



## Chapter 6

# Introduction to Cognitive Distortions

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### Thinking Errors

Suggested Duration: 1 to 2 50 min periods

#### Lesson Objectives

To introduce the concept of cognitive distortions and the notion that the way we think about situations impacts our mood as well as our behaviour.

To highlight the importance of gathering objective evidence (thoughts don't count as evidence!) when we try to work out how true our thoughts are.

To introduce Core CBT Principles #2 and #3 – that thoughts are just ideas that may not be accurate and that it's not the situation that matters, it's how you think about it.

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#### Summary of Tasks

##### **Suggested Actions/Lesson Planning**

This is among the most important chapters in the book because it really introduces cognitive behavioural therapy and the notion that there are strategies that can be used to help manage upsetting thoughts and emotions – ideally, this would be taught slowly with lots of time for discussion.

Discuss guiding questions in pairs, groups or as a class.

Also complete the “cognitive distortions” and “character response” handouts. Depending on the class, this could either be an independent activity, or done in pairs or groups.

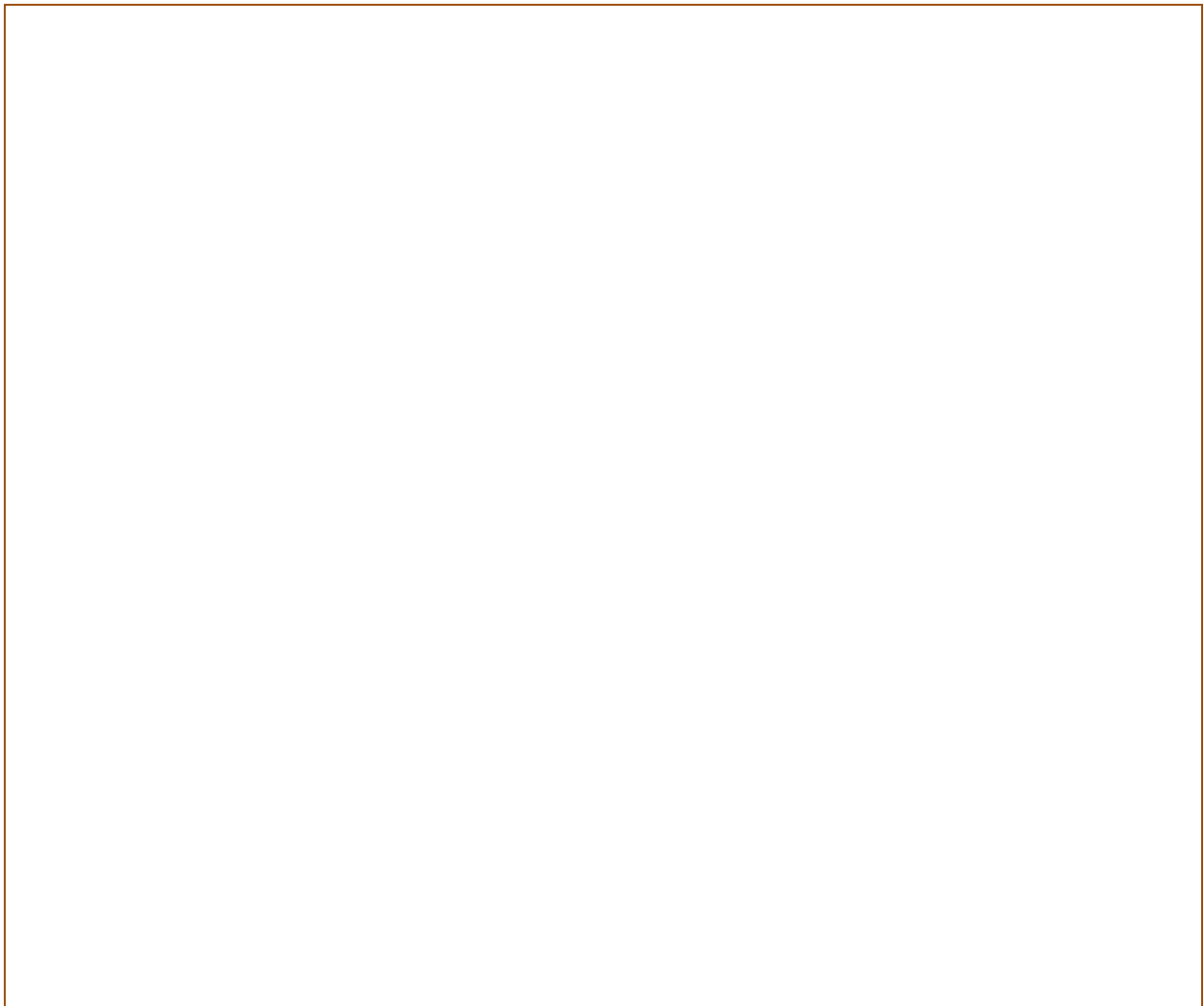
Once the chart is completed by the students, each group can present their answers to the rest of the class.

Students can brainstorm their own Stress Busters for homework

# COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS

## (“THINKING ERRORS”)

Describe the cognitive distortions in this chapter. Consider thoughts from Harry and Professor Trelawney. If possible, label the type of distortion.

A large, empty rectangular box with a thin black border, intended for the student to write their analysis of cognitive distortions from the chapter.

# COGNITIVE DISTORTIONS (“THINKING ERRORS”)

## Teacher Cheat Sheet

Describe the cognitive distortions in this chapter. Consider thoughts from Harry and Professor Trelawney. If possible, label the type of distortion.

### **Trelawney**

There are a series of “omens” that Trelawny thinks indicate great harm will come to Harry:

“beware a red-haired man” (fortune-telling)

“The falcon...my dear you have a deadly enemy” (fortune-telling)

“Dear, dear, this is not a happy cup...” (fortune-telling)

“danger in your path, my dear” (fortune-telling)

### **Harry**

In response to “who will be dying”, Harry says “Me” (fortune-telling)

### **Ron**

Thinks that the dog Harry saw must be the Grim (magnification, catastrophizing)  
(fortune-telling is the main distortion in this chapter, but more will come later in the book)

# CHARACTER RESPONSES

Our thoughts about a situation or event shape our moods and our behaviours. If we think that a friend is mad at us because they didn't make eye-contact with us in the hall, for example, then we might feel sad and our behaviours would reflect this even if our friend isn't mad at us at all.

Below, write about 3 events or challenges in *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban* that the characters have faced so far in the book.

Next, write about a chosen character's thoughts about the event or challenge.

Finally, write what that reaction tells you about the character's thinking errors.

Character name: \_\_\_\_\_

| <b>Event of Challenge<br/>this Character<br/>Faced</b> | <b>The Character's<br/>Thoughts</b> | <b>Possible<br/>Thinking<br/>Error</b> |
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|  |                                     |  |

# UNIT 4 (CH.6):

## GUIDING QUESTIONS & KEY LEARNING POINTS

### Guiding Questions

1. How does Professor Trelawney demonstrate distorted thinking?
2. How does Professor McGonagall demonstrate rational thinking?
3. Who is another person who demonstrates rational thinking in this chapter?
4. What positive thing does Harry do as a result of the support he receives from the rational thinkers in this chapter?
5. Can you think of examples where you or people you know have made a fortune telling error like Harry and his classmates?
6. Do you have a “Grim” (*a distorted thought you are prone to make*)? Explain.
7. Who is a good person for Harry to check in with when he has a worrying thought? Why is this person(s) good for Harry? Be specific.
8. Who are good people for you to check in with when you have a worrying thought? What makes this person(s) a good resource?

### Key Learning Points/Did I Cover?

- What is a cognitive distortion/thinking error
- Examples of common thinking errors
- The importance of using evidence to help us understand our thoughts and how Professor McGonagall and Hermione help Harry think more rationally
- CBT Core Principle #2 – Thoughts are just ideas. Just because you think something, doesn’t necessarily mean it’s true**
- CBT Core Principle #3 – It’s not the situation that matters, it’s how you think about it**