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Stop Mental Illness Foundation

N E W S L E T T E R

April Edition

OCDS

OCD is a chronic mental health condition characterized by obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours.

Oluseyi's Corner

Resilience is a skill that can be developed and strengthened over time.



Stop Mental Illness Foundation



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WHAT IS OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER OCDS?

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is a chronic (long-term) mental health condition characterized by impairing obsessions and often accompanied by avoidance behaviours. People with obsessive-compulsive disorder have obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours and therefore do something repetitive (compulsions) to alleviate the unwanted thoughts.

As human beings, we may have distressing thoughts or repetitive behaviours once in a while that is usually not associated with obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviour. But people with OCD have recurring thoughts and rigid intrusive behaviours, which can significantly interfere with their lives.

WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT SYMPTOMS OF OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER?

People with OCD will normally experience recurring obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviours. Obsessive thoughts and ongoing worry usually drive sufferers of OCD to do something repetitively to get rid of the thoughts and feelings (compulsions). With an attempt to try to put right the distress and relieve the anxiety, a quick check becomes several checks and then becomes hours of checking and finally endless checking. But instead of going away, the images intensified.

OBSESSION

Obsessions are undesirable and persistent thoughts, impulses, or images that enter the mind and may be hard to control and cause distressing emotions such as anxiety, concern, fear or disgust.

EXAMPLES OF COMMON SIGNS OF OBSESSION THOUGHTS:

- Fear contamination might harm them or a loved one.
- Fear of touching shared objects.
- Intrusive thoughts, images, sounds, talks or music
- Suspicion of being harmed
- Fear of shaking someone's hand,
- Fear of using public toilets or shared toilets,
- Fear of touching door handles,
- Fear of using plates, glasses, or cutlery in a public place
- Fear of causing harm to loved ones or oneself



COMPULSION

Compulsions are mental or physical actions that someone with OCD will have the feelings of doing often and repeatedly to relieve the anxiety from obsessions. Examples of Common Signs of Obsession thoughts:

- Constantly aspiring for approval or reassurance
- Repeatedly checking that you have your wallet, purse, phone, or keys on you
- Excessive hand washing or cleaning, showering, brushing teeth and toileting for fear of contamination by individuals or the environment
- Checking on things continuously for fear of losing or scrapping something important



FACTS AND EXAMPLES OF OCD BEHAVIOUR

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a disorder that affects thousands of people each year, usually starting during early adulthood. Women are more likely affected than men, and caring and sensitive people are more susceptible to OCD. Obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviour can cause distress and fear of bad outcomes. Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is a mental disorder caused by several factors, such as biological, environmental, psychological, and genetic. It can cause people to feel dirty, unsure, or responsible for harm, interrupting the normal flow of thought and forming the basis for vulnerable people to develop obsessive problems. Research has established that mental disorders are caused by biological, environmental, psychological, and genetic factors.

BIOLOGICAL FACTOR

OCD is caused by communication errors between different parts of the brain, abnormalities in neurotransmitter systems, and faulty or dysfunctional beliefs about intrusive thoughts. People with OCD often engage in compulsive behaviour to resist or neutralize these obsessions.

ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS

Environmental factors may also contribute to the onset of OCD. Infection does not cause OCD, but sufferers begin to exhibit the symptoms of OCD after a severe bacterial or viral infection. Environmental factors such as stress and parenting styles can also cause OCD in someone predisposed to it, and OCD symptoms can worsen in times of severe stress.



PSYCHOLOGICAL FACTORS

Psychological factors, such as Phobia, can lead to OCD, while environmental factors, such as life events, physical health conditions, and social isolation, can also increase risk. People with high personal standards are more likely to develop OCD.

GENETIC FACTORS

OCD can be passed down from parents to children, and treatment consists of Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) and medication such as antidepressants. Family health history and gene variants also play a role in determining risk.



COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY

CBT is the first-line therapy for OCD, aiming to correct dysfunctional thoughts and beliefs and change compulsive behaviours. Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) is the most common CBT and effective treatment.

CBT is the most effective tool for treating OCD, helping patients realize their fearful thoughts are mere thoughts.

MEDICATION

Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs) and CBT have been effective for treating OCD, but it depends on patient preference, cognitive abilities, psychiatric conditions, and treatment availability. Research has shown increased quality of life and improved functioning.

SELF-CARE

Maintaining a healthy lifestyle can help cope with OCD, which is associated with maladaptive interpretations of cognitive intrusions.



The Obsessive-Compulsive Cognitions Working Group identified six types of dysfunctional beliefs associated with OCD:

1. Inflated responsibility is a belief that you can cause OCD, in the same way, you are responsible for preventing negative outcomes ;
2. Over-importance of thoughts (thought-action fusion) is the belief that having a bad thought is morally equivalent to actually doing it;
3. Control of thoughts is the belief that it is both essential and possible to have total control over one's thoughts;
4. Overestimation of threat is a belief that negative events are very probable and that they will be particularly bad;
5. Perfectionism is a belief that one cannot make mistakes and that imperfection is unacceptable; and
6. Intolerance for uncertainty is a belief that it is essential and possible to know, without a doubt, that negative events won't happen.



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SMIF SIMPLE MECHANISMS:

The most important details are that externalizing intrusive thoughts and feelings is an effective way to handle them, and that visualization techniques such as mental rehearsal, affirmations, grounding techniques, and animal-assisted therapy can help reduce stress and anxiety. Additionally, interacting with nature has cognitive benefits for stress reduction and attention restoration, and animal-assisted therapy is a treatment adjunct for traumatized patients. Finally, it is important to understand that imperfect humans are prone to mistakes, and that relaxation techniques such as meditation, yoga, visualization, and massage can help ease stress and anxiety.

HOW CAN I SUPPORT A LOVED ONE STRUGGLING WITH OCD?

The involvement of family and friends is a predictor of treatment success. The family, friends, caregivers and loved ones can continuously reassure people with OCD that their intrusive thoughts are not real and help them practice recommended management techniques.



RESILIENCE

OLUSEYI'S CORNER

Resilience is the ability to adapt and recover from challenging situations. It is the capacity to bounce back from setbacks, overcome adversity, and continue moving forward in the face of adversity. Resilience is not a fixed trait that some people have and others do not have, rather it is a skill that can be developed and strengthened over time.

Resilience involves a combination of factors, including a positive mindset, the ability to regulate emotions, healthy coping strategies, social support, and a sense of purpose or meaning in life. Resilient individuals can face challenges with greater confidence, flexibility, and creativity and are better able to learn from setbacks and move forward in a positive direction.



It has been suggested that some young people today may lack resilience due to several factors. On the other hand, resilience is a complex trait influenced by different factors, and many young people are incredibly resilient and capable of overcoming adversity.

One factor may be the increasing emphasis on academic achievement and success, which can create a high-pressure environment that may not allow opportunities to develop resilience. Similarly, social media and constant comparison to others may contribute to a sense of inadequacy and lack of resilience.

Another factor may be the increased emphasis on safety and protection from potential harm, which can be beneficial in many ways but may also limit opportunities for young people to learn how to handle risk and adversity.

Finally, changes in family structures and the prevalence of single-parent households may also contribute to a lack of resilience in some young people, as they may lack strong role models or supportive networks to help them navigate challenges.

Building resilience in a challenging environment like Nigeria requires a positive mindset, self-care, a support network, realistic goals, coping strategies, and gratitude. To build resilience, it is important to cultivate a positive mindset, practice self-care, build a support network, set realistic goals, develop coping strategies, and practice gratitude. Be kind and patient with yourself and seek support when needed.

UPCOMING PROJECT

SMIF CHILDREN'S DAY CELEBRATION

Children's Day in Nigeria provides an opportunity to raise awareness about the challenges faced by children in the country, including poverty, lack of access to education, and child labour.

SMIF wants to seize this opportunity to raise mental health awareness among children by organising a fun-filled event.

Account Details

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