

Common Relationship Cognitive Distortions

Cognitive distortions are thought tricks our OCD may play on us. They are rooted in emotion, not logic.

Recognizing what cognitive distortions we may be experiencing can help us combat them with Exposure and Response Prevention therapy.

ALL-OR-NOTHING:

Relationships are either perfectly right or completely wrong.

"I must always feel 100 percent in love with my partner, or else we're wrong for each other." or "My coworker either loves me or hates me."

Truth: The beauty of relationships is in how our emotions grow and change.

CATASTROPHIZING:

Jumping to the worst-case scenario.

"If I don't have certainty right now, it will ruin my life and my partner's life. It will be a complete disaster."

Truth: Change is not the end of the world. Unpredictability cannot be avoided with compulsions.

SELECTIVE ABSTRACTION:

There is one small issue that we hyper-focus on, ignoring the rest.

"I can't stop thinking about the holes in their socks. Can I live with that forever?"

Truth: The holes in your partner's socks are only one piece of them. There is a bigger picture. Relationships will always have cons.

MIND READING:

Thinking you know EXACTLY what your partner or other's are thinking.

"They think I'm stupid" or "other people think we are a bad couple."

Truth: You can't read minds.

HYPER-RESPONSIBILITY:

I am responsible for my partner's wellbeing more than they are.

"I might be wasting their chances to meet others if this doesn't work out."

Truth: It is not your job to make someone else's decisions for them.

What cognitive distortions do you recognize showing up?

Recognizing these cognitive distortions is important in recognizing how our brains can play awful tricks on us and take us away from reality.

Common Relationship Compulsions

Mental checking of emotions, attraction, or thoughts associated with the relationship

Scenario-bending or theorizing about alternatives to the relationship as it is

Avoidance of situations that trigger relationship obsessions

Mental review of anything pertaining to the relationship

Compulsive confessing of intrusive thoughts or doubts about the relationship

Seeking reassurance about the relationship (from the individual or others)

Comparison to other relationships or people

Doing things to "test" your feelings or the other person's feelings

What relationship compulsions do you engage in?

The secret to combatting OCD cognitive distortions is not in challenging them mentally but rather challenging them with our **ACTIONS** by not engaging in compulsions in response to them.

Reality is that these events **could** happen, that these events **may** happen, **AND** that there is an alternate way of seeing things.

When we choose to tolerate the uncertainty and problem-solve without compulsing, it enables us to respond more effectively to these distortions.

What are some alternatives to these distortions that are more balanced, uncertain, or flexible?

How might you practice those through your **ACTIONS?**
