



**OXFORD
COGNITIVE
BEHAVIOURAL
THERAPY**

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for OCD

What is OCD?

OCD is short for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and is an anxiety disorder characterised by unwanted thoughts which lead to feelings of uneasiness, apprehension or fear. Typically the person will carry out compulsions which can be either mental rituals or behaviours aimed at alleviating the discomfort. Unfortunately these repeated patterns of behaviour or thinking often interfere with the person's daily life.

Symptoms of the disorder include excessive washing or cleaning, repeated checking (e.g. doors and windows locked), extreme hoarding, preoccupation with sexual, violent or religious thoughts, relationship related obsessions, aversion to particular numbers and nervous rituals, such as opening and closing a door a certain number of times before entering or leaving a room. These symptoms can be distressing and time consuming. OCD sufferers generally recognise their obsessions and compulsions as irrational and may become further distressed by this realisation.

Obsessive Compulsive disorder can affect children, teenagers, as well as adults.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for OCD

Research has shown that Cognitive Behavioural Therapy significantly helps 75% of people with OCD and is the only treatment recommended by the National Institute of Clinical Excellence (NICE) which guides the National Health Service.

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Therapy is a key component of treatment for Obsessive Compulsive disorder and takes the form of Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP). Treatment will be collaborative and takes place at rate which is acceptable for the person.

What to Expect

Your therapist will help you identify automatic negative thoughts and uncomfortable feelings which contribute to the compulsive behaviours. For example, OCD can literally become a chore, whereby you are spending vast amounts on cleaning materials and time to clean everything, even when you know it's already clean. This also has an effect on the people around you observing what can only be described as a form of torture. Your therapist can help you to understand what drives the behaviour and overcome the uncomfortable feelings.

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy for OCD involves five components:

1. Education. - CBT involves learning about Obsessive Compulsive disorder. It teaches you to identify the links between thoughts and feelings and then to distinguish between helpful and unhelpful actions. An increased understanding of your OCD encourages a more accepting and proactive response to it.
2. Monitoring. - In CBT for OCD, you learn to monitor your compulsive behaviour, including what triggers it, the specific things you worry about, and the severity and length of each episode. This helps you gain perspective, set achievable goals and track your progress.





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3. Behavioural strategies. - CBT teaches you to tackle unhelpful behaviours head on. You may start by imagining the thing of which you are most afraid. By focusing on your fears without trying to avoid or escape them you initially you will feel more anxious. However this feeling will subside and over time and you will more comfortable and ultimately be able to resist carrying out the compulsions. An example may be fear of being contaminated by germs when touching a toilet door handle. Through repetition touching the handle over a period of time you will overcome the anxiety which will subside leaving you feeling less scared to touch the door in the future.
4. Cognitive control strategies. - Through CBT, you learn to realistically evaluate and alter the thinking patterns that contribute to OCD. As you challenge these negative thoughts, your feelings will begin to subside. CBT also teaches you to test the beliefs you have about why you are compelled to perform behaviours, such as “If I repeat certain phrases or count, then bad things are less likely to happen.”
5. Mindfulness - Concentrating on self and the here and now, breathing and meditations that can be used in conjunction with redirection and retraining. Learning the new skills to help to feel more relaxed more of the time.

For more information or to book your therapy session – Contact us today on 01865 920077 or info@OxfordCBT.co.uk.

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