



Exercise: Cognitive distortions associated with insomnia

Goal

Learn to test the truthfulness of your perceptions. It will help you to reframe your thoughts and find alternative, sleep-friendly ways of thinking.

Instructions

Use the exercise to recognize and challenge mindsets that perpetuate insomnia.

Do this exercise regularly.

1. Read the examples and think about the cognitive distortions that they represent. If you recognize a similar cognitive distortion in yourself, write it in the text box.

2. Try to identify an alternative way of thinking about each scenario. You can use the following questions as a guide:

- Is my thinking based on fact, a belief or a guess?
 - What evidence is there that my thinking is correct?
 - Have I heard it with my own ears or seen it with my own eyes?
 - What are other people likely to think, and is it possible that I have jumped to a conclusion that is not actually correct?
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1. Examples of cognitive distortions:

All-or-nothing thinking

- Distorted thought: "If I sleep badly, the following day will be ruined."
- Reframed thought: "I have gotten through the day in the past, even when I have not slept well the night before."

Catastrophizing

- Distorted thought: "If this insomnia continues, I will surely lose my job."
- Reframed thought: "I perform well enough at work. If I cannot sleep, I can always relax and rest in other ways."



Should statements

- Distorted thought: "I should be on top form and give my all to get through the task ahead."
- Reframed thought: "There are very few things in life that require a flawless performance, and it is unreasonable to expect it from yourself. Would I expect it from others?"

False generalizations

- Distorted thought: "I always sleep badly."
- Reframed thought: "My sleep diary tells me that my sleep quality varies."

Fortune telling

- Distorted thought: "I already know that I will not sleep all night."
- Reframed thought: "There is no way to tell in advance how tonight will go. I may well fall asleep quickly thanks to my exercises."

Mind reading

- Distorted thought: "My colleagues will notice that I am tired and think that I am not capable."
- Reframed thought: "I cannot know what other people think."

2. Cognitive reframing

Identify any potentially distorted thoughts you may have and see if you can reframe them. Use the following questions to help you:

- Is my thinking based on fact, a belief or a guess?
- What evidence is there that my thinking is correct?
- Have I heard it with my own ears or seen it with my own eyes?
- What are other people likely to think, and is it possible that I have jumped to a conclusion that is not actually correct?

All-or-nothing thinking



Catastrophizing

Should statements

False generalizations

Fortune telling

Mind reading