

## **Unhelpful Thinking Styles**

Unhelpful thinking styles are patterns of thought that can negatively influence how we interpret situations, our emotions, and our responses. Identifying these thinking habits is a key step in developing healthier perspectives and reducing emotional distress.

Below are common unhelpful thinking styles, each with a brief definition and example. You may notice some of these in your own thinking from time to time.

### **All-or-Nothing Thinking**

Seeing things in black-or-white categories with no middle ground.

Example: 'If I don't succeed completely, I've failed.'

### **Overgeneralisation**

Making broad conclusions based on a single event.

Example: 'I didn't get the job; I'll never succeed at anything.'

### **Mental Filter**

Focusing only on the negative aspects of a situation.

Example: 'They praised my work, but I can't stop thinking about the one small critique.'

### **Disqualifying the Positive**

Rejecting positive experiences by insisting they 'don't count'.

Example: 'They were just being nice — they didn't really mean it.'

### **Jumping to Conclusions**

Making assumptions without clear evidence. This includes mind-reading and fortune-telling.

Example: 'They didn't reply — they must be annoyed with me.'

**Catastrophising**

Expecting the worst-case scenario to happen.

Example: 'If I make a mistake, I'll lose my job.'

**Emotional Reasoning**

Assuming something must be true because you feel it strongly.

Example: 'I feel like a failure, so I must be one.'

**Should/Must Statements**

Using critical self-talk based on rigid rules or expectations.

Example: 'I should always be in control.'

**Labelling**

Assigning fixed labels to yourself or others.

Example: 'I'm useless.'

**Personalisation**

Blaming yourself for things outside your control.

Example: 'It's my fault they're upset.'