

Exercise

Professional Version | US English

Am I Experiencing Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)



Description

Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) is a condition characterized by the presence of persistent obsessions or compulsions, or most commonly both. It is experienced by between 1 and 2 people out of every 100 (Kessler et al, 2005) but it often goes unrecognized (Heyman et al, 2003).

Obsessions are repetitive and persistent thoughts (e.g., of contamination), images (e.g., of violent scenes), or impulses/urges (e.g., to stab someone) that are experienced as intrusive and unwanted. They are commonly associated with anxiety. The individual typically attempts to ignore these obsessions, suppress them, or neutralize them by performing compulsions.

Compulsions are repetitive behaviors, mental acts, or rituals that an individual feels driven to perform according to rigid rules in response to an obsession, or to achieve a sense of 'completeness'. Examples of overt behaviors include repetitive washing, checking, and ordering of objects. Analogous mental acts include mentally repeating specific phrases to prevent negative outcomes, reviewing a memory to make sure that one has caused no harm, and mentally counting objects. Compulsions are either not connected in a realistic way to the feared event (e.g., arranging items symmetrically to prevent harm to a loved one) or are clearly excessive (e.g., showering daily for hours to prevent illness).

The DSM-5 diagnostic criteria for OCD include:

- The presence of obsessions, compulsions, or both.
- Obsessions or compulsions which are time-consuming, or which cause clinically significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, or other important areas of functioning.

The ICD-11 diagnostic criteria for OCD include:

- The presence of persistent obsessions and/or compulsions.
- Obsessions and compulsions that are time-consuming (e.g., take more than 1 hour per day) or result in significant distress or impairment in important areas of functioning (e.g., personal, family, social, educational, occupational). If functioning is maintained, it is only through significant additional effort.

Am I Experiencing Obsessive Compulsive Disorder? is an indicative screening tool, designed to help clients self-assess whether their experiences might warrant further investigation. It is not intended to give a formal diagnosis or provide a measure of severity.

Instructions

Suggested Question



Some people who describe symptoms like yours have a condition called obsessive compulsive disorder. Would you like to try a short quiz that could give us an idea of whether this problem troubles you?

References

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World Health Organization. (2019). *ICD-11: International classification of diseases* (11th revision). Retrieved from <https://icd.who.int/>

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A diagnosis of OCD should only be made by a mental health professional. However, answering the questions below can give you an idea of whether you might find it helpful have a professional assessment.

Do you have unwanted thoughts, images, or impulses that seem uncontrollable?

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

Do you try to get rid of these thoughts, images, or impulses?

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

Do you have rituals or repetitive behaviours that take up a lot of time in a day?

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

Do you wash or clean a lot?

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

Do you keep checking things over and over again?

Never Occasionally Sometimes Often

Are you troubled by these problems?

Not at all A little bit Quite a lot Very much

If you ticked the rightmost box to lots of these questions, it is an indication that you could be experiencing OCD.

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