

When OCD is the Manager at Work

A Workshop For Living with OCD

Presenters

Shannon Weise, MSW, LCSW

Emily McCollister, MSW, LSW

Matthew Varnecky

Agenda for today's workshop

Workplace OCD

A brief overview of how OCD can show up in the workplace.

Shannon Weise,
MSW, LCSW

Shannon shares her experience of working with/supervising a clinician with OCD and working with Matt in treatment.

Emily McCollister,
MSW, LSW

Emily shares her experience of being a professional with OCD in various work settings.

Matthew
Varmecky

Matthew shares his personal story with OCD and discusses how it affects him at work.

Process and
Q & A

We share experiences. You may ask any questions at this time.

Learning Objectives of Workshop

- How/when to disclose your diagnosis at work
- Know if you should apply for FMLA
- Identify OCD symptoms that get in the way at work and how to work on them

How OCD often presents itself at work

- Reassurance-seeking
- Lateness
- Checking
- Confessing
- Chronic worry about getting fired
- Indecisiveness
- Difficulty focusing
- Perfectionism
- Excessive concern about mistakes
- Procrastination due to overthinking or wanting to be sure
- Inflexibility
- Avoidance
- Concern about doing something inappropriate or social interactions
- Reviewing behavior regarding social interactions/what you've said

Shannon's experience

Shannon briefly discusses being an OCD therapist, working with clients, and Matthew. She discusses how sessions sometimes become an exposure for the therapist. She shares the challenges she experiences supervising an employee with OCD. Shannon discusses the relationship she has with Emily and how they approach these challenges together.

Emily's experience

Emily discusses working in the field of social work as a professional with OCD. Emily discusses being an OCD therapist with lived experience. She shares the ways in which OCD shows up in the workplace while working with clients and being supervised by Shannon. Emily shares past experiences she has had while working for Children & Youth, being employee of the year, etc. Emily discusses how she disclosed her OCD to Shannon and how they work together to challenge OCD.

Matthew's experience

Matthew shares his experiences at work and challenges of living with OCD. Matthew discusses how his OCD affects him in the work setting, sharing specific examples, discussing how far he has come with treatment and how far he has to go in the areas that he struggles. Matthew discusses how he works with his therapist, Shannon to approach his OCD in the workplace through the use of exposure and response prevention.

Treatment for Workplace OCD

- Exposure & Response Prevention
- ACT
- Mindfulness-based CBT
- Inference-based CBT
- Functional Analytic Psychotherapy

Things to consider about OCD in the workplace

- Have you done anything to help your employer understand you?
- Self-disclosure can help with stigma. (Branning et al., 2021) Have you shared your diagnosis?
- Sharing could be an opportunity to explain what OCD is and educate your employer.

Things to consider about OCD in the workplace

- Have you dealt with frustration from your employer? How have you handled it?
- How do you continue to work through the OCD and not let it manage your actions in the workplace?
- Am I living according to my values?
- Have I considered FMLA? Know your rights.

What is FMLA

The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) allows job-protected leave to address mental health and medical issues. An eligible employee is able to take up to 12 weeks of leave for their own serious health condition that makes them unable to perform their essential job duties. (Fact Sheet # 280: Mental Health Conditions and the FMLA, 2022)

When to consider using FMLA

- Difficulty with functioning at work
- Seeking more intensive treatment
- Should be aligned with treatment goals and used in the short term

Resources

Didonna, F. (2019). *Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy for OCD: A Treatment Manual*. Guilford Publications.

Foa, E. B., & Wilson, R. (1991). *Stop Obsessing!: How to Overcome Your Obsessions and Compulsions*. Bantam.

Hershfield, J. (2015). *When a Family Member Has OCD: Mindfulness and Cognitive Behavioral Skills to Help Families Affected by Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder*. New Harbinger Publications Inc.

Holman, G., Kanter, J., Tsai, M., & Kohlenberg, R. J. (2017). *Functional analytic psychotherapy made simple: A practical guide to therapeutic relationships*. New Harbinger Publications Inc.

International OCD Foundation. (2023, June 8). International OCD Foundation | Home. <https://iocdf.org/>

O'Connor, K., & Aardema, F. (2011). *Clinician's Handbook for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder: Inference-Based Therapy*. John Wiley & Sons.

The OCD Stories. (2023, March 29). home - The OCD Stories. <https://theocdstories.com/>

References

Branning, G., Waters, H. C., Houle, C. R., Worthy, S. L., Fink, B., & Hayes, K. (2021). Mental Illness Disclosure in the Workplace: An Opportunity for Improvement. *American health & drug benefits*, 14(4), 147–153.

Fact sheet #280: Mental Health Conditions and the FMLA. U.S. Department of Labor. (2022, May). <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/whd/fact-sheets/280-mental-health>

Q & A

- Process experience of hearing others discuss their OCD experiences in the workplace
- Ask questions related to presentation topic (we will not provide personal treatment advice or consultation)
- We will stay after to answer additional questions

Contact us

The Anxiety & OCD Treatment Center of Central
Pennsylvania

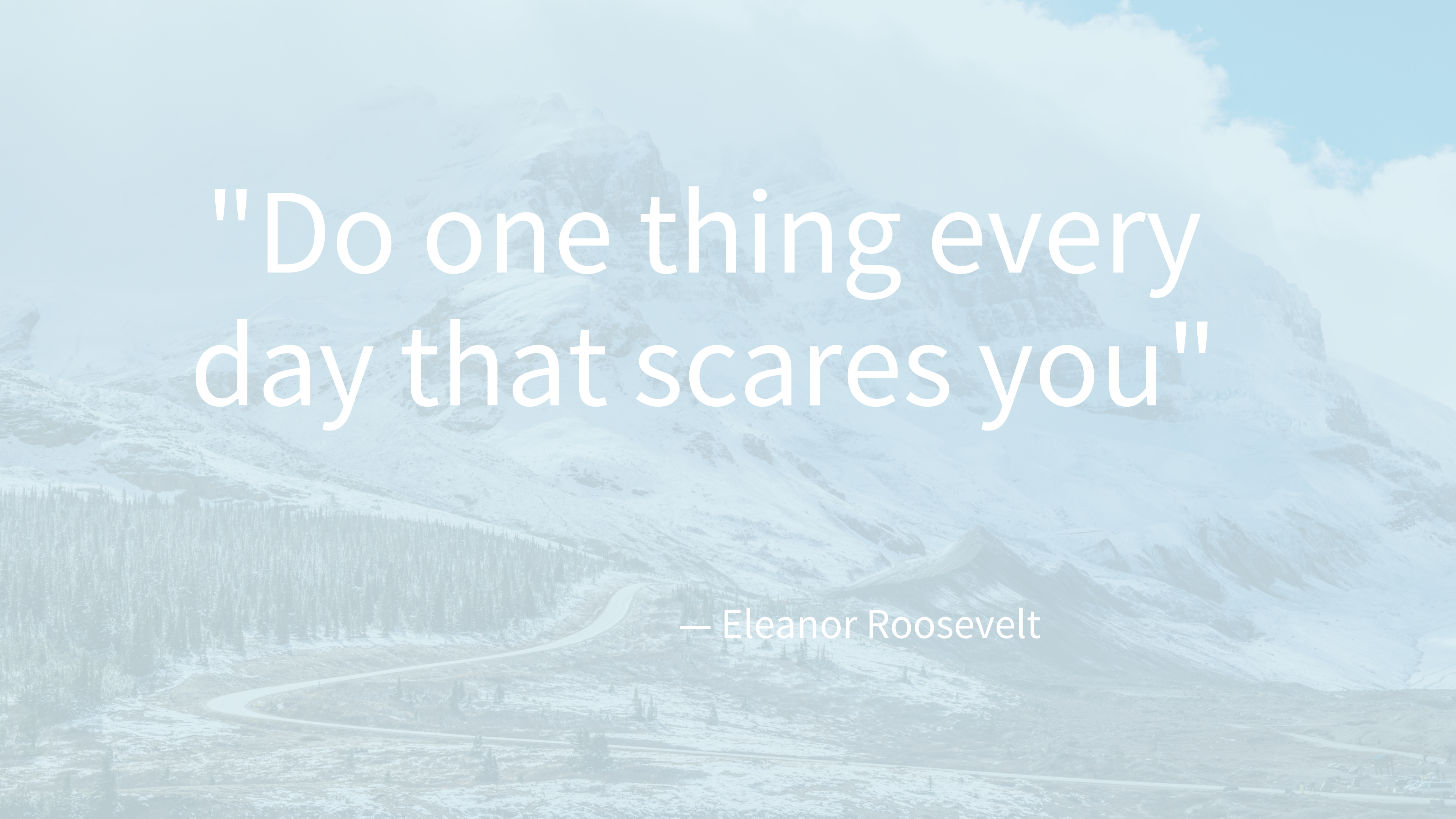
Visit us online at: <https://www.isthisocd.com>

To refer to us please call: 717.461.7933

Email: shannon@isthisocd.com

**Please remember to
complete evaluations.**

Thank you for attending.

A scenic mountain landscape with a winding road and a forest. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent blue filter. The background shows a large, rugged mountain peak with patches of snow or light-colored rock. In the foreground, a dirt road winds through a valley, bordered by a dense forest of evergreen trees on the left. The sky is bright with some clouds.

"Do one thing every
day that scares you"

— Eleanor Roosevelt