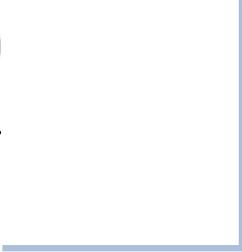


Finding Your People in Recovery & Beyond

Navigating Relationships with OCD



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Personal stories of OCD community in recovery

As people with OCD, we understand this too!

Why Relationships?

“Man is by nature a social animal; an individual who is unsocial naturally and not accidentally is either beneath our notice or more than human. Society is something that precedes the individual.”

Aristotle

“Needing someone doesn't make you weak, it makes you feel. And feeling is how you know you're alive.” **M.J. Rose**

“Truth is everybody is going to hurt you: you just gotta find the ones worth suffering for.” **Bob Marley**

The Importance of Relationships

Benefits

- Physical health
 - 2023 Harvard study
 - 85 years of data
 - “Positive relationships” = #1 predictor of longevity
 - Immune support
 - Faster healing
 - Mental health
 - Less anxiety & depression
 - Greater empathy
 - Social support
 - Practical support
-

The Importance of Relationships

Self-Compassion

- Common humanity is one component
- Especially important with OCD which can be isolating
- Hard to find examples that are accurate

**Imagine that this talk was written by ChatGPT
(why didn't we think of this?!) and presented
by a robot? What changes?**

Roadblocks to Relationships in OCD Recovery

Choose one person you love (parent, partner, child, friend).

- How does OCD affect behaviors in the relationship?
 - How does OCD affect what topics are discussed (or not)?
 - What kinds of emotions are permitted or not?
 - How does OCD enlist the other person in rituals, including reassurance?
 - How does OCD affect the other person's behavior outside of the relationship?
-

Roadblocks to Relationships in OCD Recovery

- Shame and the fear of vulnerability lead to isolation



"Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging."

-Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly*

Reference: Brown, B. (2013). *DARING GREATLY: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent and Lead*. London, England: Portfolio Penguin

Shame vs. Guilt

Guilt

Helpful - we can learn from it!

I did something bad.

"it's holding something we've done or failed to do up against our values and feeling psychological discomfort."

Shame

Unhelpful.

I am bad.

"the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging."

The Sound of Shame

- In OCD Recovery, shame can sound like:
 - “If people knew I had these thoughts and anxieties, they’d think I’m crazy!”
 - “If they knew I was having this thought, they would think I was a monster!”
 - “This physical sensation means I’m disgusting.”
 - “Only a horrible person would have thoughts like this!”
 - “I’m a bad person.”
-

“Shame derives its power from
being unspeakable”

-Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly*

“If we **cultivate enough awareness** about shame to **name it and speak to it**, we’ve basically cut it off at the knees... If we speak shame it begins to wither.”

-Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly*

“The definition of vulnerability is **uncertainty**,
risk, and **emotional exposure**...

Are we **willing to show up and be seen** when
we **can't control the outcome**?”

-Brené Brown, *Braving the Wilderness*

Reference: Brown, B. (2017). *Braving the wilderness: the quest for true belonging and the courage to stand alone*. First edition. New York, Random House.

“Vulnerability is the birthplace of love [and] belonging... If we want greater clarity in our purpose or deeper and more meaningful... lives, vulnerability is the path.”

-Brené Brown, *Daring Greatly*

Vulnerability versus Compulsive Confession

- “people...misrepresent... vulnerability and conflate it with disclosure or emotional purging.” -Brené Brown, *Dare to Lead*
- Translation: Vulnerability is not confessing to people to make sure you’re not a bad person

Reference: Brown, B. (2018). *Dare to lead: brave work, tough conversations, whole hearts*. New York, Random House.

Vulnerability is Earned

- “You share with people who've earned the right to hear your story...You have to earn the right to hear my story. It's an honor to hold space for me when I'm in shame.”

- Brené Brown, *Dare to Lead*

Practical Application

- Let's practice!!
 - First, we'll practice vulnerability to demonstrate.
 - Remember:
 - You determine level of disclosure
 - Keep in mind the tendency to seek reassurance or "emotionally purge"
-

Maintaining the Health of Our Relationships

Boundaries may look like:

- Asking if this is a good time to talk
 - Sharing when you feel this is too much to take on or uncomfortable
 - Asking for space if needed
 - Communicating expectations of privacy when it comes to disclosure of personal information
-

Maintaining the Health of Our Relationships

Supporting recovery vs. reassurance

- “How can I support you in this moment? How can I support your recovery?”
 - “I know how hard this exposure is for you and I believe in you. I know how much you want to take your life back from OCD. I want you to know I am here to support you.”
 - “You are not alone in this.”
 - “Do you think this would help support your recovery?”
 - Asking yourself, “is this behavior helping build my friendship?”
 - “Can I offer you a reframe?”
-

Maintaining the Health of Our Relationships

Values are **“desired qualities of action: how you want to behave; how you want to treat yourself, others, and the world around you.”**

-Russ Harris

Maintaining the Health of Our Relationships

Examples of values:

- Honest
 - Respectful
 - Trusting
 - Compassionate
 - Reliable
-

Maintaining the Health of Our Relationships

Applying values to friendship:

- “What sort of a friend do I want to be?”
 - “How can I support my friend’s recovery while also staying true to my values?”
 - “What ways might OCD get in the way of my values as a friend?”
-

Practical Ideas for Building Relationships in Recovery

Let's practice

- Create statement you might use to help support your friendship and their recovery?
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If you've met one
person with OCD...
you've met one
person with OCD.

Discussing diversity within the context of recovery

Marginalized identities can make finding community more difficult

Professional shortcomings and areas of growth

- Underrepresentation in research
- Inadequate assessment methods
- History of culturally insensitive/stigmatizing treatment methods

Different experiences

- Intersection between culture and symptoms (e.g., safety concerns, stereotypes)
 - Different experiences of community support/response
 - Different normative behaviors
-

Discussing diversity within the context of recovery

IOCDF Special Interest Groups, including:

- LGBTQIA+
- Chronic illness/disability
- Faith & OCD
- ASD & OCD
- Vintage voices

Conferencia de TOC Online - Spanish language conference

Advocacy in your community

**Perhaps by seeking support you can also provide support for others,
bringing purpose and meaning to the pain you've experienced!**

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