through a negatively charged lens.
- **Mind-Reading:** Assuming that we know what others are thinking.
- **Fortune-Telling:** Predicting the future based on our own negative world-view.
- **Emotional Reasoning:** Not using facts, but instead just using how you are feeling to support your response to specific situations.
- **Labeling:** Making global statements or overgeneralizing aspects of yourself and situations you experience.
- **Catastrophizing:** When we blow things out of proportion and view the problem as being larger than it is.
- **Should'ing and Must'ing:** Using “should” and “must” to put unreasonable demands on yourself.
- **Magnification and Minimization:** When you magnify the positive attributes of others and minimize (explain away) your own positive qualities.

Matching Activity

Below, there are several statements that individuals who engage in unhelpful thinking patterns might make. Based on the definitions provided above, try to match the thinking pattern with each statement. While you are doing this exercise, think about if you ever engage in any of these thinking patterns.

	Thinking Patterns	A/B/C	Statements
1.	Magnification and Minimization	<input type="checkbox"/>	A - <i>I am a failure in math because I got a bad grade on this test.</i>
2.	Should'ing and Must'ing	<input type="checkbox"/>	B - <i>Either I am going to fail the test or I'm going to pass- there's no in-between.</i>
3.	Catastrophizing	<input type="checkbox"/>	C - <i>I know I'm not going to get this job. I'm probably not as qualified as the other applicants.</i>
4.	Labeling	<input type="checkbox"/>	D - <i>Even though I did really well on my last report, I still got edits and comments from my boss. That must mean I'm doing a bad job and the nice comments are just to make me feel better.</i>
5.	Emotional Reasoning	<input type="checkbox"/>	E - <i>They don't really mean it when they said they like my skirt- they were just being nice.</i>
6.	Fortune-Telling	<input type="checkbox"/>	F - <i>My friends are being really quiet. That must mean they are mad at me.</i>
7.	Mind-Reading	<input type="checkbox"/>	G - <i>If I don't shake this depression, I will be mentally ill and incapacitated for the rest of my life.</i>
8.	Mental Filter	<input type="checkbox"/>	H - <i>I feel so guilty. I must have done something wrong.</i>
9.	Black and White/All or Nothing Thinking	<input type="checkbox"/>	I - <i>I must eat healthy all the time- this is a non-negotiable.</i>

Have you ever experienced any of these thinking patterns? If so, which one

What are some of the thoughts that you have?

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What are some ways you can reconstruct your thoughts to be more productive?

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Here is the answer key for the Matching Activity:

	Thinking Patterns	A/B/C	Statements
1.	Magnification and Minimization	E	E - <i>They don't really mean it when they said they like my skirt- they were just being nice.</i>
2.	Should'ing and Must'ing	I	I - <i>I must eat healthy all the time- this is a non-negotiable.</i>
3.	Catastrophizing	G	G - <i>If I don't shake this depression, I will be mentally ill and incapacitated for the rest of my life.</i>
4.	Labeling	A	A - <i>I am a failure in math because I got a bad grade on this test.</i>
5.	Emotional Reasoning	H	H - <i>I feel so guilty. I must have done something wrong.</i>
6.	Fortune-Telling	C	C - <i>I know I'm not going to get this job. I'm probably not as qualified as the other applicants.</i>
7.	Mind-Reading	F	F - <i>My friends are being really quiet. That must mean they are mad at me.</i>
8.	Mental Filter	D	D - <i>Even though I did really well on my last report, I still got edits and comments from my boss. That must mean I'm doing a bad job and the nice comments are just to make me feel better.</i>
9.	Black and White/All or Nothing Thinking	B	B - <i>Either I am going to fail the test or I'm going to pass- there's no in-between.</i>

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