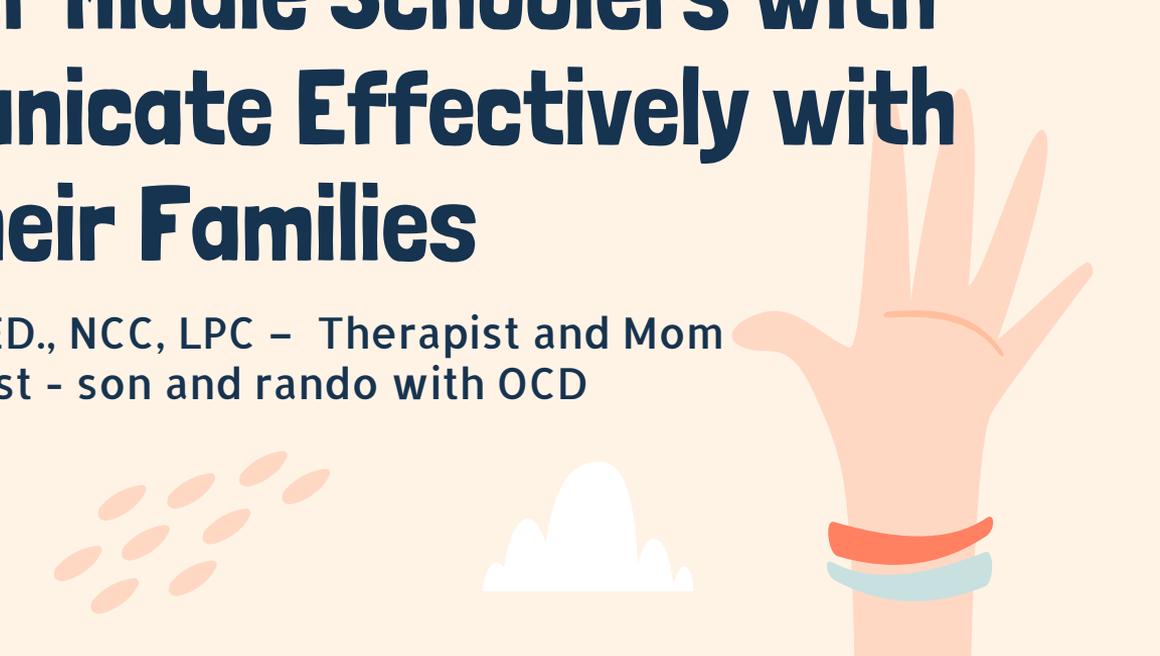




**Opening up:**

# **Strategies for Middle Schoolers with OCD to Communicate Effectively with Their Families**



*ll*

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Brian Prost - son and rando with OCD

# Agenda

1. Understanding **OCD**: Signs and Symptoms
2. Challenges to expressing thoughts and feelings
3. Vulnerability
4. Society and Social Media Culture
5. Strategies and techniques to talk to parents and families
  - Assertive Communication
  - Conflict Resolution
  - Practice and Take-Home Ideas.
1. Questions

# Objectives



## Understand challenges to communicating

Identify what is holding you back

## Learn skills to express your thoughts & feelings



Communicate so your needs are heard



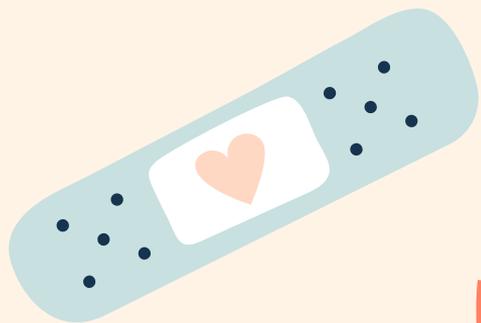
## Resolve conflicts

Learn ways to settle disputes and maintain open communication within your family

## Build trust & support

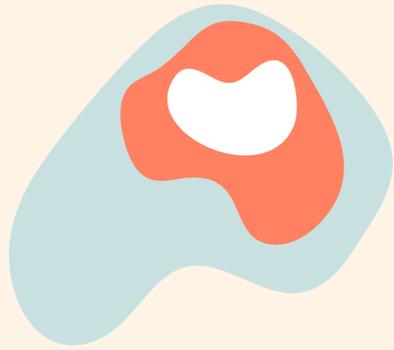
Establish an environment of mutual respect within your home





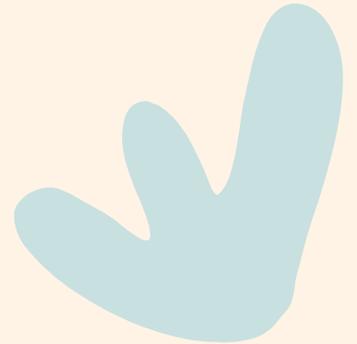
# Introduction





# SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF OCD

Two truths & a lie



# Barriers to communication



01

## Intrusive thoughts

“I can’t tell them what I am thinking!”

02

## Fear of judgement

“What will they think of me?”

03

## Anxiety & Shame

“They won’t understand!”

04

## Fear of burdening others

“I don’t want to worry them!”



# Vulnerability – What is it?



**Vulnerability is:**

Uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure.



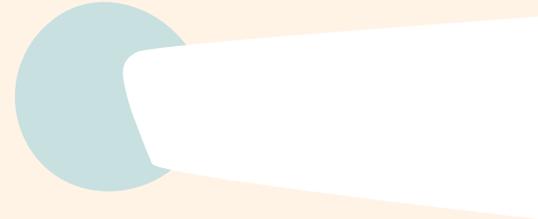
**It is not weakness**

It's our most accurate measure of courage.



**When we fear being vulnerable**

we need to ask ourselves....



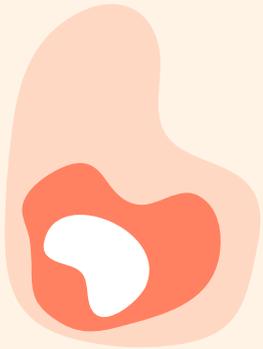
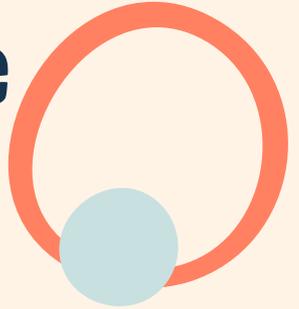
**Are we willing to show up and be seen when we can't control the outcome?**



Brené Brown

# Society and social media culture

- Normative influence - going along with the crowd in order to be liked and accepted.
- Perfectionism - pressure to live up to some standard.
- Fear of judgement - what will people think of my post?
- Comparison and self esteem issues.
- Cyberbullying and social isolation.
- Exposure to triggering content.



# Assertive Communication



## Prepare in advance

Take time to write down what you want to say and how

## Choose a quiet and calm place

Pick a time when you won't be interrupted

## Use I statements

"I feel like it's hard to explain to you how I'm feeling"



## Express your needs and concerns

Share specific situations where their support could be helpful

## Educate them on OCD

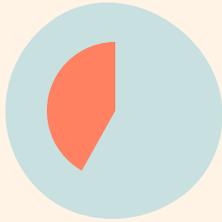
Don't assume they know how it affects you

## Listen actively

Be open to compromise to come up with options where everyone feels heard

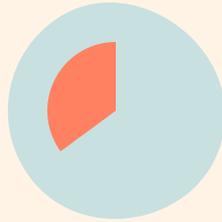


# Conflict resolution strategies



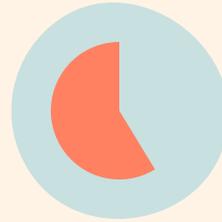
## Talk

calmly about feeling angry or frustrated rather than acting on your feelings.



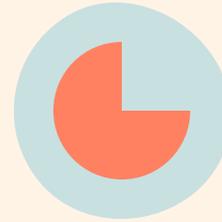
## Watch

your feelings. If you're getting too upset, take a break.



## Face

problems soon after they occur instead of letting them fester. Journal.



## Listen

to other family members and acknowledge what they are saying.



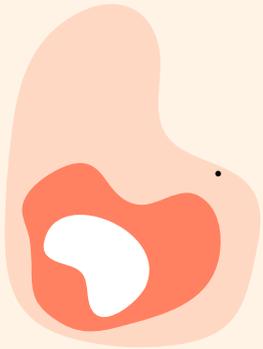
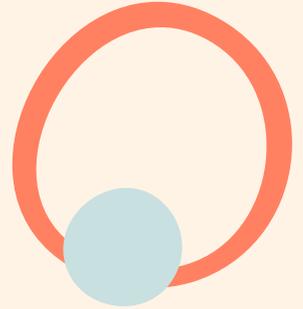


# Conversation Starters

**(Practice exercise)**

# Coping statements for OCD intrusive thoughts

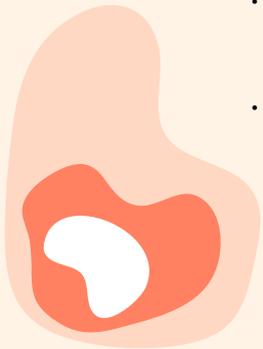
- Focus on "what is" rather than "what if"
- Thoughts are thoughts (not threats)
- Feelings are feelings (not facts)
- Sensations are sensations (not a mandate to act)
- You have to separate beliefs from fears
- Thoughts are like bubbles, waiting to be popped
- There is no such thing as "should" or "should not" when it comes to having feelings. They are a part of who we are. (Mr. Rogers)
- Observe emotions without judgement, like clouds in the sky



# More coping statements



- Be a gatekeeper - be aware of your reactions and triggers and realize "here we go again!" Decide which thoughts and feelings you are going to let through the gate.
- Just because I feel something doesn't make it true.  
Just because I have a thought, I don't have to act on it.
- You can't help that birds will fly over your head, but you can stop them from building nests in your hair.
- Our mind is a garden, our thoughts are the seeds. You can grow flowers or you can grow weeds. (Ritu Ghatourey)
- There is nothing like the present. If you can't live there, you can't live anywhere.



# Communication worksheet



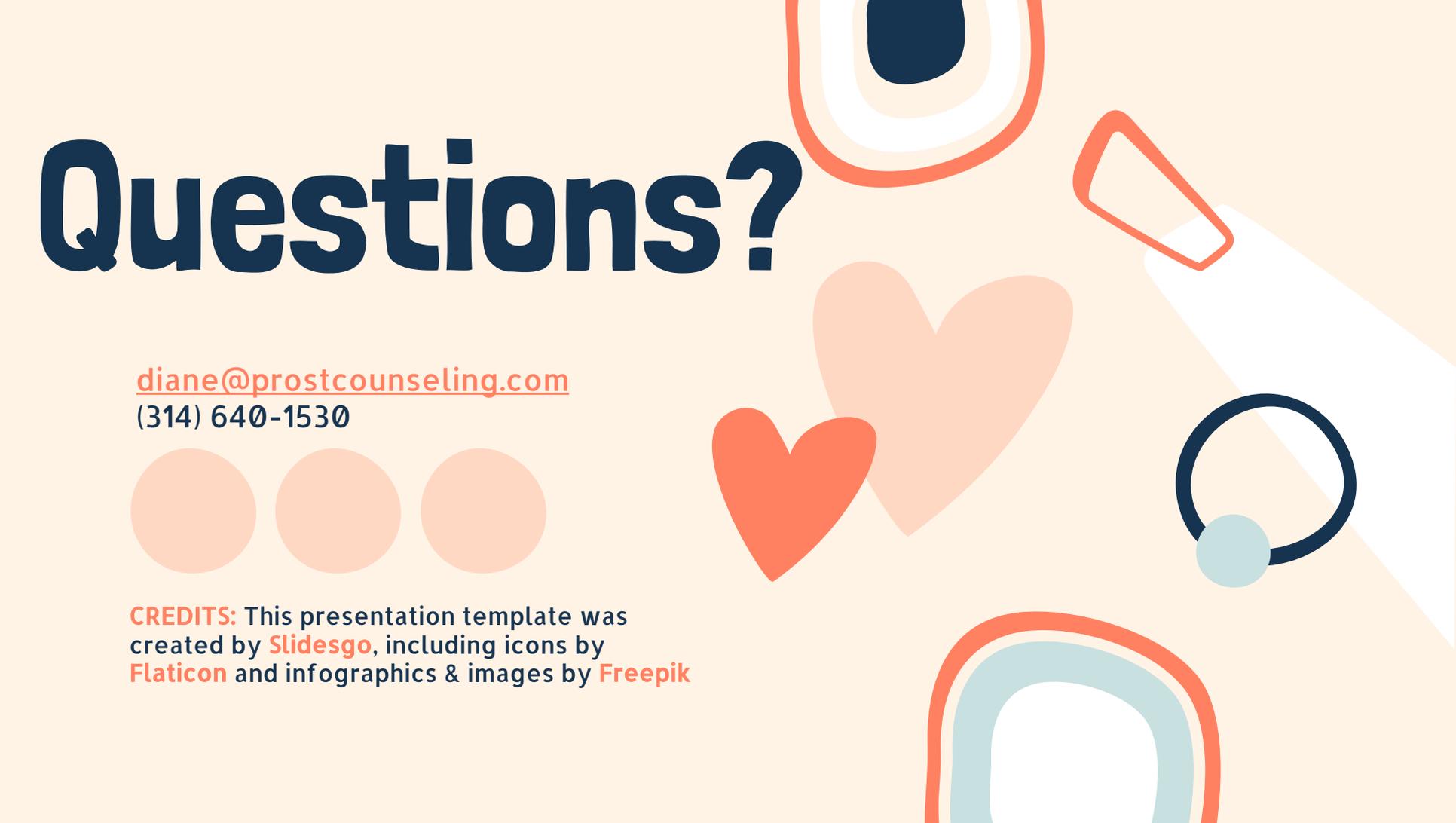
**OCD  
trigger(s)**

**Coping  
strategies**

**Support  
needed**



# Questions?



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