

Unhelpful Thinking Styles

We all develop habitual patterns of thinking that can distort how we see situations. Recognising these patterns is the first step to challenging them and developing more balanced perspectives.

Common Unhelpful Thinking Styles

Thinking Style	Description	Example
All-or-Nothing	Seeing things in black and white with no middle ground	"If I slip once, I've completely failed"
Catastrophising	Expecting the worst possible outcome	"If I tell them, they'll leave me"
Mind Reading	Assuming you know what others are thinking	"My team saw the missed deadline and thinks I can't cope"
Overgeneralising	Drawing broad conclusions from a single event	"I blew this week's budget — I always mess things up"
Filtering	Focusing only on the negative while ignoring positives	Ignoring 30 good days because of one difficult one
Personalising	Blaming yourself for things outside your control	"It's my fault they're unhappy"
Should Statements	Rigid rules about how things must be	"I should be over this by now"
Emotional Reasoning	Treating feelings as facts	"I feel like a failure, so I must be one"
Labelling	Attaching a fixed label to yourself or others	"I'm an addict" instead of "I'm a person working on change"
Fortune Telling	Predicting the future negatively	"I'll never get a decent night's sleep again"

My Thinking Patterns

Which thinking styles do I recognise in myself?

Record specific examples from this week:

Situation	Unhelpful Thought	Thinking Style	More Balanced Thought