

OCDare to Share

A DEDICATED TIME TO START THE CONVERSATION ABOUT OCD



International
OCD
Foundation

HOST GUIDE

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What is OCDare to Share?

OCDare to Share is a one-time casual get-together dedicated to starting a conversation about OCD and related disorders. You choose a place to meet for one hour either in your community or virtually. Pick a day and time that works best for you, but we encourage you to consider hosting during OCD Awareness Week, the second week of October!

Your community gathering is an opportunity to come together to reduce the stigma surrounding OCD and related disorders and foster connections. It's a space to share your story, raise awareness, provide hope, resources, and valuable information that helps correct common misconceptions about OCD! Please note: OCDare to Share gatherings are intended for community-building and informational purposes only and are not a substitute for professional diagnosis, therapy, or treatment.

We challenge you to step out of your comfort zone to raise OCD awareness right in your community. One Day for One Hour.



Who can host OCDare to Share?

Any individual with the desire to share about OCD and related disorders and spread awareness in their community can be an OCDare to Share host. The host sets the location and time and leads the discussion during their OCDare to Share gathering. (If you are reading this, you are most likely the host!) You are welcome to collaborate with someone to co-host an event with you.

The OCDare to Share Host Guide will equip you with everything you need to host a successful and meaningful gathering. Provided by the International OCD Foundation, this guide is meant to help you gather people around you to have an open conversation about OCD with confidence and ease.

You can choose to have an OCDare to Share gathering at your school, workplace, local coffee shop, library, church, or any place you wish. No matter how many attend your gathering, the IOCDF appreciates your dedication to spreading awareness and starting an honest conversation about mental health and OCD.

Thank you for hosting an OCDare to Share in your community!

HOST EXPECTATIONS

THINGS TO KEEP IN MIND



LISTEN:

Not everyone who comes to your gathering will have the same knowledge or experience with OCD as you. Consider inviting not only those familiar with OCD and related disorders but also people who may have limited understanding or misconceptions. Encourage people to ask questions and share their experiences freely. Don't be quick to judge or become defensive. Don't force anyone to share.



LEAD:

Your job as the host is to get the conversation going. Share the information in the enclosed fact sheet and lead your group with the discussion questions provided.



HONESTY:

We encourage you to be honest and transparent, creating an environment for people to open up. Be brave in sharing your story first - it often inspires others to open up and contribute to the conversation.



OPEN INVITATION:

Invite the people around you, perhaps a neighbor, your co-workers, classmates, friends, or new acquaintances. The idea is to host your gathering in a public place to keep it open for anyone to join. (Maybe you have it at a coffee shop, and someone sitting near your table wants to join in the conversation!)



SIMPLE:

Keep the event simple by focusing on meaningful connections rather than perfection! A casual setting, a few shared stories, and using the fact sheet to provide information can make a big impact. A welcoming space and open conversation will go a long way.

TO-DO LIST

PREPARING FOR OCDare to Share



CHOOSE A DATE & TIME:

Choose a time that works for you and your guests. Hosting an OCDare to Share event at any time is meaningful! Scheduling it during OCD Awareness Week offers an especially powerful opportunity to amplify voices, share resources, and inspire greater understanding.



FIND A SPACE:

Secure a free and easily accessible space to host your gathering. In some cases, you may need to ask permission to use a space. Schools, libraries, churches, work places, parks, and coffee shops are usually free and convenient! If you workout at a gym, talk to the manager about hosting your meeting after the workout.



SEND US YOUR INFO:

Register your gathering by completing the form on the official OCDare to Share webpage (iocdf.org/ocdaretoshare).



INVITE:

Share with those around you that you are putting on this event. Post the event on your social media using the hashtags #OCDaretoShare and #OCDweek, and tag us using the handle @IOCDF. We will share on the IOCDF Instagram Story following a review to ensure the content is relevant to the OCD community and aligns with IOCDF's mission.



MATERIAL:

Download the discussion questions and the fact sheet for your event.

DURING YOUR EVENT

Remember: Make it your own event

OCDare to Share is designed to be flexible and shaped by the needs of your community and your preferences. Even a gathering of five people can make a difference, but of course, more participants are welcome! The timing, the location (in person or virtual), is completely up to you and whatever you feel will have the greatest impact. It could be as simple as sitting down with your family to share your story, or hosting a broader conversation with community members at your school, church, or local community center.

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO

MAKE INTRODUCTIONS

Go around the table/room and allow everyone to introduce themselves. You can be as creative as you want!

GET THE CONVERSATION GOING

Start with the discussion questions, reading the fact sheet, or sharing your story! It is completely up to you.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Read the questions one by one yourself or write them on note cards and invite those who attend to choose one card to read aloud. Again, up to you. Allow time for each person to share or respond to each question. You may not get to every question and you may not have everyone answer the question. That's okay.

FACT SHEET

Share the information on the fact sheet at some point in your gathering. We encourage you to use it as an opener which will help set the tone for the conversation.

Continued >

DURING YOUR EVENT

WHAT YOU NEED TO DO (cont'd)

SHARE YOUR STORY

Make sure to share your experience in a positive way and take care not to monopolize the conversation. The purpose of this event is for conversation and discussion.

TAKE ATTENDANCE

Make a note of how many people participated in the event. Print, e-mail, or text the QR Code that is provided in the packet for people to give us feedback about the event and to sign up to receive more information from IOCDF.

OFFER RESOURCES

After the conversation, invite participants to explore the helpful resources available on the IOCDF websites and continue learning and finding support by connecting with their local US-based Affiliate or an IOCDF Global Partner.

- [IOCDF.org](https://iocdf.org)
- Resource Directory (iocdf.org/find-help)
- OCD in Kids (helpforkids.org)
- Anxiety in the Classroom (anxietyintheclassroom.org)

TAKE A SELFIE

Share your gathering with us! Post photos to social media (with your group's permission) using the #OCDweek #OCDaretoShare and tag us using the handle @IOCDF. We will share on our Instagram Story following a review to ensure content is relevant to the OCD community and aligns with IOCDF's mission.

AFTER YOUR EVENT

After your OCDare to Share event, you will be invited to complete a short follow-up survey. Your feedback helps us understand the impact of these events and create new ways to support you and your community.

Thank you for sharing your voice and hosting this important gathering!

QUESTIONS?

If you have any questions, please visit iocdf.org/ocdaretoshare for more information or email Julie Oliver, Partnership Engagement Coordinator, at joliver@iocdf.org.



OCD FACT SHEET

We encourage you to share the OCD facts at the start of your gathering. This will provide basic knowledge for those who do not understand OCD.

- Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) is a treatable neurobiological disorder characterized by recurrent, unwanted thoughts (obsessions) and repetitive behaviors (compulsions/rituals).
- OCD and related disorders are serious mental health conditions that affect millions of people worldwide.
- Up to 240 million people in the world suffer from OCD at some point in their lives. That is 1 in 40 individuals. (at least 1 in 40, if not more). Based on world population 2024 (United Nations) of 8.2 billion; lifetime prevalence is up to 3% of the population – for adults and kids.
- The exact cause of OCD is unknown, although research suggests that differences in the brain and genes of those affected may play a role. OCD runs in families and is roughly 50% heritable. OCD is found in 10-20% of first degree relatives of individuals with OCD. OCD-Related disorders (BDD, Hoarding Disorder, and BFRBs) are also highly heritable and run in families.
- OCD typically emerges in two key age ranges: between ages 7 and 12, and again in the late teen years or early adulthood (around age 20). However, these statistics do not account for kids who were misdiagnosed, did not receive treatment, or were never diagnosed.
- On average, it can take more than 7 years before a person suffering from OCD receives a diagnosis of OCD.
- Half of people with OCD are misdiagnosed or incorrectly treated by a care provider.
- OCD affects people of all races, ethnicities, ages, genders, sexual identities, and backgrounds.

Continued >

OCD FACT SHEET

- OCD is treatable and effective treatment is available. The most effective treatment for OCD is a type of cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) called Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP), or ERP with a combination of medication, specifically a type of psychiatric medication called Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs).
- The most frequent misunderstandings about OCD:
 - Everyone with OCD is super neat and organized
 - OCD is all about cleanliness
 - People with OCD are uptight or neurotic
 - We're all a little OCD
 - OCD is just a personality trait
 - OCD is helpful
- You cannot be "a little OCD." It is not a personality trait or quirk. While many people can have obsessive or compulsive traits, OCD stands for obsessive compulsive disorder, and people who are diagnosed with OCD cannot simply "turn it off." Research has shown that their brains are wired differently than the brains of people without OCD, and as such OCD strongly influences their thoughts and actions. If what you are doing brings you pleasure, it is not OCD. OCD is a debilitating mental health condition that causes a magnitude of anxiety and distress. People with OCD try to overcome the anxiety or distress by performing rituals or "compulsions." It's not something they want to do, it's something they feel they must do in order to receive relief from the anxiety or distress.
- OCD is not about being neat or clean. Many people think of handwashing or neatness when they think about OCD. However, there are a wide range of OCD triggers, symptoms, obsessions, and compulsions. Obsessions could include fear of harming oneself or others, losing control, and/or moral failings. Compulsion can include reassurance seeking, ruminating, checking, avoidance, and/or counting.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What is obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)?
2. Who is impacted by OCD?
3. Did any of the facts stand out to you or resonate? Which ones and why?
4. How have you or someone you know been affected by OCD-related stigma?
5. Why is OCD awareness important? What can we learn from each other?
6. How has OCD been misrepresented in movies and media?
7. What do you want someone without OCD to know or better understand?
8. What areas of your life has OCD impacted the most?

LEARN MORE ABOUT OCD

Scan the QR Code below to sign-up to receive emails and resources from the International OCD Foundation.

SCAN ME



EMAIL INVITATION TEMPLATE

Subject: You're Invited: A Get-Together to Talk Mental Health and OCD!

Hello [NAME]

You're invited to a casual gathering I'm hosting on [DATE] called OCDare to Share! It's a relaxed space where we'll talk about mental health and OCD - nothing formal, just a real conversation over [snacks, coffee, etc] and a chance to connect with others who care about supporting one another, reducing stigma, and understanding about OCD. I'm not an expert - just your [friend, relative, coworker] who believes that open dialogue makes a difference.

It's going to be low-key and meant to be enjoyable. I'll be sharing my story, but there is absolutely no pressure to share anything personal unless you feel comfortable. The goal is to connect, share some [snacks, pizza, etc] and spend time with people who care about creating more understanding.

OCDare to Share

Date:

Time:

Location:

Let me know if you can join us!

Thanks,