

## **OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER**

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- OCD is a common, chronic, debilitating psychiatric disorder that has studied for years
- The defining features of OCD are recurrent, persistent, intrusive, troubling thoughts (obsessions), and/or ritualized, repetitive behaviors (compulsions) that are usually, but not always, done in response to the obsessive thoughts
- It is the 4<sup>th</sup> most common psychiatric disorder, yet it is the hidden epidemic because the person with this diagnosis are fearful that they will have an overwhelming urge to satisfy their compulsion and they will then feel out of control
- OCD often begins in childhood and once it usually starts it will continue throughout the lifespan.
- It effect approximately 4% of the US population of both men and women

### ***KEY FEATURES OF OCD:***

#### *1. Obsessions:*

- Unwanted ideas or impulses that repeatedly well up in the mind of the person
- Persistent fears that harm may come to self or loved one, an unreasonable belief that one has a terrible illness, or an excessive need to do things correctly or perfectly
- Again and again the person experiences these disturbing thoughts
- Often these obsessions are of a violent or a sexual nature, or concern illness

#### Examples:

Obsessions with:

- Germs
- Dirt
- Doubt
- Order
- Symmetry
- Repugnant sexual thoughts
- Repugnant religious thoughts
- Repugnant images

- Horrific images
- Violent images
- Fear of forgetting
- Fear that a mistake will harm a loved on

Obsessions provoke compulsions

## 2. *Compulsions:*

- In response to their obsessions, most people with OCD resort to repetitive behaviors called compulsions
- The most common of these are washing and checking
- These behaviors are generally intended to ward off harm to the person
- Performing these rituals may provide some relief from the anxiety, but it is only temporary

### Examples:

Compulsions to repeatedly

- Wash hands
- Shower
- Check locks
- Touch things
- Count items
- Order things
- Clean things
- Perform silly rituals until it “feels” right

## ***HOW CAN OCD BE TREATED?***

- Presently there are some medications that are helpful in treating this disorder:
  1. Anafril
  2. Prozac
  3. Luvox
- Behavior therapy for OCD uses exposure and response prevention
- In exposure and response prevention the patient is exposed to a situation that would evoke obsessive worries and a strong urge for a compulsive response and the person is instructed not to give into the urge
- These techniques are used to coach the patient into alternative behaviors that he/she find work better

- Today 80% to 90% of OCD patients eventually obtain significant relief, if treated aggressively
- Unfortunately few with this disorder seek assistance because of their fears of the unknown
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