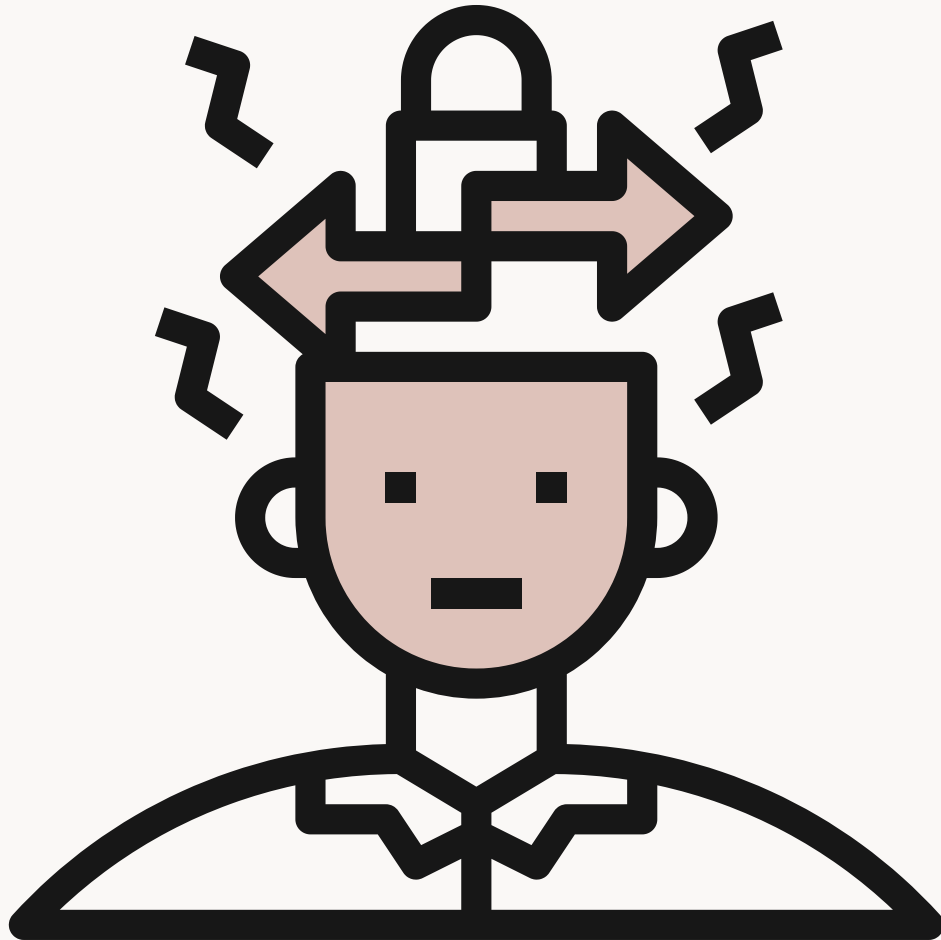


SILENCE THE SHAME

# MENTAL HEALTH GUIDE: OBSESSIVE- COMPULSIVE DISORDER



**Silence**  
**the ~~Shame~~**

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# OVERVIEW

Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is a common, chronic, and long-lasting disorder in which a person has uncontrollable, reoccurring thoughts (obsessions) and/or behaviors (compulsions) that he or she feels the urge to repeat over and over.



People with OCD may have symptoms of obsessions, compulsions, or both. These symptoms can interfere with all aspects of life, such as work, school, and personal relationships.

Obsessions are repeated thoughts, urges, or mental images that cause anxiety.

# SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

## OBSESSIONS

- Fear of germs or contamination
- Unwanted forbidden or taboo thoughts involving sex, religion, or harm
- Aggressive thoughts towards others or self
- Having things symmetrical or in a perfect order

## COMPULSIONS

- Excessive cleaning and/or handwashing
- Ordering and arranging things in a particular, precise way
- Repeatedly checking on things, such as repeatedly checking to see if the door is locked or that the oven is off
- Compulsive counting

## GENERAL

- Can't control his or her thoughts or behaviors, even when those thoughts or behaviors are recognized as excessive
- Spends at least 1 hour a day on these thoughts or behaviors
- Doesn't get pleasure when performing the behaviors or rituals, but may feel brief relief from the anxiety the thoughts cause
- Experiences significant problems in their daily life due to these thoughts or behaviors

# TREATMENT

OCD is typically treated with medication, psychotherapy, or a combination of the two. Although most patients with OCD respond to treatment, some patients continue to experience symptoms.

Sometimes people with OCD also have other mental disorders, such as anxiety, depression, and body dysmorphic disorder, a disorder in which someone mistakenly believes that a part of their body is abnormal. It is important to consider these other disorders when making decisions about treatment.

## Medication

Serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SRIs), which include selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are used to help reduce OCD symptoms.

SRIs often require higher daily doses in the treatment of OCD than of depression and may take 8 to 12 weeks to start working, but some patients experience more rapid improvement.

If symptoms do not improve with these types of medications, research shows that some patients may respond well to an antipsychotic medication.

Although research shows that an antipsychotic medication may help manage symptoms for people who have both OCD and a tic disorder, research on the effectiveness of antipsychotics to treat OCD is mixed.

## Psychotherapy

Psychotherapy can be an effective treatment for adults and children with

OCD. Research shows that certain types of psychotherapy, including cognitive behavior therapy (CBT) and other related therapies (e.g., habit reversal training) can be as effective as medication for many individuals.

Research also shows that a type of CBT called Exposure and Response Prevention (EX/RP) – spending time in the very situation that triggers compulsions (e.g. touching dirty objects) but then being prevented from undertaking the usual resulting compulsion (e.g. handwashing) – is effective in reducing compulsive behaviors in OCD, even in people who did not respond well to SRI medication.

# RESOURCES

## 01 Crisis Text Line

Text SILENCE to 707070 and you'll be connected to a trained Crisis Counselor. Crisis Text Line provides free, text-based support 24/7.

## 02 National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Call 1-800-273-8255. The National Suicide Prevention Lifeline is a national network of local crisis centers that provide free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

## 03 SAMHSA's Treatment Locator

Call 1-800-662-4357 to access information about local mental health services.

## 04 Disaster Distress Helpline

The national Disaster Distress Helpline is available for anyone experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters. Call or text 1-800-985-5990 to be connected to a trained, caring counselor. 24/7/365.  
[www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov](http://www.disasterdistress.samhsa.gov).

## 05 The Trevor Project

Leading national organization providing crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer & questioning youth.  
Trevor Lifeline 1-866-488-7386: TrevorText START to 678-678: TrevorChat

## 06 Anxiety & Depression Association of America

Find more resources at  
<https://adaa.org/find-help/support/community-resources>

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