

OCD & me





You can write your own notes or ideas here



Phone to help you get support



You can visit this place



You will need access to the internet



You can send an e-mail

This a booklet to explain what OCD is, how it might impact you and different ideas of things that may help.

What is OCD?

OCD stands for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. It is an anxiety disorder and includes obsessions and/or compulsions. An anxiety disorder is when a person is excessively worried or frightened of something. Anxiety disorders can include a range of different type of things. It might be about a specific thing (a phobia), it might be about fear about a range of different things and situations (generalised anxiety disorder) or perhaps in social situations (social anxiety)

Obsessions

Recurrent and persistent thoughts, urges or images. At some point they will be intrusive or unwanted and in most people cause anxiety or distress.

You try to ignore, make the thoughts, urges, or images, go away or to reduce them with some thought or action (i.e., by performing a compulsion).

Compulsions

Repetitive behaviors (e.g., hand washing, ordering checking) or mental acts (e.g., praying, counting, repeating words silently) that you feels you have to do in response to the obsession or a rule.

The behaviors or mental acts are aimed at preventing or reducing distress or preventing some dreaded event or situation.

These behaviors or mental acts are not connected in a realistic way with what they are designed to neutralize or prevent or are excessive



OCD facts

How many people have OCD?

We can't be exactly sure how many people in the UK have OCD but estimates suggest 1 in 50 people



What other similar conditions are there?

- Trichotillomania - pulling out hair compulsively
- Tourette's syndrome - motor and vocal tics. Many of those with Tourette's syndrome also have OCD
- Body dysmorphia - excessive worried about what perceived flaws in appearance
- Dermatillomania - picking at skin compulsively

When do symptoms normally start?

Normally in adolescence or younger adults

Different examples

People's thoughts are very different and in the same way people's obsessions and their compulsions can be incredibly varied. Some people might have only internal compulsions (for example counting in their head, or retelling a story until it has a positive ending) whilst others might have to touch or count things and people can see them do it.

Some people might have "magical thinking". Magical thinking is where the intrusive thoughts and compulsive behaviors are based around superstition or magical thinking to prevent negative experiences or harm to oneself or others. Others may hoard things, be very concerned about contamination or things being symmetrical. We have collected some examples of different intrusive thoughts and compulsive behaviours to show you how varied they are.

I am worried that if I didn't put three x's at the end of messages that my friends would die.

I was obsessed with people being able to smell me. I'd have a shower, then another shower, then another. I would constantly be late for school

I have to sit by the door in the classroom. If I don't then I know that something terribly will happen to my mum. This is my way of stopping it.



If my work isn't perfect I have to rewrite over the same words over and over again until it is. This means that my pen goes through the paper and you can't see what I've written anyway. It is much better for me to use a computer

If I leave the house at increments of five minutes, I won't have an accident. If I'm late then I have to wait until the right time.

Assessing and treating OCD

In the United Kingdom, treatment for OCD is governed by National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) guidelines. NICE guidelines are recommendations that is based on evidence from professionals and non professionals about what is helpful to treat a person for a wide range of physical and mental health conditions.

One of the the first things is to find out whether or not a person has OCD or if the symptoms can be better explained by something else. You might be asked different questions to find out more about your thinking, why you are worried about things and some of the things you might do to stop worrying. This is part of an assessment to find out more about what is happening for you.

NICE guidelines say that the main psychological treatment for OCD is Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). CBT is based on the premise that the way we feel is affected by our thinking (cognition) and this affects how we behave. CBT attempts to try and break the thinking and behaviour so we can understand it better.

Exposure and Response Therapy (ERP) can be part of wider CBT and the idea is that we are exposed to the thing that worries us (for example being late for something, dirt or cooking) and then look at different ways to manage that fear. For some people with 'mental rituals' such as counting, or replaying events, it might be reducing the number by which you count or to try and not play back the whole story.

Medication might also be used to help someone alongside psychological support. The medication is from a group of medication called SSRIs.

What are SSRIs?

SSRI stands for Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors. Serotonin is a chemical which carries signals between nerve cells in the brain. Serotonin is meant to have a positive effect on a person's mood, their emotions as well as their sleep. Serotonin is normally reabsorbed by nerve cells. This is called reuptake.

How do SSRIs work?

We think that SSRI's work by preventing the reuptake (inhibiting) which means there will be more serotonin available.

An increase in the available serotonin levels can help improve symptoms and make someone more able to do things such as CBT

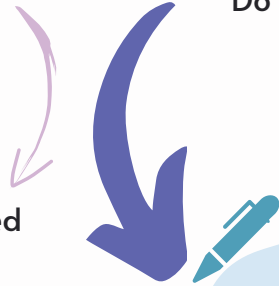
Talking about OCD with others

You might have different feelings about OCD and its symptoms.

You might feel:

Do any of these feelings relate to you?

- Embarrassed
- Worried
- Angry
- Silly
- Lonely
- Isolated



You may not feel any of these things! Or have some of the feelings some of the time but at other times not feeling them at all. However, however you feel will have an affect on how you talk (if you talk at all) about OCD with others.

In the back of this book we have put a diary that you can complete where you can write/draw how you feel about the OCD so you can see if it changes over time.

Explaining OCD to others can be really difficult as well, you might feel like you should explain because it is interrupting how you organise yourself in class or getting to school in the morning, or as a way of explaining what you might have to do to alleviate some of the thoughts.

On the following page we have provided a template that might help you in explaining how OCD affects you and what teachers or other adults might be able to do to understand or consider to make things easier for you.

What others have found helpful for OCD at school

OCD can affect attendance, concentration and performance at school. This is because it might:

- Change your routines
- Make your routines longer in the morning or between classes
- interrupt classroom time
- Make it hard to concentrate

Can you think of ways that OCD impacts upon you at school?



Here are some ideas of things that other people have felt has been helpful for them at school. Read what has been written and think if they might help you. You can use a traffic light system of red, amber, green.

This won't work for me and I don't want to try it

I don't know if this will work but would like to try

I think this would work and would like to start using it



I rewrite my work, over and over the letters. My school gave me a laptop that I used in class. That was loads easier for me as meant I just used delete

I just need extra time for finishing things but especially for exams and tests!

Concentrating is hard. I have loads of things happening in my head. The teacher used to tell me off for not listening, but now she gives me a little sheet which explains the key topic and what she wants me to do. So even I find I can't concentrate, I know what I have to do.

In the mornings I would have to do certain things before I could leave. If I was stopped, I'd start again. Getting late to school was stressful. My school helped by not having a fixed start time and I wasn't told off or given a detention. They would just say 'hello' and make sure I got to the right class.





Talking about OCD with others

I am worried about...

To help me stop or reduce this worry I...

When I can't do this I feel...

This means that...


You can help me by...

Where can I get help?

Help can feel really difficult to ask for, and sometimes, to get. There are different organisations that might help or there might be people that you know that you find supportive. These could be family, friends and/or professionals. We have written a list of organisations that you might want to find out more about to see if they can support you when you are finding things difficult. We have not assumed that you have certain support at home or at school as we know things can be varied.

One important thing to say is that having OCD can feel really lonely. It can feel like you are stuck in your thoughts and have no one to talk to or rely on. Sometimes the thoughts can make it difficult to ask for help in the first place. We hope that when you feel able to you can add to this list and make your own personal support network.



School	Home	Community	Online 
		G.P	https://ocdaction.org.uk
		CAMHS	www.youngminds.org.uk
			www.kooth.com/

I urgently need help



There might be times when you don't feel safe. This might be that you are worried about yourself or others around you. There are different places where you can get help and this is to help you plan with someone you trust where you can get help if you are worried and if you need urgent help.

Who?	When?	How?
  Emergency services	24/7	Ring 999 Visit Accident and Emergency (A&E)

How I feel



IDEAS TO KEEP NOTES

You can choose how you want to write down how you feel. You might want to write a letter to represent your feelings (for example A for anger), or perhaps a smiley :(for sad etc or numbers between 1-10 where 1 represents feelings on a scale.

YOU CAN WRITE YOUR CODE HERE TO REMIND YOURSELF

MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT	SUN



My own notes





A series of horizontal blue lines spanning the width of the page, providing a template for writing.

Books of interest

