

Cognitive Distortion and Life Skills

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Abstract :

Cognitive distortions are preconceived notions about oneself and the world around us that are distorted. We unknowingly reinforce these irrational beliefs and thoughts over time. The researcher has covered a variety of cognitive distortions throughout the study, but they all share a few characteristics: inclinations or patterns of thought or belief; that are either incorrect or false; Also, can possibly cause mental harm. Two aspects of critical thinking are problem-solving and decision-making. They go hand in hand because it's hard to make a decision without solving a problem. and sometimes even the reverse. The study's primary focus is on decision-making and problem-solving, two essential life skills, and how cognitive distortion can affect these abilities.

Key words : Cognitive Distortion, Decision making, Problem solving.

Introduction :

One of the most neglected areas of health worldwide is mental health. The neglect of mental health can be attributed to a number of factors. The first is a stigma associated with it. Second, mental health issues are viewed as “luxury goods” rather than actual illnesses. A fragmented and out-of-date service model is one of the additional leading causes. The majority of mental health services are provided in psychiatric hospitals, and there is a severe lack of preventative mental health services. a lack of human resources and policy changes that are behind schedule. The figures are mind-boggling. More than 75% of people with mental disorders do not receive treatment in low-income countries, where nearly 1 billion people live. Nearly 3 million people die each year from substance abuse. Suicide takes a life every 40 seconds. Around half of psychological well-being problems start by the age of 14.

1.1 Cognitive Distortion:

Cognitive distortion was first described by mental health professionals in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Thinking styles that place an emphasis on negative biases are known as cognitive distortions. To put it another way, cognitive distortions are internal mental filters or biases that make us feel bad about ourselves, exacerbate our anxiety, and make us miserable. Our brains are always going through a lot of information. Our brains look for shortcuts to lighten our mental load in order to deal with this. These shortcuts can be beneficial in some situations, such as with these detrimental cognitive filters, but they can also be detrimental in others. Cognitive distortions may occur in a variety of mental health conditions, according to research. Disorders of anxiety, dysphoria, and depression are examples of these. It is normal to experience occasional cognitive distortions. However, if you experience them on a regular basis, you may need to see a mental health professional for assistance.

However, cognitive distortions are not itself categorized as a mental illness. Cognitive distortion is not included as a mental health condition in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, Fifth Edition (DSM-5) of the American Psychiatric Association.

The 10 Most Common Cognitive Distortions :

1. All-or-Nothing Thinking :

Black-and-white thinking, or polarized thinking, are another name for all-or-nothing thinking. Things are viewed in absolute terms in this way of thinking: Black or white, everything or nothing, good or bad, success or failure, these are the constants in life. Focusing on mistakes and assuming that you will never succeed is an example of all-or-nothing thinking, as opposed to acknowledging the error and attempting to move past it.

Recognizing that progress and success are not binary concepts is one way to overcome this cognitive distortion over time. One can feel better their progress and recognize their strengths by addressing this type of thinking and replacing self-defeating thoughts.

2. Overgeneralization :

When you make a rule based on a single event or a series of coincidences, you are overgeneralizing. In the sentence, "always" and "never" are frequently used. You make the assumption that all subsequent events will result in the same way because you have experience with how one event played out.

Consider the scenario in which you made a suggestion regarding a work project that was not implemented in the final product. You might make an oversimplification of this and conclude that no one at work ever pays attention to you or takes you seriously.

3. Mental Filters :

Overgeneralization is the antithesis of mental filtering, but both have the same negative consequences. The mental filter takes one small event and focuses solely on it, excluding everything else, rather than taking one small event and making inappropriate generalizations about it.

For instance, Joe focuses on all of his partner's hurtful or negative actions during their relationship, but he filters out all of his partner's kind and thoughtful actions. This way of thinking makes him feel bad about his partner and their relationship.

One approach that may assist in overcoming mental filtering is journaling. Try to shift your attention away from the negative and toward more neutral or positive aspects of the situation.

4. Discounting the Positive :

Negating the good things that have happened to you is a cognitive distortion known as "discounting the positive." Similar to mental filtering, it actively rejects the positive aspects rather than simply ignoring them.

Jolly, for instance, finishes a project and wins an award for his outstanding work. He doesn't feel proud of his accomplishment because he attributes it to pure luck rather than talent or effort.

Rethinking how you assign events is one strategy for overcoming this cognitive distortion. Focus on recognizing how your own strengths, abilities, and efforts contributed to the outcome other than considering them to be random.

5. Jumping to Conclusions : There are two ways to draw conclusions quickly:

Reading minds:

When you think someone will act in a certain way or think they are thinking something they aren't.

Making predictions:

Predicting how things will play out, often to avoid trying difficult things. Jame, for instance, believes he can't live without heroin. He is unable to receive the treatment and support he needs to successfully recover from substance abuse due to these beliefs. To defeat this mental twisting, pause for a minute to consider current realities before you settle on a choice. Challenge your initial assumptions and ask questions.

6. Magnification :

Magnification is minimizing the significance of desirable characteristics while overstating the significance of flaws and issues. This cognitive distortion involves magnifying your negative qualities

while minimizing your positive ones, similar to mental filtering and discounting the positive.

For instance, you see bad things as "proof" of your own failures whenever they occur. You, on the other hand, minimize the significance of positive events. A person who is dependent on painkillers, for instance, might exaggerate how unbearable their pain is and emphasize how important it is to get rid of all pain.

7. Emotional Reasoning :

A method of evaluating oneself or one's circumstances based on one's feelings is known as emotional reasoning. This line of reasoning assumes that because you're feeling bad, it must accurately reflect the world around you. Emotional reasoning would lead you to believe that you are a bad person, for instance, if you are feeling guilty.

Denna, for instance, binged on food because she came to the conclusion through emotional reasoning that she was worthless.

Even though studies have shown that this distortion is common in people with anxiety and depression, it is actually a very common way of thinking that many people have. Cognitive behavioral therapy can help people understand that feelings are not facts and that emotional reasoning is a red flag.

8. "Should" Statements : "Should" statements involve constantly considering actions you believe you "should" or "must" take. It's possible for statements of this kind to make you feel worried or anxious. They can also make you feel guilty or like you failed. You end up feeling like you're always failing because you always think you "should" be doing something.

For instance: Cherry believes that she ought to be able to play a song flawlessly on her violin. She experiences anger and self-pity when she does make errors. She begins to avoid practicing her violin as a result.

9. Labeling :

A cognitive distortion known as labeling involves judging oneself or another as a person rather than viewing the behavior as something that does not define the individual.

For instance, you might, think of yourself as a failure. Other people can also be labeled. You might come to the conclusion that someone is a jerk because of one interaction, and then you might continue to evaluate them in all of their subsequent interactions through that lens, with no room for remorse.

By challenging the accuracy of the assumptions, one can combat labeling. Find evidence to refute the negative thoughts. Keep in mind the distinction between opinions and facts.

10. Personalization and Blame :

Personalization and blame is a cognitive distortion in which you completely blame yourself or someone else for a situation that actually involved many factors over which you had no control.

For instance, Ana faulted herself for her girl's awful grade in school. Anna believes that her daughter's difficulties are a sign that she is a bad mother and refuses to investigate causes and solutions.

Make a conscious effort to consider any additional factors that might have contributed to the situation when you engage in this cognitive distortion. Consider external factors or other people's actions that might have also been contributing factors rather than blaming yourself for something that happened.

1.2 Life Skills :

Skills that enable people to effectively deal with life's demands and obstacles are known as life skills. Because they are psychological in nature and include thinking and behavioral processes, they may also be referred to as psychosocial skills. The following are the fundamental life skills, according to UNICEF, UNESCO, and WHO, among other important organizations.

- I. Self awareness :** Self-awareness is paying conscious attention to oneself. One can engage in self-reflection or introspection to increase self-awareness. When we possess this life skill, we frequently find ourselves pondering the reasons behind our actions and behavior.
- II. Critical thinking :** Reflective thinking that focuses on deciding what to believe or do is what is meant by the term "critical thinking." It might involve organizing the facts, thinking about ideas, and weighing the arguments. In general, having this life skill means that we use disciplined thinking to make the best decisions possible and act in a way that makes the most sense given these decisions.

- III. Creative thinking :** Imagination includes the capacity to grasp an issue and furthermore to reclassify it, change contemplations, reevaluate data, and overlook existing limits to find new arrangements Inventive reasoning includes familiarity, creativity, and elaboration. The number of relevant ideas you can come up with is called your fluency. Initially is the quantity of interesting or rare thoughts you concoct. The number of new ideas you can add to build on existing ones is called "elaboration." Keeping an open mind, or "resistance to closure," may also be included in this life skill.
- IV. Decision making :** A person's ability to make decisions allows them to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of various options to determine the best one. A person can develop confidence, independence, affirmation, and responsibility to meet life's demands through decision-making skills. For the smooth operation of any life activities, constructive and positive decisions will be made. Students will only be able to make the best decisions for the benefit of themselves and others if they have been properly assessed, analyzed, and worked on the consequences of their actions.
- V. Problem solving :** A person can solve problems effectively and efficiently with the help of problem-solving life skills. Students are capable of resolving conflicts and can even facilitate the resolution of any issue. Students are able to overcome challenging situations in their daily lives thanks to their problem-solving abilities. Students' ability to solve problems increases their critical and creative thinking power.
- VI. Effective communication :** The act of revealing, unmasking, or fully explaining something is one definition of communication.
- VII. Interpersonal relationships :** We need a variety of social skills to have relationships that work and are healthy. These fundamental abilities could incorporate things like aversion to nonverbal signs, low apprehension about dismissal, and the capacity to effortlessly adjust while moving starting with one social circumstance then onto the next.
- VIII. Empathy :** The ability to empathize with another person is referred to as empathy. Empathy means putting yourself in another person's shoes, trying to see the world from their point of view, and experiencing their emotions.
- IX. Coping with stress :** Another kind of life skill is how to deal with our emotions, such as how tolerating distress and controlling our emotions. This is especially important for our well-being, but skills of this kind also have a big effect on how we get along with other people.

Being able to meet the challenges of daily life necessitates having life skills in an environment that is constantly shifting. Both the dramatic shifts in technology and the dramatic shifts in the economies of the world over the past few years are having an effect on education, the workplace, and everyday life. Young people's mental health and ability to deal with life's challenges are bolstered by life skills.

Cognitive Distortion and life skills :

Here in this study, the Researcher is mainly Interested to study the two core life skills, i.e : Decision making and problem solving correlating to cognitive distortion.

Cognitive distortion and Problem solving-

Cognitive distortions are simply ways in which a person's mind leads him to believe something that is not true. Cognitive distortions are negative thoughts and beliefs that affect an individual's perception of reality. These inaccurate thoughts are frequently used by individuals to reinforce negative thoughts or emotions (McGrath & Repetti, 2002) by telling themselves things that seem rational and accurate but actually only serve to keep them feeling bad about themselves. Depression-prone individuals, according to Nevid and Rathus (2005), tend to view the world through a darkened mental filter that skews or biases how they interpret life experiences. People who are anxious or depressed frequently have a negative attitude toward finding solutions to problems, which prevents them from putting their problem-solving skills into practice.

Cognitive distortion and Decision making-

An individual is not defined by circumstances. Human beings always have the ability to choose their attitude, regardless of the circumstances of their lives. So, how is it different from someone who stubs their toe and stays angry the rest of the day from someone who stays hopeful despite suffering a lot? The person's thought processes hold the answer. Cognitive distortions are irrational, exaggerated thoughts or beliefs that sway a person's perception of reality, typically in a negative way, according to psychologists. Cognitive distortions are common, but if you don't know what to look for, they can be hard to spot. Many of them come to mind automatically. They are so ingrained that the thinker frequently is unaware that they have the power to alter them. That comes to be accepted as normal by many.

A person's mental health can be seriously harmed by cognitive distortions, which can increase stress, depression, and anxiety. If you don't take action, these automatic thought patterns can become ingrained and have a negative impact on your ability to make decisions based on logic and reason.

Conclusion :

If allowed, cognitive distortion can have a devastating effect on one's life. When someone experiences an upsetting event in their life, such as a disagreement at work, an argument with a partner, or a poor academic performance, and thinks about it in a way that makes them feel bad and negative, cognitive distortion occurs. Even though some people might think that "feeling bad" is a necessary part of learning from our mistakes, many people end up stuck in a pattern of feeling bad about themselves that keeps happening and makes them feel worse. This may result in a self-fulfilling prophecy in subsequent interactions and lower self-esteem.

Two aspects of critical thinking are problem-solving and decision-making. They go hand in hand because it's hard to make a decision without solving a problem. and sometimes even the reverse. Cognitive distortions have the potential to have an impact on a person's capacity for decision-making and problem-solving because they can have a significant negative impact on mental health, resulting in increased levels of stress, depression, and anxiety.

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