Cognitive Distortions

COMMON THINKING TRAPS

All-or-Nothing Thinking
Seeing things in black-and-white categories with no middle ground.
"If I'm not perfect, I'm a total failure."

Catastrophizing
Expecting the worst possible outcome as if it's certain.
"This headache must be a brain tumor."

Mental Filter
Focusing only on negatives while filtering out all positives.
Dwelling on one criticism despite many compliments.

Jumping to Conclusions
Assuming you know what others think or predicting the future negatively.
"She didn't reply - she must hate me."

Emotional Reasoning
Believing something is true because it feels true.
"I feel stupid, so I must be stupid."

Should Statements
Rigid rules about how things "should" or "must" be.
"I should never make mistakes."

Labeling
Attaching a negative label to yourself or others based on one event.
"I'm such a loser" after one mistake.

Personalization
Taking responsibility for things outside your control.
"The meeting went badly - it must be my fault."

Overgeneralization
Drawing broad conclusions from a single event.
"I failed once, so I'll always fail."

Magnification/Minimization
Blowing negatives out of proportion while shrinking positives.
Magnifying a small error while dismissing a big success.

◌ HOW TO USE THIS

When you notice a strong emotion, pause and ask: "Which thinking trap am I falling into?" Naming the distortion is the first step to challenging it. Use this alongside the 7-Column Thought Record for deeper work.