

Thinking Clearly

Being aware of our cognitive biases so that we can improve our decision-making and act fairly



Reference:

Buster Benson's categorisation in the "[Cognitive Bias Codex](#)" on Wikipedia (codex by John Manoogian III) showing almost 200 thinking errors we all tend to make

Not enough meaning

We tend to find stories and patterns even when looking at sparse data.
We fill in characteristics from stereotypes, generalities, and prior histories.
We imagine things and people we're familiar with or fond of as better.
We simplify probabilities and numbers to make them easier to think about.
We think we know what other people are thinking.
We project our current mindset and assumptions onto the past and future.

eg Stereotyping, Bandwagon effect, Affinity/in-group bias, Halo effect

What we remember

We store memories differently based on how they were experienced.
We reduce events and lists to their key elements.
We discard specifics to form generalities.
We edit and reinforce some memories after the fact.

eg Prejudice, Peak-end rule, False memory

Too much information

We notice things already primed in memory or repeated often.
We remember bizarre, funny, visually striking, or anthropomorphic things.
We notice when something has changed.
We are drawn to details that confirm our own existing beliefs.
We notice flaws in others more easily.

eg Confirmation bias, Blind spot bias, Availability heuristic, Humour effect

Need to act fast

We favor simple-looking options and apparently complete information.
To avoid mistakes, we aim to preserve autonomy and group status.
We tend to complete what we've invested in.
We favor things in front of us.
We want to feel confident and important.

eg Status quo bias, Sunk cost fallacy, Self-serving bias, Egocentric bias