



OCD – WHAT IS IT AND WHAT KEEPS IT GOING

In a nutshell, OCD is a problem of trying too hard to reduce the threat of harm.

Obsessions are usually intrusive thoughts, images, doubts or impulses that a person tries hard not to think about, or a kind of harm they particularly want to prevent. This might be a threat of harm to themselves or other people, in the present or the future.

If you have OCD, you often feel you have a pivotal responsibility for preventing harm or causing harm. This is often based on a misinterpretation that a “mental event”, (such as thought, doubt, impulse or image) is a threat in some way and is linked to an action in reality. You may worry that having these thoughts, feelings, and anxieties may make you lose control or go mad.

To manage, push out, or try to reduce these obsessions, people with OCD often carry out a set of actions which are called **compulsions**. These compulsions, although they can offer short term relief, keep the problem going for a number of reasons that are explained below.

- 1) The more you check something the more responsible you will feel.
- 2) The more you check something the more doubts you'll have
- 3) The more you try to neutralize or suppress a thought or image, the stronger and more intrusive it will become.
- 4) The more you analyse a thought, the more significant it will become, and the more your mind will pay attention to it.
- 5) The more you try to reduce threats, the more aware of them you will become.
- 6) The more you try to reassure yourself, or get reassurance from others, the more your doubts return.
- 7) The more you wash, the more likely you are to feel dirty and wash again.
- 8) The more you avoid something, the more your fear of it will increase.

As you can see from these points, your current solutions are maintaining the problem and are keeping the OCD going.