



What is OCD and How is it Treated?

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Agenda

- ▶ Definition of OCD
- ▶ Obsessions
- ▶ Compulsions
- ▶ Recommended Treatment
- ▶ What To Ask A Therapist

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

- ▶ Presence of obsessions, compulsions, or both
- ▶ Time consuming or cause clinically significant distress
- ▶ Not due to a substance or medical condition
- ▶ Not better explained by another mental disorder

Obsessions

- ▶ Recurrent and persistent thoughts, images, or urges that cause anxiety or distress.
 - ▶ Unwanted
 - ▶ Intrusive
 - ▶ Recurrent
 - ▶ Disturbing
- ▶ The person attempts to ignore or suppress the obsessions.

Obsessions

- ▶ Important:
- ▶ Everyone has intrusive thoughts.
- ▶ Individuals with OCD have intrusive thoughts that get stuck, cause distress, are persistent.
- ▶ Intrusive thoughts (and obsessions) can be about ANYTHING.

Obsessions

- ▶ Contamination
- ▶ Aggression/Harm
- ▶ Doubting
- ▶ Religious/Moral/Scrupulous
- ▶ Symmetry/Exactness/Order
- ▶ Sexual Obsessions
- ▶ Sexual Orientation Obsessions
- ▶ Gender Identity
- ▶ Pedophilia Obsessions
- ▶ Loss of Impulse Control



Obsessions

- ▶ “Just Right” OCD
- ▶ Perfectionism
- ▶ Hyper-Responsibility
- ▶ Hyper-Awareness
- ▶ Meta OCD
- ▶ Real Event OCD
- ▶ Relationship
- ▶ Postpartum
- ▶ Death/Existential

Contamination Obsessions

- ▶ Is that door knob dirty?
- ▶ Did someone put animal products in my vegan dish?
- ▶ Did someone sit on my toilet seat?
- ▶ If I lend her my phone, will it be contaminated?
- ▶ Is there E.coli on this lettuce?
- ▶ I can't sit in the waiting room at the doctor's office!
- ▶ What if our backyard has pesticides on the grass?
- ▶ Are her hands clean?

Aggression/Harm Obsessions

- ▶ What if I grabbed this knife and stabbed my spouse?
- ▶ What if I drove off this bridge?
- ▶ What if I'm a mass murderer or psychopath?
- ▶ What if I shoot up my entire workplace?
- ▶ What if I smother my baby in the middle of the night?
- ▶ What if I attack my therapist?
- ▶ Violent or horrific images

Doubting Obsessions

- ▶ Did I turn off the iron?
- ▶ Did I close the garage door?
- ▶ Did I hit someone with my car?
- ▶ Did I turn the light off?
- ▶ Did I want that thought?
- ▶ Is treatment really working?
- ▶ Did _____ really occur last year?

Religious/Moral/Scrupulous Obsessions

- ▶ Am I committing a sin?
- ▶ Am I a bad person?
- ▶ Did I say my prayer correctly?
- ▶ Does this go against my faith?
- ▶ Am I going to heaven or hell?
- ▶ Am I acting in an ethical manner?
- ▶ Is God angry with me?
- ▶ Is God punishing me?

Symmetry/Exactness/Order Obsessions

- ▶ Is that picture parallel to the floor?
- ▶ Are the candles lined up from tallest to shortest?
- ▶ Are the books symmetrical on both sides of the book case?
- ▶ My closet has to be color coded from black to white.
- ▶ Are my drawers shut completely before bedtime?
- ▶ Is everything on my desk facing forward when I leave for the day?

Sexual Obsessions

- ▶ Do I want to have sex with my father?
- ▶ Am I attracted to that child?
- ▶ Am I aroused by my pet?
- ▶ Did I get aroused by that?
- ▶ Did I enjoy the assault/rape?

Sexual Orientation Obsessions

- ▶ Uncertainty about not knowing your sexual orientation
- ▶ Am I gay?
- ▶ Am I straight?
- ▶ Am I bi?
- ▶ Am I asexual?
- ▶ Am I in denial?
- ▶ What if I never figure it out?

Gender Identity Obsessions

- ▶ Uncertainty about not knowing your gender.
- ▶ Am I really male?
- ▶ What if I am a female?
- ▶ What if I never really know?

Pedophile Obsessions

What if I was aroused by that child?

- ▶ Am I attracted to that child?
- ▶ Am I safe to be around my child/nieces/nephews/students?
- ▶ What if I have done something inappropriate in the past and don't remember?
- ▶ Should I have children? What if I do something awful to them?

Loss of Impulse Control

What if I blurt out a curse word in front of everyone?

- ▶ What if I steal something when walking out of the store?
- ▶ What if murder someone while sleep walking?
- ▶ What if I accidentally touch my co-worker inappropriately?
- ▶ What if I share an intrusive thought in a work email?

“Just Right” OCD

- ▶ An obsession that something does not feel, look, or sound right
- ▶ No specific consequence/worry, rather a feeling of tension:
 - ▶ All items on the end table must be facing the door
 - ▶ The volume has to be on an even number
 - ▶ Flip light switch on/off until it feels right

Perfectionism Obsessions

- ▶ Did I make a mistake?
- ▶ Was there a typo in that last email?
- ▶ What if I'm a minute late?
- ▶ What if that assignment isn't perfect?

Hyper-Responsibility Obsessions

- ▶ If something bad happens, it's my fault.
- ▶ What if I leave an appliance on and my children die in a house fire?
- ▶ What if I don't notice my child's fever in time and they die?
- ▶ What if my husband dies in a car accident because I didn't do _____?
- ▶ What if our house gets robbed because I didn't go back and check the locks/garage door once moor?

Hyper-Awareness Obsessions

Focusing on physical sensations like:

Ringing in ears

- ▶ Twitches
- ▶ Heart beat
- ▶ Breathing

Meta OCD

- ▶ Obsessing about obsessing.
- ▶ Why am I not worried about that one?
- ▶ Am I worried enough about that?
- ▶ Am I actually getting better?
- ▶ I'm feeling better, does that mean I made up my OCD?
- ▶ Maybe I don't really have OCD.
- ▶ What if I really did want that thought?

Real Event Obsessions

- ▶ Uncertainty about events that really occurred.
- ▶ Did I handle that right?
- ▶ What if that means I'm a bad person?
- ▶ Maybe I really meant to do that?
- ▶ What if I actually hurt them?
- ▶ False Memory OCD: What if I did something bad and I just can't remember it?

Relationship OCD

- ▶ Fears about relationships, sex, and intimacy
 - ▶ Doubts about the relationship.
 - ▶ But are you really happy?
 - ▶ What if I want to cheat on my spouse?
 - ▶ Do I love them enough?
 - ▶ Am I attracted to my spouse?
 - ▶ Is that how they want to be kissed/touched?
 - ▶ Am I smart enough for him/her?
 - ▶ How long will we last?
 - ▶ Is he/she “the one?”

Postpartum Obsessions

- ▶ What if I touch my baby inappropriately?
- ▶ What if I accidentally drop my baby?
- ▶ What if I smother my baby when they are asleep?
- ▶ What if someone kidnaps my baby?
- ▶ What if I roll over on my baby and smother him/her while snuggling?
- ▶ What if my baby becomes contaminated by touching _____?

Death/Existential Obsessions

- ▶ When will I die?
- ▶ What is my purpose on earth?
- ▶ What happens in the afterlife?
- ▶ What if God sends me to Hell?
- ▶ Am I even really here?
- ▶ What if all this is just a dream?

Compulsions

- ▶ Repetitive behaviors or mental acts that the person feels driven to perform in response to an obsession.
- ▶ The compulsion is aimed at preventing or reducing distress or preventing some dreaded event.
 - ▶ Provides temporary relief however the cycle feeds/reinforces OCD

Compulsions

- ▶ Washing/cleaning
- ▶ Checking
- ▶ Ordering/arranging/evening out/making perfect
- ▶ Repeating, erasing, redoing
- ▶ Touching/tapping
- ▶ Confessing
- ▶ Praying



Compulsions

- ▶ Camouflaging
- ▶ Staring
- ▶ Superstitious behaviors
- ▶ Behavioral avoidance
- ▶ Reassurance seeking

Compulsions

- ▶ Mental Compulsions:
 - ▶ Not thinking about the worry/Cognitive avoidance
 - ▶ Confessing
 - ▶ Apologizing
 - ▶ Lucky words/numbers/phrases
 - ▶ Praying
 - ▶ Cognitive restructuring
 - ▶ Counting
 - ▶ Checking
 - ▶ Reassuring self
 - ▶ Rumination/solving

Exposure & Response Prevention

- ▶ Exposure & Response Prevention (ERP) is a form of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy.
- ▶ Focuses on behavioral interventions (exposure therapy) as opposed to cognitive/emotional interventions.
- ▶ ERP is an evidence based treatment for OCD
 - ▶ Supplementary treatments can be beneficial in addition to ERP, but are not recommended as a stand-alone yet (ACT, DBT).

Goals of Treatment

- ▶ Face the fear = Exposure
- ▶ Decrease the fear = Habituation
- ▶ Tolerate the fear or discomfort = Inhibitory Learning
- ▶ Decrease compulsions and avoidance = Response Prevention
- ▶ Accept intrusive thoughts
- ▶ Don't fix or fight the obsessions, rather choose to live with them

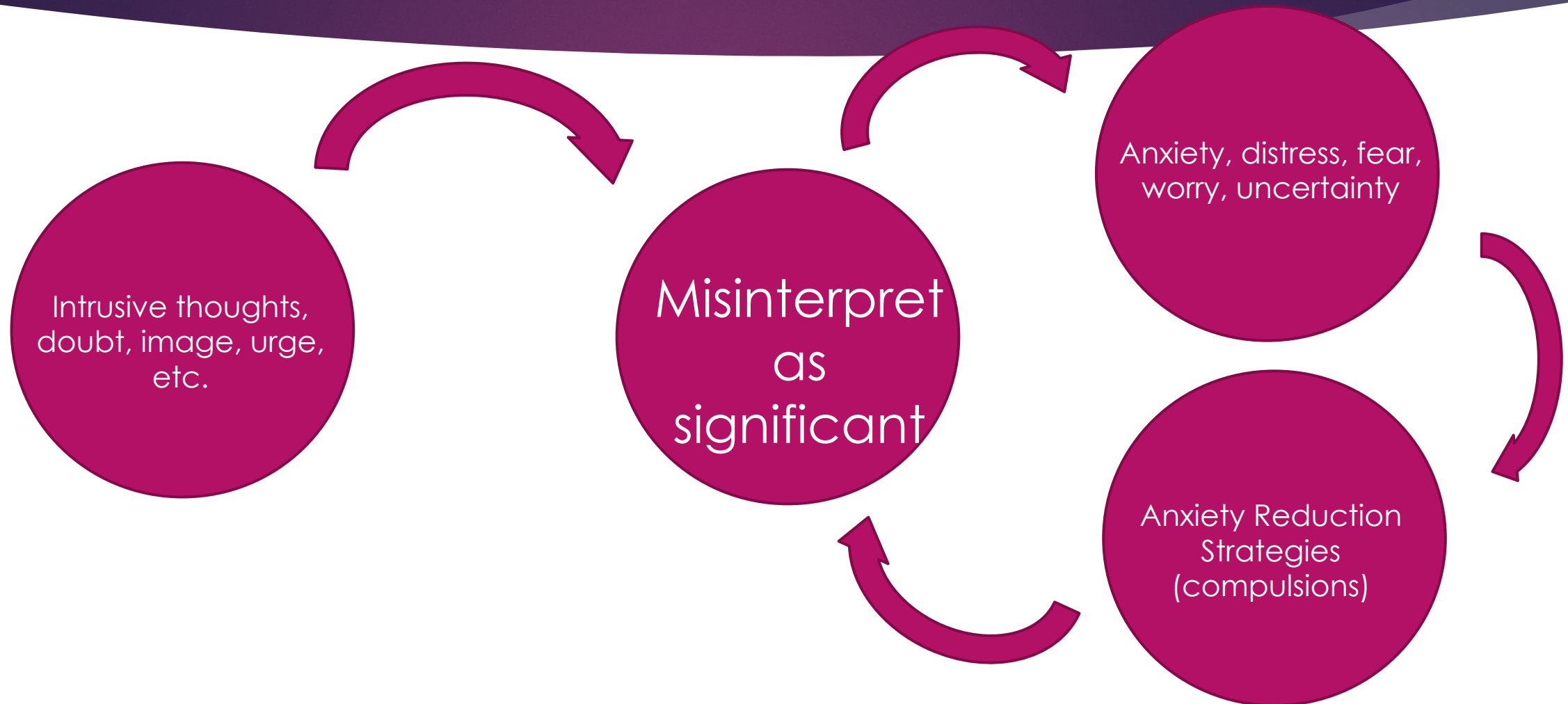
Unhelpful Goals of Treatment

- ▶ I will never have this thought again
- ▶ I will like the thoughts
- ▶ It will feel good
- ▶ I will never have OCD again
- ▶ I will not experience anxiety again
- ▶ This thought will never come true

Exposure & Response Prevention



Exposure & Response Prevention



What To Ask A Therapist?

- ▶ What treatment do you use for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder?
- ▶ Where were you trained?
- ▶ How many individuals with OCD have you treated? Or...
- ▶ How much of your caseload includes individuals with OCD?
- ▶ What are some of the goals with OCD treatment?

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