

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

Condition:

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a form of anxiety disorder. There are many different types of anxiety disorder, some are covered elsewhere in this series.

Young people may be given a diagnosis of OCD if their anxiety issues involve having repetitive thoughts, behaviours or urges. Contrary to popular myth, we are not “all a bit OCD” if we like things tidy or clean; it is a specific and sometimes debilitating condition.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) has two main parts: obsessions and compulsions:

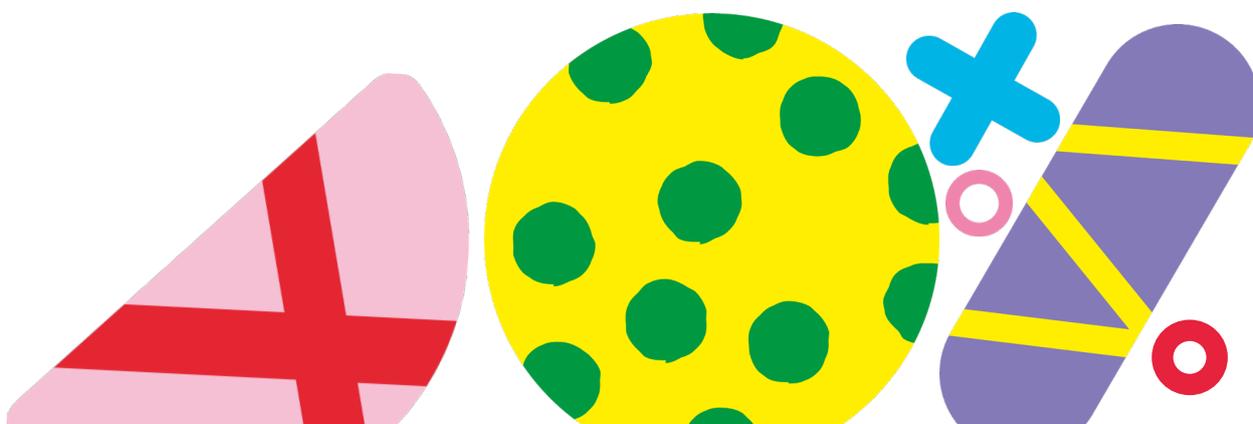
- Obsessions are unwelcome thoughts, images, urges, worries, or doubts that repeatedly appear in a person’s mind. They can make them feel very anxious (although some people describe it as ‘mental discomfort’ rather than anxiety).
- Compulsions are repetitive activities that people do to reduce the anxiety caused by the obsession. It could be something like repeatedly checking a door is locked, repeating a specific phrase in their head, or checking how their body feels.

Problem Areas:

Some people with OCD might find that their obsessions and compulsions are manageable, and at other times they may make day-to-day life really difficult. They may be more severe when they are stressed about other things, like life changes, health, money, school, exams, work, or relationships.

If a young person experiences OCD, it’s likely that their obsessions and compulsions will have a big impact on how they live their life:

- Disruption to day-to-day life: Repeating compulsions can take up a lot of time, and they might avoid certain situations that trigger their OCD. This can mean that they are not able to go youth group, visit family and friends, or even go outside. Obsessive thoughts can make it hard to concentrate and leave people feeling exhausted.
- Impact on relationships: Young people may feel that they have to hide their OCD from people close to them, or doubts and anxieties about a relationship may make it too difficult to continue.
- Feeling ashamed or lonely: Young people may feel ashamed of their obsessive thoughts, or worry that they can’t be treated. They might want to hide this part of themselves from other people and find it hard to be around people or to go outside. This can make them feel isolated and lonely.





- Feeling anxious: Young people may find that their obsessions and compulsions are making them feel anxious and stressed. For example, some people feel that they must carry out their compulsions so frequently that they have little control over them.

Support strategies for your Group:

Young people may find it difficult to talk about their obsessions and compulsions. They may have kept them secret for a long time and be very worried about your reaction. It can help to acknowledge this and encourage them to talk about their experience in a way that feels comfortable to them.

- Be patient. Remember that their fears are very real to them, even if they seem unrealistic, irrational, or extreme to you.
- Don't judge. It can be upsetting to hear about some obsessive thoughts, but if you act shocked or judge them, they will be less likely to share their thoughts and feelings with you in future. Make it clear that you love and support them regardless.
- Find out as much as you can about OCD. This will help you understand what the young person is going through.

Further information:

Mind <https://www.mind.org.uk>

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'Invited to Belong' has been developed in partnership between Urban Saints and Youthscape.



Youthscape

www.urbansaints.org/invitedtobelong