

Distorted Thoughts: **Exaggerating**

Let's say your friend Tyler complains frequently about his parents. Today he told you that they are abusing him.

You talk to Tyler and he makes the following statements:

1. *"My parents are the worst ever. I know they hate me."*
2. *"My dad was yelling and screaming and completely out of control last night. I was sure the whole neighborhood could hear him."*

These statements could be true, or could be examples of **Exaggerating**: Everything is the best, or it is the worst. When this person shares a story it is hard to know what to believe or how to react.

- Do we know if what Tyler is saying is true? What else might you want to know to understand what is going on in Tyler's home?
- Why might Tyler's statements be examples of **distorted thoughts**??

Sometimes when we tell a story, we make things sound worse than they really are. What are some **reality statements** that Tyler could use to counter this distorted thought?

"My parents are the worst ever. I know they hate me."

- *"I understand why my parents get really frustrated when I make dumb decisions."*
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Think about a situation that you are in (or have been in) where you may have **Exaggerated** the story rather than stating the facts of the situation:

1. What were your feelings at that time? How did those feelings impact your thoughts?
2. What is an example of a thought you had in this situation where you **Exaggerated**?
3. Did this thought help you? In what way did it become a roadblock to feeling better, or fixing the problem?
4. What might be a positive thought or reality statement that you could use to replace the distorted thought that you had?

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