



OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER

Sutton

What is Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)?

OCD has two main features: experiencing frequent, disturbing, unwanted thoughts that result in fears and anxiety (obsessions); and carrying out rituals in response to fears caused by the obsessions (compulsions – see symptom box). In some cases, a person may have only obsessional thoughts without showing compulsive behaviour or visa versa.

Most people have occasional unwanted thoughts that only stay in their mind for a few moments. This is normal, even though the thoughts are upsetting or strange to the person that thought them. But some people find that these thoughts are with them for long periods of time and they cannot get rid of them.

Obsessive compulsive disorder is a common mental health condition that affects approximately 2% of the population. The severity of OCD varies between people and the impact of OCD on their everyday life will differ, but each person's distress is very real.

People with OCD may try to fight these anxiety-provoking unwanted thoughts with mental or physical rituals - the compulsions. Carrying out the rituals can make them feel slightly better, but this is only temporary because when the obsessional thought comes back the whole ritual starts again.

Most people with OCD know that their thoughts and behaviour are irrational and senseless, but feel incapable of stopping them. People with OCD may experience feelings of embarrassment, guilt and even shame, often impacting on their self-esteem and relationships with others and may lead to depression.

Treatment for OCD

Treatment for OCD may involve a variety of different approaches, including psychological therapy, medication and self-help.

If your GP thinks you have OCD, they may prescribe medication and/ or refer you to the Psychological Therapies in Primary Care service (PTiPC) in Sutton. This service provides guided self-help, group therapy and some individual Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT). You can find out more information about talking therapies in the websites and books listed overleaf.

If the OCD persists after being seen by PTiPC and receiving a course of medication you may be referred to the Community Mental Health Team (CMHT). The CMHT provides specialist mental health services and will provide a care package which may include medication management, psychological therapy and social support. The CMHT may refer you to other services within the Trust that specialise in particular therapies.

Symptoms of OCD

A person with OCD has obsessions, compulsions or both. There are many types of obsessions and compulsions. Below are some common examples of obsessions and compulsions

Obsessions

- Unwanted thoughts, often of a disturbing nature e.g. sexual or violent urges,
- Feeling the need to confess to something,
- Fear of making mistakes or behaving in an inappropriate way,
- Fear about causing harm to other people,
- Needing everything to be perfect.

Compulsions

- Fear of contamination and germs, leading to constant cleaning,
- Repeatedly checking things, such as doors and locks,
- Counting, while performing routine tasks,
- Needing to do things a certain number of times or in a certain order,
- Touching or arranging items in careful and neat order,
- Hoarding objects, usually of no value
- Repeating numbers, words, phrases, prayers or a particular song

Physical Symptoms of OCD are similar to panic attacks, including:

- Sweating,
- Racing heart,
- Dizziness,
- Shortness of breath, and
- Trembling or shaking

A diagnosis should only be made by a mental health specialist.



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Useful sources of information and support in Sutton

There is a lot of information about mental health available on the Internet and in books. Occasionally these are not from reliable sources and may provide mis-information. While service users and mental health professionals have recommended these websites, books and services, we cannot guarantee their quality nor can we take responsibility for the impact that the resources and services will have on you. The websites and books listed here are not an exhaustive list.

Websites

- www.ocdaction.org.uk/ocdaction/index.asp
- www.ocduk.org
- www.mind.org.uk/Information/Booklets/Understanding/Understanding+obsessive-compulsive+disorder.htm
- www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk/articles/article.aspx?articleId=266§ionId=23130
- www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinformation/mentalhealthproblems/obsessivecompulsivedisorder/obsessivecompulsivedisorder.aspx
- www.nopanic.org.uk/menu.htm
- www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mentalhealthinformation/therapies/cognitivebehaviouraltherapy.aspx

Books

- Overcoming Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder by D. Veale and R. Willson **ISBN:** 1841199362
- The OCD Workbook: Your Guide to Breaking Free from Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder by C. Pedrick and B. Hyman **ISBN:** 1572244224
- Free Yourself from Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder by B. Lock **ISBN:** 0060987111

Private Therapy

If you are interested in seeking private therapy it is recommended that you find a therapist through one of these professional bodies:

British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies www.babcp.com

British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy
www.bacp.co.uk/seeking_therapist/index.html

British Psychological Society
www.bps.org.uk/e-services/find-a-psychologist/psychoindex.cfm

Other Useful Numbers

SaneLine: 0845 767 8000 (Monday- Sunday 1-11pm)

Samaritans: 08457 90 90 90 (everyday, 24 hours)

NHS Direct: 0845 46467 (every day, 24 hours)

Mental Health Helpline: 0500 639 000

There are other voluntary services in Sutton that may be useful but not directly linked to OCD, please ask your GP for more information.