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Common Cognitive Distortions That Cause Stress & Anxiety

1

MIND READING

Believing that I know what someone else is thinking or that others can read my mind - e.g. "I know you don't mean that!".

2

FORECASTING

Predicting that something will happen without real evidence to support the claim - e.g. "I'm going to fail this exam."

3

COMPARING

Creating personal despair by comparing myself to others - e.g. "I never get as many compliments as she/he does."

4

FILTERING

Allowing positives to slip through our mind while focusing on negatives - e.g. I get 3 compliments and 1 complaint and focus on the complaint.

5

ALL OR NOTHING - BLACK & WHITE

Not allowing for any middle ground or "gray" - e.g. thinking things are all good or all bad or only being happy when I come in first place (vs. third).

6

CATASTROPHIZING

Reacting as if everything is falling apart and/or as I am facing a disaster - e.g. "My friends will never talk to me again!"

7

PERSONALIZATION

Assuming that things are about me - e.g. that people are talking about me when they could be talking about someone or something else.

8

SHOULD

Believing there are things I must or should do without asking myself if this is really true - e.g. "I should have worn something nicer."

9

LABELING/MISLABELING

Deciding to label myself or others based on one thing - e.g. I make a mistake and label myself "stupid".

10

EXPIRATION DATES

Thinking "it's too late" to do or say something because time has passed (it's never too late)!