

Cognitive Distortions

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1. Arbitrary Inference refers to the process of drawing a specific conclusion in the absence of sufficient evidence or any evidence at all. For example, a man concludes he is worthless because the cleaners loses the suit he wants to wear to church.
2. ~~Selective Abstraction consists of focusing on~~ one of many elements of a situation and drawing a conclusion on the basis on this fragment. For example, a woman feels worthless when a man has a heart attack after eating potato chips at a party she's hosting, overlooking his record of heart problems.
3. Overgeneralization refers to the pattern of drawing an overall general conclusion on the basis of one of more isolated events. For example, a student does poorly on one exam and concludes he is stupid and will fail all his classes that semester.
4. Magnification and Minimization is reflected in gross errors in evaluating the significance or magnitude of an event. For example, (magnification) a person believing that after spilling kool-aid on the carpet the house is virtually ruined; or (minimization) a student still feels hopeless in spite of numerous academic achievements.
5. Personalization refers to a person inclination to relate external events to himself when there is no basis for making such a connection. For instance, a person holds himself accountable for the war in the Middle East, justifying his hopelessness.
6. Absolutistic, dichotomous thinking is demonstrated in the tendency to place all experiences in one of two opposite categories; for example, flawless or defective, saint or sinner or immaculate or filthy, with the person always selecting the extreme negative description.