

Three Column Technique

Vigilance is crucial in handling cognitive distortions. Once identified, they can be rejected (McKay & Fanning, 2016).

The following worksheet is helpful for the identification and rebuttal of cognitive distortion when a situation makes you feel depressed or discouraged.

Create a new row for each cognitive distortion:

- In the first column, write down what your critic is telling you.
- Then compare it with the following nine definitions of cognitive distortions. Place the matching label in the second column.
- In the final column, write rebuttals for each one.

Common cognitive distortions:

- **Overgeneralization**—you make a generalized rule based on a single isolated event.
- **Global labeling**—you automatically use pejorative, or critical, language when you describe yourself.
- **Filtering**—you focus on the negatives and disregard the positives.
- **Polarized thinking**—everything is right or wrong, good or bad, perfect or worthless.
- **Self-blame**—you blame yourself even when things may not be your fault.
- **Personalization**—you assume everything has something to do with you.
- **Mind reading**—you make assumptions without any objective evidence.
- **Control fallacies**—either you feel you have total, or no, accountability for everybody and everything.
- **Emotional reasoning**—you assume that the way you feel about things makes it true.

Self-statements	Distortions	Rebuttal
I'm going to say something stupid. I'm always like that.	Overgeneralization	Not so! I'm often good at talking to new people.

Self-statements	Distortions	Rebuttal

References

- McKay, M., & Fanning, P. (2016). *Self-esteem*. CA: New Harbinger.

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