

Thinking Traps

It is easy to fall into these common “thinking traps.” Do any of these look familiar to you?

Black and White Thinking

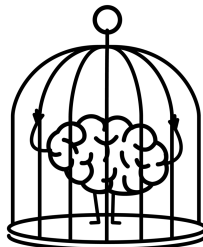
Viewing a situation as all or nothing, as one extreme or another

e.g. “When I get enough sleep, I am ready to take on the world! When I don’t, everything falls apart.”

Overgeneralization

Generalizing from one experience to another without recognizing how the two situations may differ (e.g. assuming something will go wrong in the future because it went wrong in the past)

e.g. “I’ve tried making changes to my sleep before, and it didn’t work. There’s no point in trying now.”



Personalization

Taking blame for negative events you're not really responsible for

e.g. *"I'm too exhausted to be the perfect parent. That's why my son is doing poorly in school."*

Mistaking Feelings for Facts

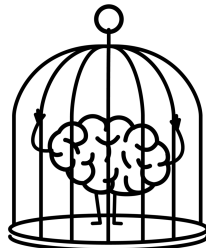
Confusing *feelings* with *reality* (e.g. believing you *are* stupid because you *feel* stupid)

e.g. *"I feel so groggy when I wake up in the morning. I'm such a lazy, unproductive person."*

Jumping to Negative Conclusions

Drawing negative conclusions from a situation when there is no evidence for this interpretation

e.g. *"I have that feeling again. I just know I'm not going to fall asleep tonight."*



Mind Reading

Assuming you know what other people are thinking without their saying anything directly

e.g. *“Everyone can see the bags under my eyes. They must be thinking I’m a tired mess.”*

Catastrophizing

Assuming a situation was or will be a disaster

e.g. *“I didn’t sleep at all. My day is ruined! I won’t be able to focus, and if I keep that up I’ll lose my job...”*

“Thinking traps” can have a powerful effect on how we feel and how we act. By recognizing these thinking traps, we can begin to “fight back” by replacing them with more helpful thoughts.

