

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Not just even numbers and organisation

What is OCD?

What people often think it is...

- Only liking even numbers
- Washing your hands a lot
- Keeping a tidy desk
- Being super organised

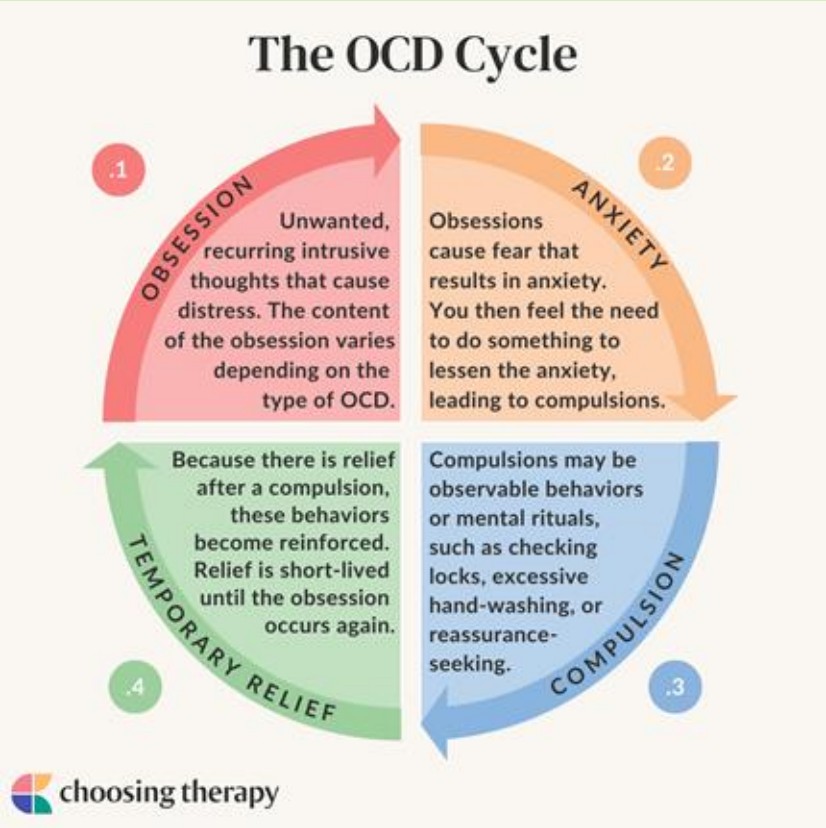
These can be compulsions that arise from having OCD, however these are not the root issue or the extent of how the condition affects people

What it actually is...

- OCD is a mental health condition characterized by unwanted, intrusive thoughts (obsessions)
- The need to complete repetitive, time-consuming behaviors or rituals (compulsions), which are performed to temporarily relieve the obsession

This cycle can cause the affected person anxiety and extreme discomfort and severely disrupt daily life

The OCD Cycle



Trivialisation

You have probably heard (or said yourself) one of the following phrases said casually before:

- "I had to do that **because of my OCD**"
- "**I'm a little bit OCD** like that"
- "I **wish I had OCD**, my house would be so **clean and tidy**"

It's okay if you've said this before, but these statements can have a big impact on someone suffering and cause hidden disruption/turmoil

Please think before you make a statement like this, and ask yourself...

"**Would I claim to have, or say something this trivial about other mental health conditions?**"

Example video

WARNING: The linked video is intense and dramatic from start to finish, and depicts someone in OCD crisis. It may be triggering, or difficult to watch.

If you decide to watch it, please ensure that you allow yourself time after to decompress. Remember that you can pause, or stop watching, at any time.

If you need to talk about it afterwards, we are here to support you, so please don’t hesitate to send a private message


NASHVILLE
FILMQUEST
O.C.D.
obsession. coercion. desire.

A lot just happened, let's summarise it...

- Owen's obsession is to re-organize the freezer and make things "right"
- After resisting the urge to organize the freezer, the OCD voice (Steven Ogg) appears to repeatedly question the decision (this voice will not go away)
- Owen's brain starts to race/spiral, creating increasingly ridiculous scenarios as a direct result of things not being "right"
    - He has a false memory regarding an offensive photograph that he never took
        - He knows this photo doesn't exist, yet he can't trust his own memory
        - This distress then spreads to the thought that everyone has seen this somehow, and they hate him and want to hurt him because of it
    - He starts to believe that his partner and home are in danger, and even believes that his partner has died
    - He believes that armed robbers have stormed the store, and, recognizing him from the offensive photograph (which doesn't exist), want to kill him

Getting help

Diagnosis (spotting the signs)

OCD symptoms can start at any age, and can be triggered by specific events or infections:

- OCD most commonly starts between the ages of 10 and 21
- Signs can be spotted in children as young as 6
  - Children may not be able to understand that their behaviour or rituals are a result of OCD
  - It's important for parents and teachers to help spot these signs and seek help
- It often develops slightly later in females
- OCD can also begin or worsen during pregnancy or postpartum
- Usually symptoms would not develop after the age of 35, but can in rare cases

Diagnosis (where to start)

There are a few options for obtaining a diagnosis if you believe that you, or a dependant may suffer with the condition:

- Speak to your GP
  - Not all GPs are equipped for this type of diagnosis/treatment and may refer / ask you to refer yourself (see below)
- Refer yourself to your local NHS Talking Therapy
  - These services will often not be able to diagnose officially, but can confirm symptoms and arrange support
- Seek private diagnosis from a licensed Psychiatrist
  - A psychiatrist will be able to officially diagnose the condition

Diagnosis (how)

Depending on the route you take, diagnosis may vary, common factors would include:

- Having a pre-assessment with a trained mental health practitioner
  - This will usually be an informal chat to discuss symptoms and confirm that this fits OCD criteria
- Completing some pre-assessment evaluations/tests (see next slide)
- Having a formal discussion with a licensed psychiatrist (or similar)
  - This person will use a combination of assessments and your lived experience to diagnose

OCI & OCI-R Tests

The most common OCD-specific test seen in the UK is the Obsessive Compulsive Inventory (OCI) or OCI-R (shorter version)

- This is a set of 42 (or 18 for the OCI-R) questions which are scored on a scale of 0-4
- The results usually give an overall score (likelihood of having OCD and the severity) as well as a breakdown per category (to help identify themes)

If you'd like to take an online OCI-R test, you can find one here

Support and management

OCD cannot be cured, but can be managed for the duration of a person's life, the most common management techniques:

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT)
  - Low-intensity therapy designed to help target obsessions / triggers and teach individuals the techniques to manage these on a daily basis
- Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) therapy
  - A more intense type of CBT therapy that aims to treat obsessions by exposing the individual to them, and building comfort / relief over time
- Medication
  - SSRIs (also used for depression) are the most common medication provided to help manage OCD, usually as a short-term measure

Contacts / useful links

- NHS (OCD)
- OCD-UK (charity)
- OCD Action (charity)
- Online OCI-R test (18 questions)
- Interview with Tuppence Middleton (This Morning)

Recommended Books:

- Because We Are Bad: OCD and a Girl Lost in Thought **– Lily Bailey**
- When I See Blue: An Inspiring Story of OCD, Friendship and Bravery **– Lily Bailey**
- Scorpions, A memoir **– Tuppence Middleton**
- The Man Who Couldn't Stop **– David Adam**