Overview of Common Errors in Fast Thinking

These are powerful, common distortions in the way we perceive reality based on unconscious processes, leading to predictable mistakes in perceptions we have and decisions we make. **Decision making competence includes understanding, recognizing, and overriding these fast-thinking errors.** *Here are some of the most common:*

1) **Framing Error**: Drawing different conclusions based on how information is presented—what "frame" it is presented in affects what we see. --"Frame" narrows our focus, --lean on context much more than we realize.

2) **Anchoring Error**: If we start with an initial position or value, we then adjust from there—and have the tendency to be biased toward the initial value. --Rely too heavily on (anchor to) one trait or piece of information; --adjustments (from starting point) typically are insufficient

3) **Availability Bias**: Tendency to base projections of probability/plausibility on how easily an example comes to mind. --Instances of large classes usually recalled better & faster, --BUT: biased toward vivid or emotionally charged examples, over-reported incidents, and recency of example, so we'll think something is much more likely than it is.

4) **Confirmation Error**: Tendency to look for information that supports what we already believe and filter out disconfirming information. We search for, positively interpret, and put more weight on information that confirms our preconceptions. --Selective search and rationalization; can be a reflex-like rejection of contradictory evidence.

5) **Overconfidence Error**: People's confidence in their judgments and knowledge typically is higher than the actual accuracy of them … and we tend to think confidence equates with accuracy. --Those who jump to a decision early are the most confident but often are not the most accurate. --Confirmation Error contributes to this as well

6) **Attribution Error/ Pro-Self Bias/ Above Average Effect**: Tendency to over-estimate internal (personality) factors & underestimate external (situational) factors when explaining the behavior of others, but do the opposite for ourselves. --For *others*: state/situational/ external factors responsible when successful ("Good luck") vs trait/personality/internal factors for lack of success ("Lazy"). --For *ourselves*: Personality/internal factors responsible for our success ("I'm smart") vs external factors when not successful ("Bad luck").

7) **Affect Error and Halo Effect:** Tendency to judge people, objects, or events by an immediate feeling of goodness/badness; halo effect; + develop preferences because familiar

8) **Familiarity Principle/In-Group Bias:** Develop preferences for people or things merely because we're familiar with them; unfamiliar more likely deemed "bad" or "wrong." /Favoring our own group because it feels "right."

9) **Representativeness Error**: Probabilities evaluated by the degree one thing resembles the model of a certain category. (Can be complex, but training can greatly reduce this error.) Errors come through not considering: the true nature of chance, the sample size, whether the feature is actually predictive, other-factors that limit predictive validity (base rate, etc.)

10) **Loss Aversion / Negativity Bias:** Tendency to find losses more painful than gains are pleasant / negatives have a greater impact. --When consider a loss: prone to take risks to avoid it; when consider gains: more conservative. Framing error contributes (loss vs gain)

AND … ~ **Blind Spot Bias:** Seeing oneself as less susceptible to cognitive biases than other people. Connects to pro-self bias, but worth calling out separately since it is so common.