

TIP SHEET 12.4

Common thinking errors – handout for clients.

The list below of common thinking errors, upon which many problematic automatic thoughts are based, is adapted from Arden and Linford (2009), Beck (1995) and others:

- Polarisation – all-or none thinking: categorical black or white thinking.
- Overgeneralisation: the expectation that just because something has occurred it will always occur.
- Personalisation: feeling that you are the centre of events: that you are to blame for negative events; and feeling that others are scrutinising and judging you.
- Mind reading: making assumptions about what others think which often lead to feelings of failure, guilt, and shame.
- Shoulds and should nots: Having rigid rules around behaviour interferes with the ability to adapt to the environment.
- Catastrophising: Seeing the problem as more severe and terrible than it is.
- Magnification and minimisation: Magnifying the positive attributes of others and minimising your own.
- Emotional reasoning: seeing situations in terms of how you are feeling.
- Labelling: labelling ourselves based on one example.
- Discounting positive experiences: often, when positive things happen, people discount them and insist that they don't count.