

Everybody's Mental Health Matters



Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)

What is OCD?

Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) is a mental health condition that affects 2% of the population. It is characterised by obsessive thoughts that can cause feelings of anxiety.

People who suffer from OCD may experience:

- Frequent, disturbing or unwanted thoughts that cause fears, anxieties and compulsions.

Or perform

- Acts and rituals resulting from obsessive thoughts

Compulsive actions and behaviour such as hand washing, checking, excessive neatness and measuring are not uncommon in people experiencing OCD.

In addition, a person experiencing OCD may realise that his/her compulsions/obsessions are unreasonable or excessive. OCD may be time consuming, for example taking more than an hour a day (particularly were a particular ritual is involved), and can also cause disruption in other aspects of life including work, school or socialising. People experiencing OCD may also experience depressive symptoms.

Self Help:

- One way a person experiencing OCD can help themselves is by exposure to thoughts that might be troubling. For example, it might be helpful to record troubling thoughts, perhaps in writing, then reading your notes on a frequent basis until anxiety around the thought reduces.
- Avoiding alcohol as a way of reducing anxiety
- Resisting compulsive behaviour and not compulsive thoughts

Common Treatments available for OCD

A GP may prescribe several types of treatment which could include:

- Cognitive Behavioural Therapy. Two types of Cognitive Behavioural Therapy are used: Cognitive Therapy (CT) or Exposure and Response Therapy (ERP)
- Guided self help
- Anti-depressant medication
- Group Therapy

Further Information

<http://www.rcpsych.ac.uk>

<http://www.nhsdirect.nhs.uk>