

# Assess the Role OCD Plays in Your Life

**Objective:** To determine how you are impacted by OCD by exploring your thoughts, actions, and experiences.

## You Should Know

Many people have thoughts or see images that are upsetting or strange, but they are usually spontaneous, infrequent, and quickly dismissed. In contrast, OCD-fueled obsessions often consist of the same mental activity over at least a two-week period or more. This mental torment is usually accompanied by an extreme and overwhelming desire to stop or control these thoughts in order to alleviate the severe anxiety they provoke.

Compulsions are repetitive actions that people who suffer from OCD feel compelled to engage in to alleviate their anxiety. More often than not, they realize that these actions are unreasonable and even harmful but are still unable to stop themselves.

What makes OCD so difficult to comprehend and diagnose is the various ways that obsessions and compulsions can present themselves. Perhaps you don't quite know how to describe what you are experiencing, let alone how to make it stop. This assessment can help you explore your thoughts and actions, your accompanying emotions, and the physical sensations you experience.

## Does This Sound Like You?

Amy saw the same frightening images and had the same disturbing thoughts over and over again at the most inconvenient times. She found herself engaging in repetitive actions to stop the images and thoughts. Somewhere deep within, she realized these actions were nonsensical and even somewhat dangerous, but she felt compelled to take them. Amy did not know how to describe what she was experiencing, let alone how to make it end.

## What to Do

This activity will help you:

- recognize that the symptoms you experience are not unique to you but are universally experienced by others with OCD;
- recognize that your behaviors are symptoms of a disorder and not personal imperfections that stem solely from within you;
- learn what areas you could focus on to begin to manage your OCD;

- collect information that can help you to decide what steps to take next.

Circle the answer that most represents how you feel. If you answer “True” to at least two of the statements within a group of questions, you are most likely experiencing symptoms that characterize OCD.

### **Obsessions**

1. The same thought appears in my mind repeatedly.  True  False
2. I have obsessed over the same thought for at least a two-week period.  
 True  False
3. I have thoughts and see images that are disturbing to me.  True  False
4. I find myself trying unsuccessfully to stop or control the distressing thoughts and images I experience.  True  False

How many of these statements did you circle as true? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Compulsions**

1. I feel compelled to engage in repetitive behaviors in response to my obsessive thoughts.  
 True  False
2. My repetitive behaviors are all aimed at reducing the anxiety or mental distress derived from my obsessions.  True  False
3. I recognize that the compulsive acts I engage in are most likely not helpful to me, but I feel compelled to do them anyhow.  True  False

How many of these statements did you circle as true? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Contamination OCD**

A fear of becoming contaminated or contaminating someone else with germs after coming in contact with real or imaginary unclean objects, places, or people.

1. I avoid touching certain things because of possible contamination.  True  False
2. I clean my living space excessively.  True  False
3. I wash my hands excessively.  True  False
4. I often take extremely long showers or baths.  True  False
5. I am overly concerned with germs and diseases.  True  False
6. I am afraid of going into hospitals.  True  False

7. I am afraid of coming in contact with people who seem to be dirty.

True  False

8. I am afraid of certain colors that I associate with germs or dirt.  True  False

How many of these statements did you circle as true? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Symmetry and Ordering OCD**

The fear that negative consequences will follow or that harm will come to you or those you care about because objects are arranged or positioned in the wrong order and do not follow a certain pattern.

1. I must have certain things around me set in a specific order.  True  False

2. I spend a lot of time making sure that things are in the right place.  True  False

3. I notice immediately when my things are out of place.  True  False

4. It is important that my bedding be straightened out impeccably.  True  False

5. I need to arrange certain things in special patterns.  True  False

6. When other people rearrange my things, I get extremely upset.  True  False

How many of these statements did you circle as true? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Harm OCD**

A fear of harming yourself, a loved one, or a stranger through deliberate or thoughtless acts.

1. I fear that I will blurt out inappropriate words at an inappropriate moment.

True  False

2. I worry that I will harm someone by making careless mistakes.  True  False

3. I worry about the fate of complete strangers.  True  False

4. I believe I have the power to keep people from harm.  True  False

How many of these statements did you circle as true? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Checking and Repeating OCD**

A fear that manifests itself in the constant feeling that something bad will happen if you don't repeatedly check to make certain that everything is all right.

1. I frequently have to check things over and over again.  True  False

2. I have difficulty finishing tasks because I repeat actions.  True  False

3. I often repeat tasks in order to prevent something bad from happening.  
\_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False

4. I worry excessively about making mistakes. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False

How many of these statements did you circle as true? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Perfection OCD**

Having an unrealistic and unhealthy obsession about performing tasks to a standard that is excessively high and impossible to reach.

1. I have an excessive preoccupation with past mistakes. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False

2. I fear making new mistakes. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False

3. I have constant doubts about whether I am doing something correctly.  
\_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False

4. I have very high expectations for myself and for others. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False

How many of these statements did you circle as true? \_\_\_\_\_

### **Magical Thinking or Thought-Action Fusion OCD**

Believing that simply thinking about an action is equivalent to actually carrying out that action.

1. I believe that my thoughts can cause something to happen. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False

2. I believe that thinking about an unwanted event makes it more likely the event will happen. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False

3. I believe that my thoughts are dangerous. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False

4. I believe that certain numbers, colors, phrases, or actions are unlucky and can cause harm. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False

5. I believe that certain numbers, colors, phrases, or actions are lucky and are responsible for good things happening. \_\_\_\_ True \_\_\_\_ False

How many of these statements did you circle as true? \_\_\_\_\_

If you circled more statements as true than false in one or more sections, you should consider the idea that OCD symptoms play a large and impactful role in your life.

## Reflection

Do you like the way your life has been going?

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Do you feel confused and overwhelmed by the thoughts and feelings you've been having?

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Do you want to address these thoughts but not know how to describe what you are experiencing?

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Do you feel like you want and need to make a change in your life but don't know where to begin?

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## Feedback

Rate this exercise on a scale of 1 to 4, with 1 being the lowest and 4 being the highest.

This exercise was helpful overall.

\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_ 4

It helped me learn something new.

\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_ 4

It helped me reach my goals.

\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_ 2 \_\_\_ 3 \_\_\_ 4