

FROM ISOLATED TO EMPOWERED.

The Realities of Physical and Emotional
Contamination OCD

with featured speakers:



Melissa Mose, LMFT



Melissa Mose, LMFT has 30 years of experience working with individuals and families living with anxiety, and she has specialized in OCD treatment for over a decade. She is a graduate of the IOCDF's general and advanced Behavior Therapy Training Institute (BTTI) as well as the Supportive Parenting for Anxious Childhood Emotions (SPACE) program and Cognitive-behavioral Intervention for Tics training (CBIT). Currently, in addition to her private practice, Melissa is serving as the president of OCD Southern California, an affiliate of the IOCDF, where it is her mission to extend resources, education, and support to families and individuals in need.



What is emotional contamination OCD?

Emotional contamination is a lesser known subtype of OCD, in which the sufferer fears that contact with a particular person, place, or item will somehow contaminate and endanger him.

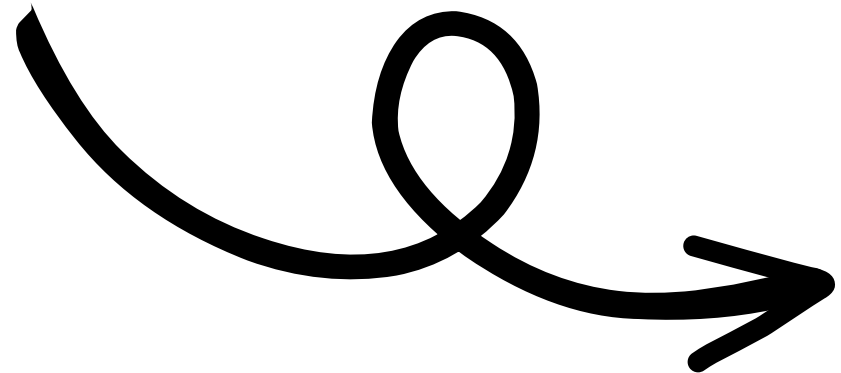
Emotional contamination, like many subtypes of OCD, can lead to severe isolation and avoidance as an individuals symptoms progress.



Individuals with emotional contamination may avoid:

- **Touching, looking at, or using personal belongings like clothing, books, or even their vehicle due to a perceived presence of “contamination”, or unwanted feelings.**
- **Certain colors, foods, numbers, and letters.**
- **Entire rooms or areas of their home.**
- **People and places / landmarks associated with particular events or fears.**
- **Certain songs with “contaminated” words.**
- **Speaking or writing certain words, letters, or phrases.**

How do physical and
emotional contamination
differ?



Examples of physical contaminants:



Blood and bodily fluids



Dirt, dust, wood, grime



Greasy and sticky foods, and/or residue



Contractible illnesses and diseases



Radiation sources, chemicals, household cleaners



“Dirty” dishes, flooring, surfaces, doorknobs

Examples of emotional contaminants:



Certain colors that have been associated with the individuals source of fear



Physical locations, roads, or rooms of the home that are “marked” by unwanted feelings



Certain people that may serve as a reminder of a particular event



Items of clothing that have come into contact with certain emotions or source of fear



“Bad” or negatively associated types of food



Contaminated letters, numbers, days of the week

Treating contamination OCD
from a providers perspective:
there is hope



Kerry Alayne Osborn

Kerry Alayne Osborn, OCD Advocate and Author, experienced an onset of debilitating OCD symptoms after a traumatic car accident that would change her life as she knew it - forever.

In the depths of her OCD, Kerry was unable to write a full sentence, keep any sort of hygiene, or walk properly due to her constant obsessions.

However, against all odds, and through intensive ERP treatment, Kerry went on to write and publish a book, "The Obsessive Outsider," and is now the Director of the Member Advocate department at NOCD, Inc.



@theobsessiveoutsiders







Mackenzie Reed

Mackenzie Reed is a Registered Nurse and OCD Advocate, who in 2019, experienced a rapid onset of symptoms – which she would later learn were the result of Emotional Contamination OCD.

For two years, Mackenzie was isolated only to her bedroom and bathroom, where she found herself entering her home solely through her bedroom window. Today, Mackenzie shares her experiences through her blog “Obsessively OCD”.

Mackenzie is passionate about educating others on both emotional contamination and compulsive hoarding. Mackenzie hopes that by bringing awareness to hoarding behaviors, that individuals suffering will be met with less judgment and more understanding.



@obsessivelyocd

How it all started:

Major life events, instability, and changes (nursing school, unhealthy relationship)



Seeking control over pain in the form of avoidance



Broken sink faucet and thrown away “good” item triggered multiple events



Further instability



Entire house, and any reminder of events = “bad”, and “must be avoided”. Throwing away items = “bad”, because garage / events = “bad”. Keeping items = protective, “safe”.



My two years of isolation



Entering my home through my bedroom window for years



No access to a kitchen or refrigerator, eating McDonald's on thanksgiving, keeping silverware in bedside stand



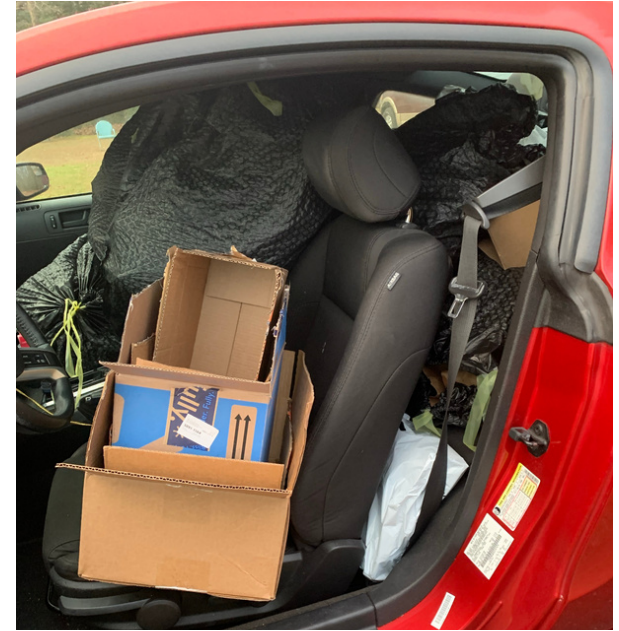
Unable to wash clothes



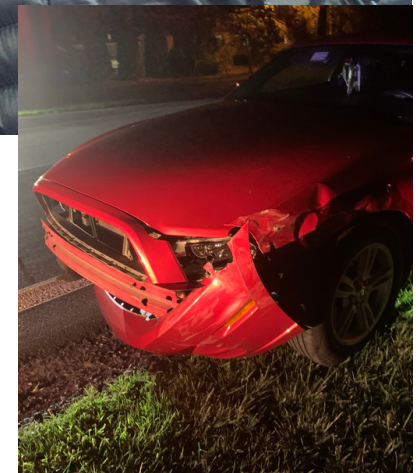
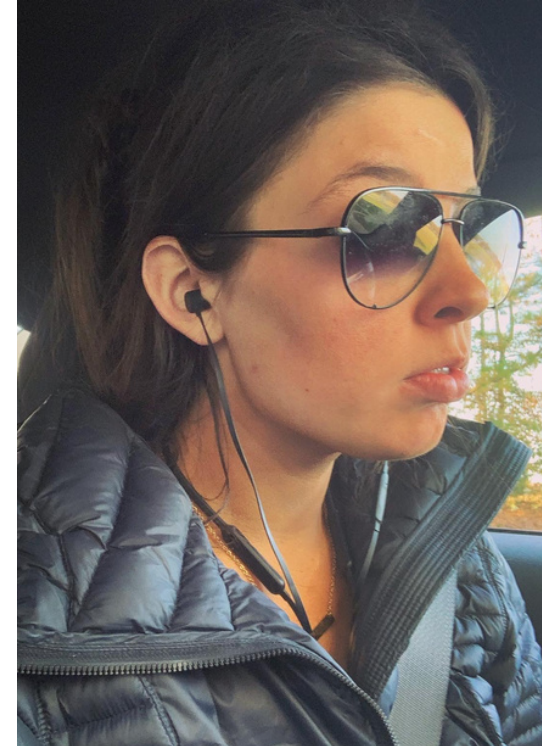
Using a step stool to get inside

Pure suffering and torture

Emotional contamination + compulsive hoarding



Experiencing total loss .. my last non “contaminated” road



Seeking intensive treatment



Sitting next to my brother and seeing my family for the first time in years



This was taken the day the treatment center had a scheduled meeting with my family. After 4 months of treatment where I couldn't write or speak their names, look at their photos, or hear their voice; I sat in the same room with them again.

I then was almost immediately sent to a local coffee shop for exposure (they weren't kidding!)

I sat at a table somewhat away from everyone else, but found the courage to take a photo with my brother (least contaminated) at the end 😊

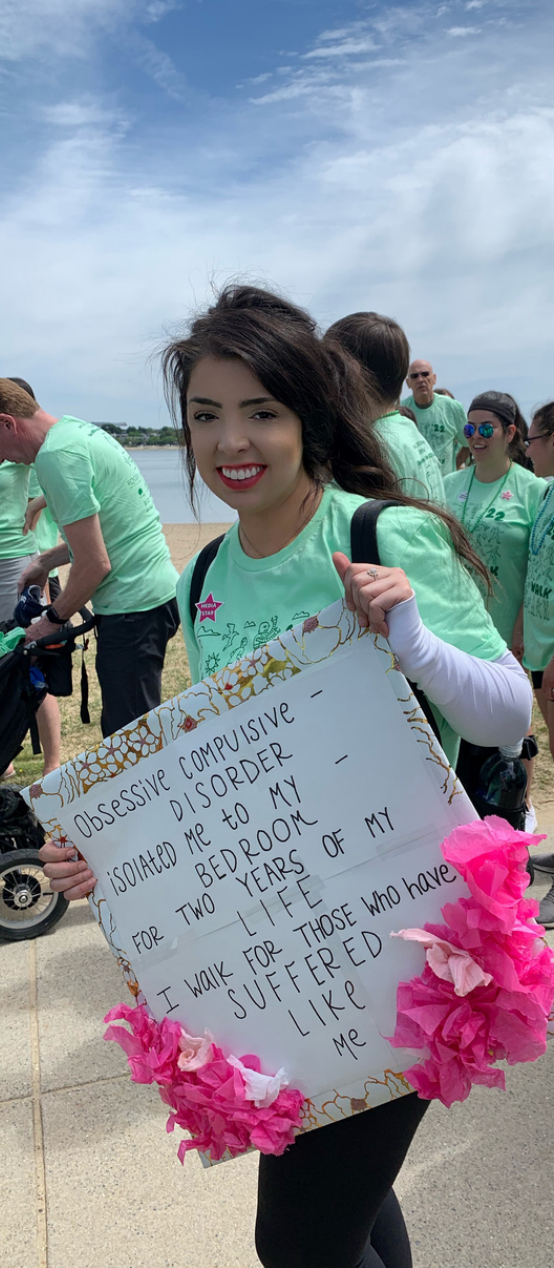
Entering my home through the front door again



Finding my voice through advocacy

obsessively
OCD

ocd
is a
debilitating
mental
illness
not a
personality
trait





Callie Carlyle

Callie Carlyle is a passionate OCD advocate who has suffered from debilitating emotional contamination OCD since the young age of nine. She created the blog "OCDtotheNthDegree" in 2013, when she began intensive ERP treatment.

The name "OCDtotheNthDegree" is what Callie describes as a "play" on how infinite and excessive OCD can be. As the daughter of two clinical psychologists, Callie finds that sharing her "private-in-real-life story" is an unexpected part of her life's purpose and calling.

Callie hopes that sharing her story will provide hope to others who are suffering, while exposing the underrepresented subtype that is emotional contamination OCD.



@ocdtothenthdegree

How it all started: the onset

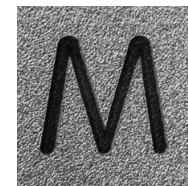
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My experience: Regional contamination



Marcel ...



Clothing Contamination



Exposure Therapy and Regaining my life Again



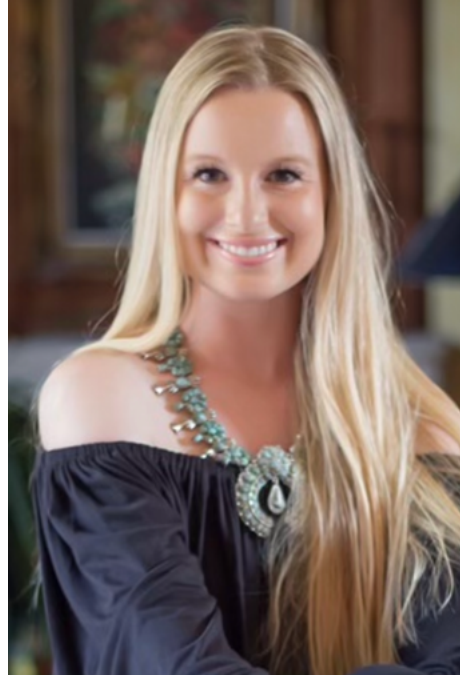
Where I'm at now: A message of hope



Connect with us!



Melissa Mose, LMFT
President OCDSocal
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Kerry Alayne Osborn
Author: "The Obsessive Outsider"
@theobsessiveoutsiders



Mackenzie Reed, RN
Blog: Obsessively OCD
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