

Sensory Focused Obsessive Compulsive  
Disorder (SF-OCD): Designing And  
Implementing Treatment For Intolerable  
Symptoms

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Primary/ Secondary FC's in SF-OCD

- In all OCD : They fear they are doomed to a life of endless obsessing and misery. However, in most cases this is the secondary feared consequence (FC), but in SF-OCD this would be the primary fear.
- It's extremely important to understand the primary feared consequence prior to treating the patient.
- An old obsession may return, but the primary feared consequence may change.

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## Common Feared Consequence with Internal and External SF-OCD Cont.

- SF-OCD are neutral because there is nothing about the stimuli that is dangerous, **upsetting** or even unlucky. The entire problem is simply feeling that you cannot get them out of your mind.
- In its purest form, the sufferer obsesses about the fact that she/he obsesses: constantly thinking and obsessing about how life will be ruined by this constant obsessing with little other content.

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## Internal Vs. External Hyper-Awareness (HA)

Internal SF-OCD/HA: A heightened awareness/hyper-focus on involuntary bodily activities and processes.

External SF-OCD/HA: A heightened awareness/hyper-focus on external sounds, smells, pictures, words, songs, old obsessions, etc...

BOTH: "Something feels "stuck" in your mind.

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## Common Feared Consequence with Internal and External SF-OCD.

- Most obsessions are ever present and time consuming, but with SF-OCD, the ever-presence of the obsession is the problem.
- only one in which the feared consequence comes true, which is not usually the case for other OCD symptoms.

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## Examples of Internal SF-OCD:

- |                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| ➤ Heart rate/pulse    | ➤ Bladder                |
| ➤ Breathing           | ➤ Eye Floater            |
| ➤ Swallowing          | ➤ Dizziness              |
| ➤ Digestive Processes | ➤ Speaking/Pronunciation |
| ➤ Tinnitus            | ➤ Body Position          |
| ➤ Blinking            | ➤ Olfactory              |

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### Examples of External SF-OCD

- Misophonia or selective sound sensitivity: a strong dislike or hatred of a specific sound.
- Subset: Sound of someone chewing gum.
- Sounds, songs, words, pictures, quotes, etc...

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### Obsessing About Obsessing

- External referent with obsessing as the primary feared consequence.
- Internal:
  - As with all hyperawareness, the sufferer wants the obsessing to stop; in this case the feared consequence is their own thinking.
  - Can be over past obsessions.
  - Can be on any aspect of noticing thinking.

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## Treatment of SF-OCD

- The purpose of this treatment is NOT to stop obsessing.

Two mistakes that therapist make:

- 1.) Not recognize the feared consequence
- 2.) Use the downward arrow, a cognitive technique, to discover what your core fear is.

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## Treatment of SF-OCD Cont.

- **SF-OCD: neutral obsession/ obsessing about obsessing**
  - Wishing Ritual
    - Denial = comparing fantasy to reality.
  - Mourning = moving from denial to acceptance
  - Acceptance sucks – not really, but...

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## Treatment of SF-OCD Cont.

- **SF-OCD: neutral obsession/ obsessing about obsessing**
- Complete assessment: are other problems?
  - Relationship difficulties, difficult boss?
  - Unrealistic expectations?

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## Treatment of SF-OCD Cont.

- Goals of treatment:
    1. Overcoming wishing ritual
    2. Learning to have the thought in your mind
    3. Exposure with response prevention
- Warning:** Success often breeds disappointment and slips

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## Treatment of SF-OCD Cont.

How could living with SF-OCD forever, ever be tolerable?

1. The 5 Minute Frame of Mind
2. Loss of a loved one.
3. Headache

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## Treatment of SF-OCD Cont.

- Exposure –making the thought pervasively impossible to avoid:
  - Visual cues.
  - “It” script
  - Conventional script

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## Treatment of SF-OCD Cont.

- **You may feel this isn't necessary, because your obsession is always there, but this isn't true.**
  - A.) Sometimes it leaves, even if only for a few minutes. Then when it reappears, your immediate thought is: "oh no, there it is again, I can't believe it..."
  - B.) Without meaning to, you are off and running into your wishing it was gone.

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## Treatment of SF-OCD cont.

- Response Prevention
  - Can't stop thoughts, so again focusing attention.

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## Treatment of SF-OCD cont.: Acceptance

Ex. Now imagine you've lost your arm.

1. Learning to have the best one-armed life possible

OR

2. Comparing every moment and activity to how much better it would be if I had two arms- something that is never going to happen?

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## Treatment of SF-OCD cont. : ACCEPTANCE

### Acceptance

- Involves loss, but it allows us to live in and appreciate the present.
- So part of response prevention involves focusing on whatever little enjoyment is present and learning to enjoy the 20 to 40% that can still get through despite your obsessing.

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## Treatment of SF-OCD cont. : ACCEPTANCE

### Acceptance

- not avoiding any activities, because your obsessing will interfere with them.
- word script recording-Reminds you of your problem and your goal.

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## Treatment of SF-OCD: ACCEPTANCE

### Acceptance

- Overcoming SF-OCD will not make all other problems vanish.
- The only things that will get better are the ones you work on...
- Mistakenly blaming everything on OCD

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## Conclusion:

- Ultimately, overcoming the wishing ritual means moving from denial to acceptance, from fantasy to reality.
- Reality may not be as pretty as fantasy, but it is far better than the misery of wishing.

## QUESTIONS?

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