

Obsessions and Compulsions.....OCD

Obsessions:

- Thoughts, images, or impulses that occur over and over again and feel out of the person's control.
- The person does not want to have these ideas.
- He or she finds them disturbing and unwanted, and usually know that they don't make sense.
- They come with uncomfortable feelings, such as fear, disgust, doubt, or a feeling that things have to be done in a way that is "just right."
- They take a lot of time and get in the way of important activities the person values.

What Obsessions Are Not:

- It is normal to have occasional thoughts about getting sick or about the safety of loved ones.

Compulsions

- Repetitive behaviours or thoughts that a person engages in to neutralize, counteract, or make their obsessions go away.
- People with OCD realize this is only a temporary solution, but without a better way to cope, they rely on the compulsion as a temporary escape.
- Compulsions can also include avoiding situations that trigger obsessions.
- Compulsions are time consuming and get in the way of important activities the person values.

What Compulsions Are Not:

- Not all repetitive behaviours or “rituals” are compulsions. For example, bedtime routines, religious practices, and learning a new skill involve repeating an activity over and over again, but are a welcome part of daily life.
- Behaviours depend on the context: arranging and ordering DVDs for 8 hours a day isn’t a compulsion if the person works in a video store.

Common Obsessions in OCD*

Contamination

- Body fluids (examples: urine, feces)
- Germ/disease (examples: herpes, HIV)
- Environmental contaminants (examples: Asbestos, radiation)
- Household chemicals (examples: cleaners, solvents)
- Dirt

Unwanted Sexual Thoughts

- Forbidden or perverse Sexual thoughts or images
- Forbidden or perverse sexual Impulses about others
- Obsessions about homosexuality
- Sexual obsessions that involve Children or incest
- Obsessions about aggressive sexual behaviour towards others

Losing Control

- Fear of acting on an impulse to harm oneself
- Fear of acting on an impulse to harm others
- Fear of violent or horrific images in one’s mind
- Fear of blurting out obscenities or insults
- Fear of stealing things

Religious Obsessions (Scrupulosity)

- Concern with offending God, or concern about blasphemy.
- Excessive concern with right/wrong or morality.

Harm

- Fear of being responsible for something terrible happening (examples: fire, burglary)
- Fear of harming others because of not being careful enough (example: dropping something on the ground that might cause someone to slip and hurt him/herself)

Other Obsessions

- Concern with getting a physical illness or disease (not by contamination e.g., cancer)
- Superstitious ideas about lucky/unlucky numbers, certain colours.

Obsessions Related to Perfectionism

- Concern about evenness or exactness
- Concern with a need to know or remember
- Fear of losing or forgetting important information when throwing something out
- Inability to decide whether to keep or to discard things
- Fear of losing things

Common Compulsions in OCD*

Washing and Cleaning

- Washing hands excessively or in a certain way
- Excessive showering, bathing, tooth brushing, grooming or toilet routines
- Cleaning household items or other objects excessively
- Doing other things to prevent or remove contact with contaminants

Mental Compulsions

- Mental review of events to prevent harm (to oneself, others, to prevent terrible consequences)
- Praying to prevent harm (to oneself, others, to prevent harm (to oneself, others, to prevent terrible consequences)
- Counting while performing a task to end on a “good”, “right”, or “safe” number
- “Cancelling” or “undoing” (example:

	replacing a “bad” word with a “good” word to cancel it out
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Checking

Other Compulsions

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