

Condition:



Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

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What is Obsessive Compulsive Disorder?

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a common mental health condition in which you experience obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours.

Obsessions are unwelcome thoughts, images, urges, worries or doubts that repeatedly appear in your mind. They can make you feel very anxious (although some people describe it as 'mental discomfort' rather than anxiety).

Compulsions are repetitive activities that you do to reduce the anxiety caused by the obsession. It could be something like repeatedly checking a door is locked, washing your hands, repeating a specific phrase in your head or checking how your body feels.

It affects men, women and children, and can develop at any age but typically develops during early adulthood.

OCD can be distressing and significantly impact on your life but treatments and learning self management techniques can help you keep it under control.

Reference



Click here to watch this video about OCD
Video (link opens in new window)

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and work

Managing OCD and work may not be easy at times but there are some basic things you can do to ensure you are in the best position to cope during each day.

Firstly take care of yourself; this is important. It may sound simplistic but getting enough sleep and maintaining a healthy diet can go a long way to ensure your stress levels are manageable, making it easier to relax which helps regulate the OCD.

If you find you are struggling with certain tasks, talk to a colleague or ask for support from your manager if you are feeling overwhelmed. Please make an appointment with your GP and talk to them about how you are feeling.

Top tips to help manage your Obsessive Compulsive Disorder in the workplace

- **If you are on medication**, ensure you continue to take it in order to keep your OCD manageable.
- **Tell someone** you can trust at work about your OCD. It can be comforting knowing that someone knows.
- **Ask for help** if you need it. Be realistic in what you can do.
- **Take regular breaks**. Make sure you take your lunch and maybe go for a walk. It will help with escaping some of your compulsive behaviours.
- **Do not take your work home**. Try to leave it at the door and do not check emails or your phone out of hours.
- **Plan your annual leave**. A proper break will help you care for yourself allowing quality time with friends and family or for relaxing.

How do I know if I have Obsessive Compulsive Disorder?

If you have OCD you will usually experience frequent obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours which if not acted upon cause significant anxiety.

What it feels like

An obsession is an unwanted and unpleasant thought, image or urge that repeatedly enters your mind, causing feelings of anxiety, disgust or unease.

A compulsion is a repetitive behaviour or mental act that you feel you the need to carry out to try to temporarily relieve the unpleasant feelings brought on by the obsessive thought.

It is possible to just have obsessive thoughts or just have compulsions, but most people with OCD will experience both.

For example, someone with an obsessive fear of their house being burgled may feel the need to check all of the windows and doors are locked several times before they leave the house. Or an obsessive thought may be fear of harming yourself or others by mistake. For example: setting your house on fire by leaving the cooker on.

Not all compulsive behaviours will be obvious to other people therefore it is possible to hide the impacts of OCD.

What causes Obsessive Compulsive Disorder?

It is not clear exactly what causes OCD. A number of different factors may play a role in the condition.

These include:

- **Family history** – you are more likely to develop OCD if a family member has it, possibly because of your genes.
- **Differences in the brain** – some people with OCD have areas of unusually high activity in their brain or low levels of a chemical called serotonin.
- **Life events** – OCD may be more common in people who have experienced bullying, abuse or neglect and it sometimes starts after an important life event, such as childbirth or bereavement.
- **Personality** – neat, meticulous, methodical people with high personal standards may be more likely to develop OCD, as may those who are generally quite anxious or have a very strong sense of responsibility for themselves and others.

Talking to your GP or another health care provider about your Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Sometimes it can be difficult talking to your GP or another health professional. It is normal to get a little nervous talking about your feelings. It may be worth writing a few things down before you go to the appointment describing the symptoms and how they are making you feel and affecting you.

How is it diagnosed?

Although Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is accepted as an illness with biological roots, it cannot be diagnosed using a blood sample, X-ray or other medical tests. A mental health professional such as a psychiatrist, psychologist or family doctor or nurse with special training will usually make a diagnosis of OCD using their medical judgment and experience.

Treatments for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Medication

Antidepressants, such as Fluoxetine or Clomipramine.

Talking therapy

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT) is a talking therapy that can help you manage your problems by changing the way you think and behave.

Counselling and support groups

You will be invited to participate in a therapy group with others experiencing Obsessive Compulsive Disorder.

Managing your Obsessive Compulsive Disorder



Connect

Talk to someone you trust about your OCD.



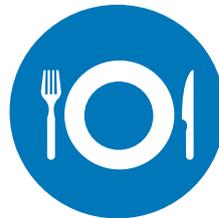
Sleep

Try to get enough sleep. Sleep can give you the energy to cope with difficult feelings and experiences.



Manage your stress

Your OCD can get worse if you are stressed and anxious. Try some relaxation techniques. Relaxation can help you look after your wellbeing when you are feeling stressed, anxious or busy.



Healthy Eating

Think about your diet. Eating regularly and keeping your blood sugar stable can make a difference to your mood and energy levels.



Take Notice

Be mindful of your surroundings. Take notice of what is happening now. Are constant negative thoughts helpful? Try mindfulness. Mindfulness can help you manage unwanted thoughts and reduce stress and anxiety. It can be helpful as part of recovery from OCD.



Be Active

Try and take some exercise. Exercise can be really helpful for your mental wellbeing. This could be a walk around the block or getting your old bike back out.

Useful links

Reference



Click here to visit OCD Action.

Website (link opens in new window)

Reference



Click here to visit OCD-UK.

Website (link opens in new window)

Reference



Click here to visit TOP UK.

Website (link opens in new window)

Helplines

The **OCD Action Helpline** and Email Service is a confidential and unbiased service offering help, information and support for people with OCD, carers and anyone who is concerned that they, or their friends or relatives, may have OCD.

0845 390 6232
or 020 7253 2664

No Panic

A voluntary charity offering support for sufferers of panic attacks and OCD. Offers a course to help overcome your phobia/OCD.

0844 967 4848
(daily, 10am-10pm)
www.nopanic.org.uk