

7 tips for those suffering from OCD and their families/carers

1

Whilst you may be having intrusive thoughts about subjects that you are not comfortable with remember that these thoughts do not reflect you as a person. In fact, even people without OCD or mental health problems experience occasional unwanted horrible intrusive thoughts.



2

Avoid Avoidance! Two words that are key to your OCD recovery. If you think you are avoiding something due to your OCD then try to make yourself do it.

This may be difficult, but you can work up to it. Ask someone to help you complete your OCD exposure exercise/challenge the first time, then give it a go on your own the second time. But don't just complete the exercise once, do it daily until it no longer creates anxiety. E.g. if you avoid touching bins because of OCD, you could wear gloves the first time then try it without gloves the second time.



3

As hard as it may seem at the time, avoid giving reassurance when it is sought out. But if you are already offering lots of reassurance at this time, try and agree compromises with your loved one about when to offer it and when to challenge the OCD. Try and reduce the amount of times you offer reassurance if you're offering it frequently. As a family member or carer this may seem uncaring but it is imperative for an OCD sufferer's treatment and recovery. Ensure you are not aggressive and remain compassionate. E.g. sometimes you can try and offer emotional reassurance (like a hug, or telling them you love them) but try avoid giving OCD reassurance where possible.



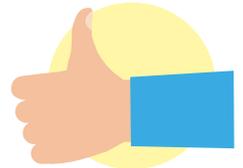
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You are not alone and there is support out there. Having a mental health problem can be very isolating but it is important to remember that many people are currently experiencing OCD symptoms and many more people are currently living their lives having recovered from OCD. If you are feeling isolated due to your condition then there are many OCD support groups out there that allow sufferers and those in recovery to support each other. Check out The Shaw Mind Foundation and OCD-UK websites (www.shawmindfoundation.org and www.ocduk.org). OCD-UK have an active discussion forums of people offering supportive help and advice.



5

The world is not black and white. OCD unfortunately makes sufferers think in an all or nothing mentality. Whilst your OCD may like to jump on your mistakes or relapses to make you feel you have failed, remember that everybody makes mistakes. Having a relapse or making an error in life does not make you a failure, no matter what the OCD wants you to think!



6

Ask for help when you need it. Whilst some people with OCD can find supportive self-help books useful to better understand OCD and therapy, many people will need professional input to help them overcome their OCD. Whilst there is still some stigma around mental illness, do not let this stop you from getting the help you deserve. Some services may have waiting times, so the sooner you ask for help the better!



7

Trying to prevent intrusive thoughts will increase their frequency. The best way to deal with these thoughts is to acknowledge their existence and to try to continue on with whatever you were doing. This may seem counterintuitive, but OCD doesn't always follow our rules. The feelings of the thoughts is likely to increase your anxiety but trying to reason with or fight the intrusive thoughts will only increase frequency and lead to further anxiety.



OCD Awareness Week 9 – 15th October 2016



For further information and support please visit www.OCDUK.org and www.shawmindfoundation.org