# MINDBRIDGE

## Week 3: Problems with our Thinking Processes

### Exercise #1: Identifying your own Cognitive Distortions

☐ <u>All-or-Nothing Thinking (Black-and-White Thinking)</u>: Seeing things in extreme terms, with no middle ground or gray area. For example, "If I don't get a perfect score, I'm a total failure".

☐ <u>Overgeneralization</u>: Taking a single negative event and seeing it as a pattern of defeat or failure in all areas of life. For example, "I didn't get invited to this party. I'm always left out of everything".

☐ <u>Mental Filtering (Negative Filter)</u>: Focusing only on the negative aspects of a situation and ignoring any positive feedback.

☐ <u>Disqualifying the Positive</u>: Dismissing or downplaying positive experiences, achievements, or qualities. For example, "Sure, I got an A on this project, but that was just luck. I'm not actually smart".

☐ <u>Mind Reading</u>: Assuming you know what others are thinking or feeling without any evidence to support your assumption. For example, "She didn't smile at me; she must think I'm annoying".

☐ <u>Fortune-Telling (Predicting the Future)</u>: Predicting negative outcomes without considering other possibilities or acknowledging past successes. For example, "I know I'm going to fail this interview. I always mess things up".

☐ <u>Magnification (Catastrophizing)</u>: Blowing things out of proportion and making events a bigger deal than they actually are. For example, "If I don't get this job, my entire life will be ruined".

- ☐ <u>Emotional Reasoning</u>: Believing that because you feel something, it must be true, even when there's no evidence other than the feeling. For example, "I feel stupid, therefore I must be stupid".
- ☐ <u>Labeling</u>: Putting a negative label on yourself or others based on specific actions or outcomes. For example, "I fell down trying to score that goal in soccer today. I'm a horrible klutz".
- ☐ <u>Personalization</u>: Taking things personally and assuming that people always think about their actions and decisions. For example, "My friends are playing together without me; they must not like me".
- ☐ <u>Minimizing</u>: Downplaying the significance of positive events or achievements. For example, "I just got lucky on that test. I'm not that good at math".
- ☐ <u>Should Statements</u>: Thinking about what you "should" or "must" do, leading to disappointment and frustration when these expectations are not met. For example, "I should always be perfect"

**Exercise** #**2:** Accepting a Thought, and Creating Cognitive Distance

| Thought:<br>"I am…" "I will always be…" "Would if…" | Defusion of Thought:<br>"I feel like…." "I am experiencing a thought that.." |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |

# **Exercise #3:** Putting our Thoughts on Trial

| The Situation / Trigger<br>What happened or triggered the problem? | The Prosecution<br>What facts support a negative interpretation? | The Defence<br>What facts support a positive interpretation? | The Neutral Witness<br>What would an independent observer say? |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | | |

**The Balanced Judgement – Having assessed the evidence, what is a balanced, realistic and fair interpretation?**