

COGNITIVE RESTRUCTURING

I. Identifying Irrational Thoughts/Cognitive Distortion

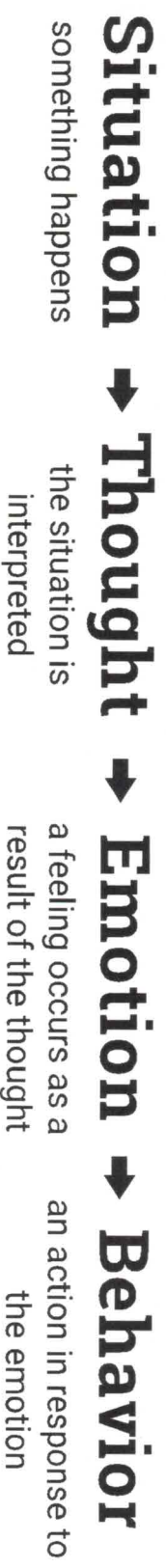
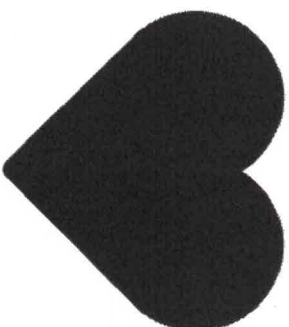
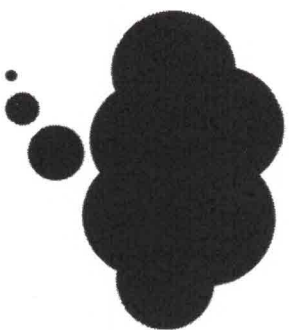
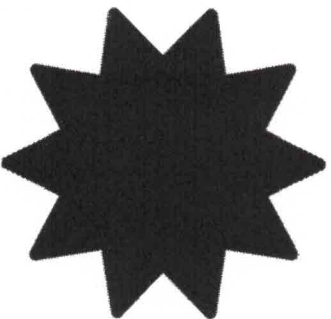
A. Psychoeducation

- a) Cognitive Distortions Overview**
- b) Cognitive Model**
- c) Cognitive Distortions List**
- d) Cognitive Distortions Draw Pictures**
- e) Cognitive Model Example (thoughts, emotions, behaviors)**
- f) Catastrophizing Pic**
- g) Magnification and Minimization Pic**

COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS OVERVIEW

- In general, cognitive distortions represent the different means by which individuals modify their experiences, thereby creating dysfunctional subjective constructs.
- Cognitive distortions, one of the main concepts of Cognitive Therapy (CT) or Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) refers to inflated inaccurate thoughts.
- Aaron Beck first developed the theory behind cognitive distortions and David Burns made it popular.

The Cognitive Model



Cognitive Distortions

Cognitive distortions are irrational thoughts that can influence your emotions. Everyone experiences cognitive distortions to some degree, but in their more extreme forms they can be harmful.

Magnification and Minimization: Exaggerating or minimizing the importance of events. One might believe their own achievements are unimportant, or that their mistakes are excessively important.

Catastrophizing: Seeing only the worst possible outcomes of a situation.

Overgeneralization: Making broad interpretations from a single or few events. "I felt awkward during my job interview. I am *always* so awkward."

Magical Thinking: The belief that acts will influence unrelated situations. "I am a good person—bad things shouldn't happen to me."

Personalization: The belief that one is responsible for events outside of their own control. "My mom is always upset. She would be fine if I did more to help her."

Jumping to Conclusions: Interpreting the meaning of a situation with little or no evidence.

Mind Reading: Interpreting the thoughts and beliefs of others without adequate evidence. "She would not go on a date with me. She probably thinks I'm ugly."

Fortune Telling: The expectation that a situation will turn out badly without adequate evidence.

Emotional Reasoning: The assumption that emotions reflect the way things really are. "I feel like a bad friend, therefore I must be a bad friend."

Disqualifying the Positive: Recognizing only the negative aspects of a situation while ignoring the positive. One might receive many compliments on an evaluation, but focus on the single piece of negative feedback.

"Should" Statements: The belief that things should be a certain way. "I should always be friendly."

All-or-Nothing Thinking: Thinking in absolutes such as "always", "never", or "every". "I *never* do a good enough job on anything."

COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

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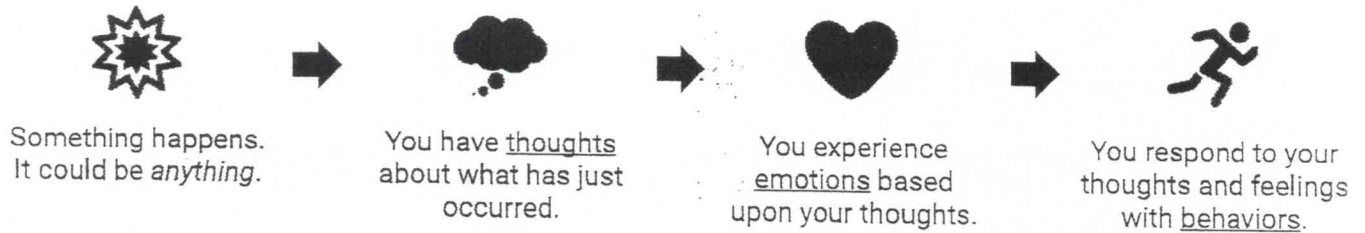
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The Cognitive Model

Thoughts → Emotions → Behaviors

Cognitive behavioral therapy (“CBT”) is based on the idea that **how you think determines how you feel and how you behave**. The diagram and example below show us this process:



Example: Mark

Situation: A stranger scowls at Mark while passing him on the street.

Mark's Thoughts: "I must've done something wrong... I'm so awkward."

Mark's Emotions: Embarrassed and upset with himself.

Mark's Behaviors: Mark apologizes to the stranger and replays the situation over and over in his head, trying to understand what he did wrong.

In this example, you might've noticed that Mark's thought wasn't very rational. The stranger could've been scowling for any number of reasons. Maybe the stranger just got dumped, or maybe he scowls at everyone. Who knows?

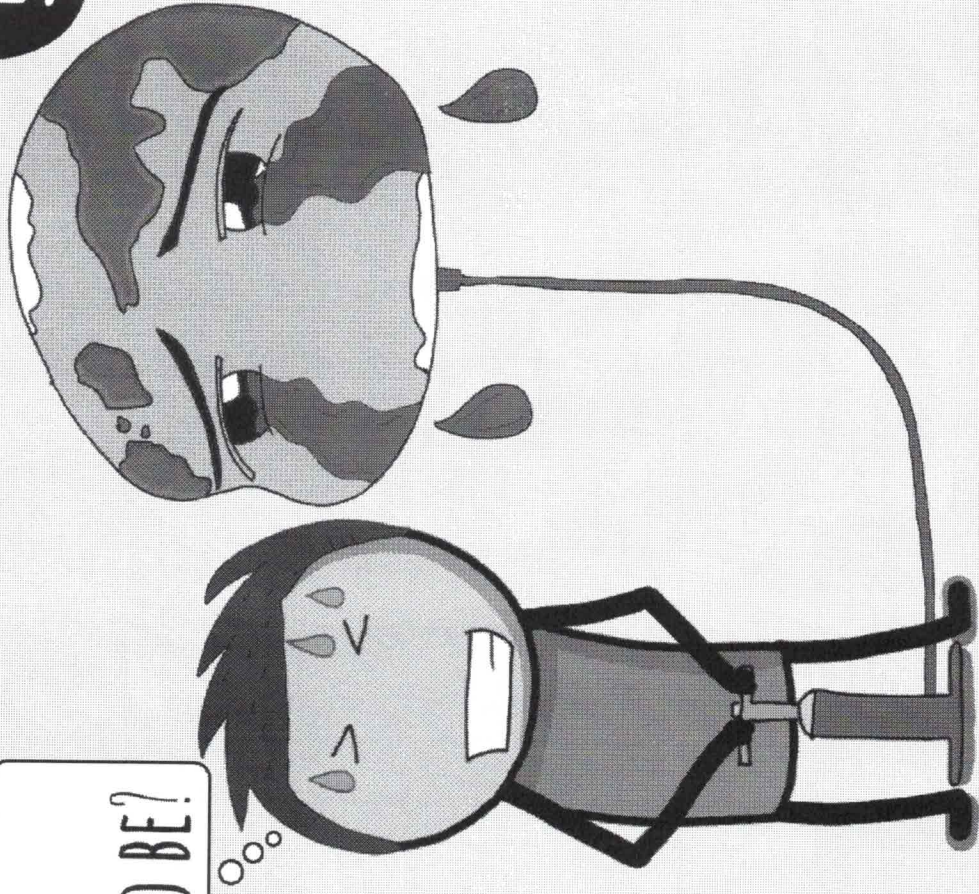
As humans, we all have **irrational thoughts** like these. Unfortunately, irrational or not, these thoughts still affect how we feel, and how we behave. Consider how Mark might've responded to the same situation if he had a different thought:

Thought	Emotion	Behavior
"What a jerk!"	Angry	Mark shouts: "What's your problem?!"
"He must be having a bad day..."	Neutral	Mark walks away and forgets the incident.

Using the cognitive model, you will learn to identify your own patterns of thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. You'll come to understand how your thoughts shape how you feel, and how they impact your life in significant ways.

Once you become aware of your own irrational thoughts, you will learn to change them. The thoughts that once led to depression, anxiety, and anger will be replaced with new, healthy alternatives. Finally, you will be in control of how you feel.

WHAT IF THINGS AREN'T AS
BAD AS I MAKE THEM OUT TO BE?



CATASTROPHIZING

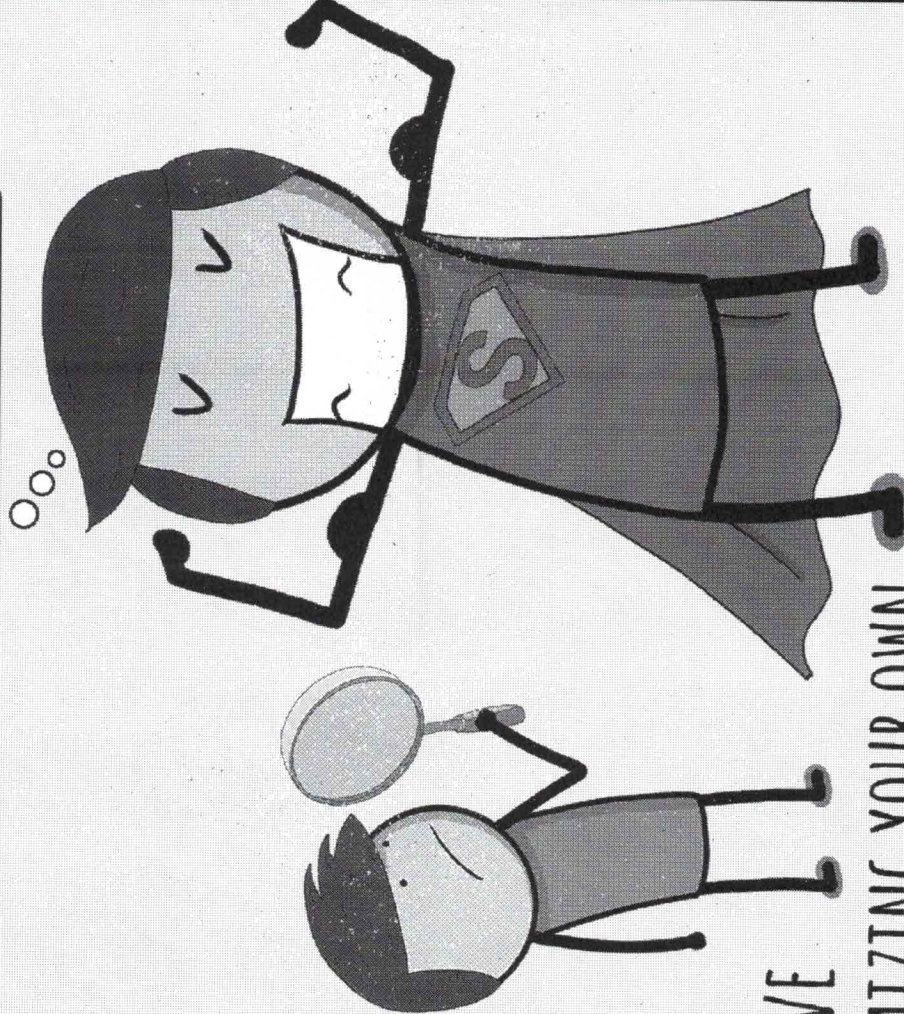
THE TENDENCY TO BLOW CIRCUMSTANCES
OUT OF PROPORTION BY MAKING PROBLEMS LARGER THAN LIFE.

5. CATASTROPHIZING

Catastrophizing is a thinking error where we tend to blow circumstances out of proportion. In other words, we make things out to be a lot worse than they should be. Now of course, the reality of our predicament might actually be very different. The problem we face may in fact be quite an insignificant minor mishap. However, because we indulge in the habit of catastrophizing, we always make problems larger than life, which of course makes them incredibly difficult to overcome. In order to successfully work through this cognitive distortion, question whether things are truly as bad as you make them out to be.

WHAT IF I BELIEVED THAT I WAS DESERVING AND CAPABLE?

MAGNIFICATION AND MINIMIZATION



THE TENDENCY TO MAGNIFY THE POSITIVE
ATTRIBUTES OF ANOTHER, WHILE MINIMIZING YOUR OWN.

10. MAGNIFICATION AND MINIMIZATION

Magnification and Minimization is a thinking error where we tend to magnify the positive attributes of another person, while minimizing our own positive attributes. You talk-down all your positive attributes and accomplishments in order to lower people's expectations. In other words, you are effectively devaluing yourself, while at the same time putting the other person on a pedestal. Having humility is of course a wonderful thing, but not to the detriment of your own self-esteem. In order to successfully work through this cognitive distortion, challenge yourself to find reasons why you are deserving and capable.