AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION

NAME: _____

Seven Thinking Errors

Here is a list of common off the mark thinking errors. Use this handout to "catch your self-talk" and examine the evidence to get more realistic, on the mark thoughts. Put one checkmark next to the types of thinking habits you sometimes fall into, two checkmarks next to thinking habits that come up pretty often, and three checkmarks next to thinking habits that describe how your mind typically works.

_____ **All-or-Nothing Thinking**

Thinking in extremes. It's either right or wrong, perfect or a complete failure. For example, you missed a shot in the basketball game, and you feel you've failed.

_____ **Filtering**

Magnifying the negatives of a situation and minimizing the positives; thinking about the bad things that happened and not much about the good things. For example, the day in school goes fairly well overall, but one negative thing happens. When someone asks you how the school day went, your answer is "Terrible!"

_____ **Catastrophizing**

Expecting the worst to happen and that you won't be able to handle a situation. This type of thinking is a common cause of anxiety. We call these thoughts "What ifs?" For example, you think "What if I mess up on this writing assignment?" and automatically jump to the conclusion that you will fail and never be able to write well.

_____ **Personalization**

Thinking that everything people do or say is some kind of reaction to you. This involves not considering other reasons that could explain why someone is whispering or laughing or looking at you, for example.

_____ **Shoulds**

You have certain beliefs or expectations about how you and other people should act or how the world should work. For example, you think that there is only one way to play a game and believe that someone else should play the same game with the exact same rules. People who break the rules upset and may even anger you.

_____ **It's Not Fair!**

You assume things will happen a certain way and, when they don't, you feel like you've been mistreated. For example, your parents say it's time to clean up and go out with them when you'd rather not. Another example might be that a friend gets to go the movies, but your family has planned something else.

_____ **Blaming Others**

When bad things happen, you assume it's someone else's fault and react with anger or upset feelings. For example, someone said something mean to you and you hit them. You blame them for what they said and say it's the cause for your hitting them.

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