# Basic DBT: Recognizing Unhealthy Thinking Habits

Recognizing what unhealthy thinking habits you utilize in different situations can help you avoid them and find alternative, more realistic thoughts.

| Mental Filter | Judgments |
|---|---|
| <ul><li>Notice only what the filter allows or wants us to notice</li><li>Avoid anything that does not "fit"</li><li>Only picking up the negatives</li></ul> *Am I filtering out the positives? Am I wearing those, "gloomy specs?" What would be more realistic?* | <ul><li>Making evaluations/ judgments about events, ourselves, others, or the world</li><li>Not describing what we actually see and have evidence for</li></ul> *It is how I make sense of the world, but that doesn't mean my judgments are right or helpful. Is there another perspective?* |
| **Prediction** | **Emotional Reasoning** |
| <ul><li>Believing we know what's going to happen in the future</li></ul> *How likely is it that my prediction might happen? Am I jumping to conclusions?* | <ul><li>I feel bad, so it must be bad!</li></ul> *Just because it feels a certain way does not dictate how the situation truly is. My feelings are just reactions to my thoughts—and my thoughts are automatic brain reflexes.* |
| **Mind-reading** | **Mountains and Molehills** |
| <ul><li>Assuming we know what others are thinking (usually about us)</li></ul> *Those are my thoughts not theirs. What is the evidence? Is there another balanced way of looking at the situation?* | <ul><li>Exaggerating the risk of danger</li><li>Minimalizing the odds of how things will most likely turn out</li></ul> *How would someone else see the problem? What's the bigger picture?* |
| **Compare and Despair** | **Catastrophising** |
| <ul><li>Seeing only the positive aspects in others</li><li>Comparing their positives to your negatives</li></ul> *What is a more balanced thought?* | <ul><li>Imagining and believing the worst possible thing will happen</li></ul> *What's most likely to happen?* |
| **Critical Self** | **Black and White Thinking** |
| <ul><li>Putting ourselves down</li><li>Blaming ourselves for events that aren't totally our fault</li></ul> *What would most people who really know about me say about me? What is something I am totally responsible for?* | <ul><li>Placing things only into two categories</li><li>Ignoring the in-between or the spectrum that exists</li></ul> *Where is this on the spectrum?* |
| **Shoulds and musts** | **Memories** |
| <ul><li>Inserting "should" and "must" into actions to place pressure on ourselves, creating unrealistic expectations</li></ul> *Am I creating unrealistic expectations? What would be more realistic?* | <ul><li>Current events trigger unsettling memories, leading to distress in the present</li></ul> *This is a reminder of the past. That was then, and this is now. Even though this memory makes me feel upset, it's not actually happening again* |