

Core Competency #12

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

What cognitive distortions have you experienced in your intimate relationships?

- Blaming  Global Attributions  Mind Reading  Fortune Telling  Over Generalization
- Rationalizing  Magnification  Minimization  Emotional Reasoning  Should Statements
- Labeling

What skills have you developed to recognize cognitive distortions and change your thoughts and behavior?

- Reframing  Examine the Evidence  Identifying the Distortions  Survey Method
- Experimental Technique  Vertical Arrow  Be Specific  Other

Give one example of a recent distorted thought you experienced recently.

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What technique did you use to examine the thought? \_\_\_\_\_

Were you successful? \_\_\_\_\_

How can you use these techniques to avoid future domestic violence incidents?

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## COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS and DV

We are familiar with cognitive distortions and how these distorted thoughts effect our behavior. Now we will examine cognitive distortions common to domestic violence.

Here are examples of distorted thoughts that lead to abusive behavior;

#1. Statement - *"She started it."* Distortion - So if she started the argument she is to blame for the outcome of the incident. Is the problem who started the argument? Do we have an argument starting problem here? Or is the issue how you responded to the argument? Skill Deficit – how do you resolve an argument without becoming abusive?

#2. Statement - *"She was being a bitch."* Distortion – Her behavior was the problem, so she was treated like a bitch. She was irritable, disagreeable, discontented? If someone is emotional are you justified being abusive towards them? Or is the problem you were abusive to her when she is experiencing negative emotions? Skill Deficit – How can you interact with her when she is in a negative mood without becoming abusive?

#3. Statement - *"She has it pretty good."* Distortion – She should be happy because I work hard and support her. Working to support her and others is a good thing, but it does not justify being abusive or having unrealistic expectations of providing for others. Focus on the problem of abusive behavior, do not distract yourself and others by boasting about your efforts to support the family. Avoid rationalizing your behavior by telling yourself or others about your positive contribution to the family. Skill Deficit – owning your behavior.

#4. Statement – *"She cheated on me."* Distortion – She deserves what she got. Hurt me, I will hurt you. You did this to me! Obviously if she was unfaithful to you this can be upsetting, you can see this as a breach of your expectations of a committed relationship, but you do not have control over her, she is free to associate with whoever she chooses. Unless you live in Saudi Arabia, you have to

recognize her freedom to make her own decisions, no matter how unacceptable you might believe her decision to be with someone else is, it is her call. Skill Deficit – managing your emotional response to the stressor.

#5. Statement or thought – “All she ever does is whine about her problems.”

Distortion – She needs to quit whining about everything and quit bothering me about it. Skill Deficit – global attributional style, a lack of empathy.

**REFRAMING** – One of the most effective treatments for distorted thinking is to reframe the thought. You have done this probably hundreds or thousands of times, to reframe a thought we simply try taking another perspective on the thought.

Example - “All she ever does is whine about her problems.”

**Reframe** – It sounds like you have a problem with listening to her complaints. How can we help you deal with the frustration **you experience** when listening to complaints? Instead of blaming her for your frustration, how can we learn to tolerate complaints without becoming upset?