

What causes OCD?

Genes: OCD is sometimes inherited, so can occasionally run in the family.

Stress: stressful life events bring it on in about 1 out of 3 cases.

Life changes: times where someone suddenly has to take on more responsibility.

Brain changes: if you have the symptoms of OCD for more than a short time, researchers think that an imbalance of a chemical called serotonin (also known as 5HT) develops in the brain, although this has not been proven.

Personality: if you are a neat, meticulous, methodical person with high standards you may be more likely to develop OCD.

Ways of thinking: Most of us are able to quickly dismiss odd or distressing thoughts and get on with our lives. However, some people find it terribly distressing to have these thoughts due to high standards of morality and responsibility.

Treatments

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy: helps to change the way you think and behave so you can feel better and get on with your life.

- **Exposure and Response Prevention:** a way to stop compulsive behaviours and anxieties from strengthening each other.
- **Cognitive Therapy:** a psychological treatment which helps you to change your reaction to the thoughts, instead of trying to get rid of them.

Antidepressant medication: SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors) can help to reduce obsessions and compulsions, even if you are not depressed, however these can have side effects.

The Five Ways to Wellbeing: encourage the person to maintain their social life, be active with regular physical activity, encourage them to talk and practice mindfulness.

O b s e s s i o n s

Obsessions are unwelcome thoughts, ideas or urges that repeatedly appear in your mind; for example, thinking that you have been contaminated by germs or worrying that you haven't turned off the oven.

- **Thoughts:** single words, short phrases or rhymes that are unpleasant, shocking or blasphemous.
- **Pictures in your mind:** showing your family dead, or seeing yourself doing something violent or sexual which is completely out of character
- **Doubts:** you may wonder for hours whether you might have caused an accident or misfortune to someone.
- **Ruminations:** you endlessly argue with yourself about whether to do one thing or another so you can't make the simplest decision.
- **Perfectionism:** you are bothered, in a way that other people are not, if things are not in the exactly the right order, not balanced or not in the right place.

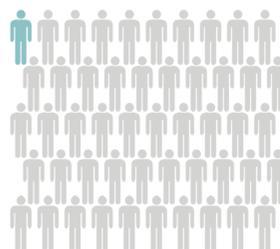
Mental Health: Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD) has 3 main parts:

- the thoughts that make you anxious (obsessions)
- the anxiety you feel
- the things you do to reduce your anxiety (compulsions)

Around 1 in every 50 people suffer from OCD at some point in their lives, men and women equally.

1 in 50



That adds up to over 1 million people in the U.K.

E m o t i o n s

- You may feel tense, anxious, fearful, guilty, disgusted or depressed.
- You may feel better if you carry out your compulsive behaviour, or ritual - but it doesn't last long.



C o m p u l s i o n s

Compulsions are repetitive activities that you feel you have to do.

This could be something like repeatedly checking a door to make sure it is locked or washing your hands a set number of times.

- Correcting obsessional thoughts
- Rituals
- Checking
- Avoidance
- Hoarding
- Reassurance

