What’s a cognitive distortion and why do so many people have them? Cognitive distortions are simply ways that our minds convince us of things that aren’t necessarily true, and can lead us feeling bad about ourselves. By learning to correctly identify and challenge them, we can break free from unhealthy patterns of thinking and behavior.

Cognitive distortions are common and are often triggered by a desire to control events or situations, which are usually beyond our control. This can lead to a sense of helplessness and hopelessness, which in turn can reinforce negative thinking and emotions.

There are several different types of cognitive distortions, each with its own unique characteristics and potential consequences. Some of the most common are:

1. **Overgeneralization**: A person comes to a general conclusion about a situation or event based on a single instance. This can lead to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

2. **Personalization**: A person believes that every negative event or situation is the result of their own actions or beliefs. This can lead to feelings of guilt and self-blame.

3. **Polarized Thinking**: A person sees things in extremes—either/or, right/wrong, good/bad. This can lead to black-and-white thinking and can prevent us from seeing the gray in situations.

4. **Filtering**: A person focuses on the negative aspects of a situation while filtering out all positive aspects. This can lead to a skewed view of reality and can make us feel hopeless.

5. **Emotional Reasoning**: A person’s emotions take over our thinking and reasoning. Emotional reasoning can be summed up by the statement, “If I feel that way, it must be true.” Whatever a person is feeling is believed to be true automatically and unconditionally.

6. **Jumping to Conclusions**: A person comes to a conclusion based on a single incident or a single piece of evidence. This can lead to premature conclusions that may not be accurate.

7. **Global Labeling**: A person an unhealthy universal label to themselves or others. This can lead to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

8. **Self-Concept Distortion**: A person’s self-concept may be distorted by their own opinions and actions being the absolute correct answer. This can lead to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

9. **SHOULDs**: Statements such as “I should…”, “I ought to…”, and “You should…” can lead to feelings of guilt and helplessness.

10. **Control Fallacies**: A person expects that other people will change to suit them if they just pressure them enough. This can lead to feelings of helplessness and hopelessness.

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By learning to correctly identify and challenge our cognitive distortions, we can break free from unhealthy patterns of thinking and behavior. This can lead to a more positive and fulfilling life. Check out our website to learn more about cognitive distortions and how to fix them!