

Common Cognitive Biases II

UNHELPFUL THINKING STYLES FROM THE TRACKER

These are the nine thinking styles most often tracked in daily practice. Each is a common pattern that can distort how a situation is perceived — usually without our noticing at the time.



All-or-Nothing Thinking

Seeing things in extremes, with no middle ground.

"If it isn't perfect, I've completely failed."



Catastrophising

Predicting or magnifying the worst possible outcome.

"One mistake and I'll lose the whole project."



Mind Reading

Assuming you know what someone else thinks, without checking.

"They didn't reply — they must be angry with me."



Fortune Telling

Treating an uncertain future as if it is already known.

"I know I'll bomb this interview."



Mental Filtering

Focusing on one negative detail while overlooking the wider picture.

Dwelling on the single critique in an otherwise positive review.



Discounting the Positive

Dismissing positive experiences, achievements or evidence.

"That success doesn't count — anyone could have done it."



Emotional Reasoning

Treating a feeling as proof that something is true.

"I feel guilty, so I must have done something wrong."



Should Statements

Rigid rules about how you or others ought to be.

"I should always be productive."



Labelling

Reducing yourself or another person to a single global negative label.

"I made a mistake, so I'm an idiot."

These are the nine styles tracked in the Cognitive Biases Tracker — use both resources together to notice, track and reflect on your patterns.

SOURCES

Beck, A.T. et al. (2020). Cognitive model and cognitive restructuring in CBT.
Hofmann, S.G. et al. (2012). The cognitive bias modification approach.
National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) (2022). Depression in adults: treatment and management.

NOTE

Evidence-informed educational resource.