



Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)



What is Obsessive Compulsive Disorder?

- **Obsessions** - unwanted, repetitive thoughts, impulses, or images that do not go away, are personally unacceptable and can cause major anxiety in an individual. Regardless of the desire to suppress the obsession, it continues to occur and involves irrational concerns that the person often recognizes as highly unlikely and even nonsensical.
- **Compulsions** - repetitive behaviours or mental acts that are meant to reduce the anxiety associated with an obsession. Individuals are driven to perform the ritual even though they may try to resist it and may have to repeat the behavior until it "feels right". The individual often experiences further distress if they can't complete the compulsion even though they realize it may not make sense.
- **This disorder can have a profound negative impact on daily functioning and often interferes with work, education, and social functioning.**

Examples of Obsessions and Compulsions

- The obsession with the fear of contamination by germs could lead to the compulsion of spending a lot of time washing or cleaning.
- The obsession with losing control or harming others could lead to the compulsion of repeatedly checking in to make sure people are safe.
- The obsession with deviations from orderliness or symmetry could lead to the compulsion to arrange things "just so".
- The obsession with one's verbal or behavioural responses could lead to the compulsion of doing senseless things to reduce anxiety.

What are the signs and symptoms of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder?

- Presence of obsessions and/or compulsions
- Person recognizes that the obsessions or compulsions are excessive, unrealistic, even senseless, at some point during the course of the disturbance
- Obsessions and compulsions cause marked distress, are time consuming, or significantly interfere in daily activities
- The content of the obsessions and compulsions is not restricted to concerns associated with another psychological disturbance such as the preoccupation with food in an eating disorder or guilty ruminations in major depression, nor are the symptoms directly caused by the physiological effects of a substance or general medical conditions

How is Obsessive Compulsive Disorder treated?

- Cognitive Behavioral Therapy
- Counselling
- Medication
- Support Groups
- Self-Help Strategies



Accommodations for Students with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder:

- Reduced course load
- Extra time for tests/assignments
- Condition impacts attendance
- Audio recording device
- Writing tests with AS
- Ergonomic chair/reserved seating
- Noise cancelling headphones
- Alternate forms of:
 - Group work
 - Presentations
 - Classroom participation
- No more than one exam in 24 hr period
- Distraction-reduced environment
- Low lighting for tests/exams

*All accommodations are based on individual needs and recommendations.

For more information:

- Canadian Mental Health Association. (2014). Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Retrieved from <https://cmha.ca/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/OCD-NTNL-brochure-2014-web.pdf>
- Canadian Psychological Association. (2021). "Psychology Works" Fact Sheet: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Retrieved from https://cpa.ca/docs/File/Publications/FactSheets/FS_ObsessiveCompulsiveDisorder_EN_2020.pdf.
- Mental health first aid. Retrieved from <http://mhfa.ca/en/course-info/courses/mhfa-basic>