

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE (OCD) DISORDER

WHAT IS OCD?

Some people are bothered by intrusive thoughts or pictures that come into their minds repeatedly, e.g. a fear of germs or doubts about having locked the door. These are called obsessions. They happen even though you don't want them to, and they often don't seem to make any sense. They are really difficult to get rid of no matter how hard you try.

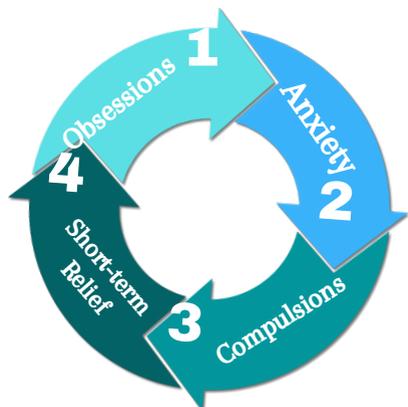
Some people with OCD feel they have to wash even though they know they are clean. Other people check things again and again, even though they have already been checked, for example doors or switches. These kinds of behaviours are called compulsions. Compulsions are behaviours that you feel you have to do, even though they don't make sense and you don't want to do them. You might feel very upset or worried until you have done them.

Obsessional problems can make people feel really bad. Some people feel worried, some people feel sad or depressed, and some people just feel that things are not right. Obsessional problems can get so bad that people don't have time to do anything else. They spend all their time worrying or checking things or washing or doing some other kind of obsessional behaviour. This can get in the way of school work, friendships, hobbies or almost anything else.



WHAT KEEPS OCD GOING?

Nearly everyone experiences intrusive thoughts from time to time, but someone with OCD will experience them more often and the thoughts will lead to strong feelings of anxiety. To reduce the anxiety, the person engages in compulsions which provides short-term relief, but does not stop the distressing thoughts (obsessions) and a vicious cycle begins. Without support, the OCD symptoms become more distressing and the cycle becomes harder to break out of.



HOW TO HELP OCD

WHEN DOES IT BECOME A PROBLEM?

Some mild symptoms of OCD can be considered as normal, and are also symptoms of mild anxiety which can be self-managed, such as unwanted thoughts and doubts. OCD can be considered a concern when symptoms are present for 1 hour or more a day, and they have a significant impact on a person's wellbeing, relationships, ability to socialise with friends or family, and engagement in education. Over time, if OCD is unmanaged, then symptoms can become worse, and they can also be exacerbated by stressful life events.

WHAT CAN I DO ABOUT IT?

1 Work on reducing your overall levels of stress and anxiety. Get good quality sleep, eat a balanced diet, exercise, do things that you enjoy, have a rest from time to time, socialise, practice mindfulness.

2 Noticing triggers and how you respond to them helps you to understand your difficulties, and notice when they are making you feel worse. Knowing that your behaviours increase your anxiety rather than reducing it, is the first step to overcoming OCD.

3 Thoughts aren't facts. We all have intrusive thoughts, and they are rarely facts. Reminding yourself of this may help you to accept them and let them go, instead of responding to them.

4 Speaking to a trusted adult can help you and them to understand your difficulties, and it also informs someone that you trust about what you are experiencing which can create a sense of safety for you. They can also help you to seek professional support if you feel that you need it.

WHERE CAN I FIND MORE SUPPORT?

USEFUL WEBSITES:

www.YoungMinds.co.uk
www.TheMix.org.uk
www.Kooth.com

USEFUL APPS:



Chill Panda



What's Up



Kooth (website)



Think Ninja



IF YOU FEEL LIKE YOU ARE UNABLE TO MANAGE SYMPTOMS OF OCD, SPEAK TO A TRUSTED ADULT AT SCHOOL ABOUT BEING SUPPORTED BY THE MENTAL HEALTH IN SCHOOLS TEAM.