Exercise 10 - Cognitive Distortions

The following list of common cognitive distortions can help you to identify, label and pre-empt your own thinking process errors:

1 **Catastrophising:** Automatically assuming the worst possible outcome. ☐

2 **Polarised Thinking:** Viewing things in absolute or black and white terms. ☐

3 **Over-generalising:** Making sweeping inferences based on a single negative event. ☐

4 **Negative Filter:** Focusing on the negatives and ignoring or discounting the positives. ☐

5 **Jumping to Conclusions:** Drawing conclusions without checking the facts. ☐

6 **Mind-Reading:** Deciding what people are thinking and feeling without any real evidence. ☐

7 **Emotional Reasoning:** Interpreting feelings as factual judgments. ☐

8 **Musts / Shoulds:** Expressing wishes and preferences as rigid demands. ☐

9 **Labeling:** Using global labels to describe a person based on a single characteristic or situation. ☐

10 **Blaming:** Automatically attributing personal blame or responsibility to self or others. ☐

11 **Perfectionistic Thinking:** Demanding unhelpful standards of exactitude and viewing anything less than 100% as failure. ☐

12 **Comparing:** Devaluing self-worth by negative comparison with others. ☐

13 **Change Fallacy:** Assuming that things should always change to make us happy or suit our needs. ☐

14 **Control Fallacy** - Assuming we are powerless / victimised if we are not in control. ☐

15 **Fairness Fallacy** – Expecting everything to be measured in fairness and showing resentment when it doesn't work out. ☐

16 **Reward Fallacy** – Expecting sacrifice and self-denial to pay off and feeling bitterness when the reward doesn't happen. ☐

Make a note of the common thinking errors that apply to you, so that you can readily spot them when you are caught up in unhelpful thinking processes. The following section of the workbook completes our trip around the Cognitive Tritangle by looking at perspective taking and how we relate to our thoughts.