

OBSESSIONAL COMPULSIVE DISORDER [OCD]

OCD is a disorder characterized by obsessions and / or compulsions. OCD is common, affecting approximately 1 in 30 people. It usually appears in childhood or adolescence but continues into adulthood. It is an exaggeration of normal thoughts and actions that happen in nearly everyone. Most people find that from time to time, they have worrying thoughts that they cannot get out of their head or they carry out repetitive actions that are not really necessary. Obsessions are recurrent, persistent thoughts or ideas that the person may feel are senseless but are unable to ignore them. Compulsions are repetitive, ritualistic behaviours that the person feels driven to perform. Obsessions and compulsions in OCD can cause a lot of distress to the individual and their family. They can be very time-consuming, interfering with people's daily lives.

Treatment

Cognitive behaviour therapy has been shown to be very helpful in treating OCD. It involves learning to manage the situations that would normally provoke compulsive actions. Sufferers may learn to resist the compulsions and to tolerate the discomfort they experience as a result which gradually lessens with time. It also aims to change the way sufferers think about the situations associated with their OCD. Sufferers of OCD can benefit from self-help techniques, either individually or within a group.

For further information contact Obsessive Action [see Useful Contacts].