## **Cognitive Distortions**

Cognitive distortions are *irrational thoughts* that shape how you see the world, how you feel, and how you act. It's normal to have these thoughts occasionally, but they can be harmful when frequent or extreme.

**Magnification and minimization:** Exaggerating or minimizing the importance of events. You might believe your own achievements are unimportant or that your mistakes are excessively important.

Catastrophizing: Seeing only the worst possible outcomes of a situation.

**Overgeneralization:** Making broad interpretations from a single or few events. "I felt awkward during my job interview. I am *always* so awkward."

**Magical thinking:** The belief that thoughts, actions, or emotions influence unrelated situations. "If I hadn't hoped something bad would happen to him, he wouldn't have gotten into an accident."

**Personalization:** The belief that you are responsible for events outside of your control. "My mom is always upset. She would be fine if I did more to help her."

**Jumping to conclusions:** Interpreting the meaning of a situation with little or no evidence.

**Mind reading:** Interpreting the thoughts and beliefs of others without adequate evidence. "She wouldn't go on a date with me. She probably thinks I'm ugly."

Fortune telling: The expectation that a situation will turn out badly without adequate evidence.

**Emotional reasoning:** The assumption that emotions reflect the way things really are. "I feel like a bad friend, therefore I must be a bad friend."

**Disqualifying the positive:** Recognizing only the negative aspects of a situation while ignoring the positive. You might receive many compliments on an evaluation, but focus on the single piece of negative feedback.

"Should" statements: The belief that things should be a certain way. "I should always be perfect."

**All-or-nothing thinking:** Thinking in absolutes such as "always," "never," or "every." "I *never* do a good enough job on anything."