

# Common Thinking Traps

## Trap: Jumping to Conclusions

We predict what is going to happen, with little or no evidence. This can include thinking that you know what others are thinking (mind reading), without any evidence.

*I'm not going to the local new mom group because I won't fit in.*

Talking to other mothers will just highlight how little I know about being a mother.

## Trap: Worst-Case Scenario

We exaggerate how badly something will turn out and how we will be unable to cope.

*I can't stop comparing my son to other children his age. If I find that he is developing slower, I worry that he'll always be behind and won't be successful in life ... and I won't know how to help him.*

## Trap: It's All My Fault

We take on too much responsibility and believe that if we have any influence over a negative outcome then we are responsible for preventing it.

It must have been my fault that I ended up having an emergency C-section. There must have been SOMETHING I could have done to prevent it.

## Trap: Harsh Critic

We impose harsh rules or labels on ourselves or others about the way we SHOULD behave and/or feel.

*I SHOULD always be able to soothe my child right away when she is upset. I'm a bad mother for not being able to do so.*

## Trap: Black-and-White Thinking

We think in extreme (or all-or-nothing) terms and view things as either perfect or a complete disaster or failure.

*My son's birth was a horrible experience and I feel like a failure. I had an epidural even though I planned not to have one.*

## Trap: Confusing Thoughts with Actual Probability

We believe that thinking about a negative event or action actually increases the likelihood of it happening.

*I get horrific images of my child catching some disease and being very ill. This is a sign that it's likely to happen and I need to be extra careful about cleanliness.*

## Trap: Confusing Thoughts with Actions

We believe having the thought about doing something undesirable is the same as actually doing it.

*Whenever I feel frustrated with my daughter, I get scary thoughts about hurting her. What if these thoughts are trying to warn me that I could snap sometime and actually do it? I try to spend as little alone time with her as I can to make sure that I do not act on my thoughts.*

## Trap: If It "Feels" True, It Must Be True

We use emotional reasoning – using our feelings as evidence that our thoughts are really true, even when there is little or no concrete evidence to support them.

*I feel unsure of myself, therefore I must not know what I'm doing as a mother.*