Some Common Compulsions of People Struggling with OCD

*Excessive Hand-washing:* Washing hands multiple times in a row, scrubbing hands raw, or a constant fear of contracting a disease such as HIV.

*Overzealous Cleaning:* Hours a day spent cleaning; feeling anxious when attempting to stop.

*Checking Behavior:* Such as returning 3 or more times to check if the door is locked, the appliances are turned off, faucets, etc.

*Counting:* Feeling like you need to perform tasks a certain amount of times or in a particular pattern. These behaviors may be driven by superstitious beliefs.

*Organization:* An obsession over achieving perfect order; anxiety if things are not exactly ordered.

*Unwanted sexual thoughts:* Individuals may struggle with inappropriate or taboo thoughts about sexual behavior.

*Religious Obsessions:* Unwanted thoughts such as blasphemous religious thoughts, compulsive prayer, and intense concern about committing a sin.

***If you experience problems like the ones above, and trying to stop causes you extreme anxiety or fear, you may be struggling with OCD. The good news is, you can get help!***

Local & National Resources:

*Kentucky Psychiatric and Mental Health Services
  9700 Park Plaza Ave., Suite 108
  Louisville, Kentucky 40241
  (502) 339-2442
  www.drkevinchapman.com

*Louisville OCD Clinic
  2011 Lake Point Way, Suite 201
  Louisville, KY 40223
  (502) 403-7818
  www.louisvilleocdclinic.com

*Lindner Center of HOPE
  4075 Old Western Row Road
  Mason, Ohio 45040
  (513) 536-0600
  www.lindnercenterofhope.org

*International OCD Foundation
  PO Box 961029, Boston, MA 02196
  (617) 973-5801
  www.ocfoundation.org

*Seven Counties Services
  24 Hour Hope Hotline: (502) 589-4313 or 1-800-221-0446
  101 West Muhammad Ali Blvd
  Louisville, KY 40202
  www.sevencounties.org

If you or someone you know is suffering from OCD, there is help! If you cannot locate these resources, ask for help from your doctor or counselor. The symptoms of OCD may be made much more manageable.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

“I feel like I’m constantly counting in my head and reorganizing the items on my desk. Even when the pencils are perfectly arranged, I can’t stop myself.”

“When I take a shower, I scrub my body over and over again...sometimes I spend up to an hour standing in there and my skin becomes raw. I just can’t seem to stop.”

What’s wrong with me?

Help & Hope for People Suffering From OCD
What is Obsessive Compulsive Disorder?

OCD is a mental disorder that includes obsessions and/or compulsions. Most people experience both obsessions and compulsions. The obsessions are usually upsetting and cause distress.

Who else has this?

If you suffer from OCD symptoms, you are not alone. About 1.2% of people in the United States are diagnosed with OCD each year. The average age that OCD starts to bother people is 19.5 years.

What Causes OCD?

There are several factors that work together to cause OCD: genetics, life events, personality, and the environment. Physical and sexual abuse or other trauma during childhood has been associated with a higher risk for developing OCD. Individuals with parents who have been diagnosed with OCD are also at a higher risk of developing OCD.

Do I Have OCD?

If you experience obsessions and/or compulsions, you should talk to a licensed mental health professional, like a counselor, therapist, psychologist, or psychiatrist.

Obessions: Recurrent and persistent thoughts, feelings, images, or urges that are unwanted and cause a great deal of anxiety or distress.

Compulsions: Repetitive behaviors (hand-washing, ordering, checking) or mental acts (counting, repeating words silently) that the person feels driven to perform in response to an obsession or rigid rules. These behaviors or mental acts are aimed at preventing or reducing anxiety or distress or preventing some dreaded situation; however, these behaviors/mental acts are not realistically connected to what they are trying to prevent, or are clearly excessive.

Is there a cure for OCD? What are the treatment options?

No cure for OCD exists; however, with proper treatment the symptoms can be made much more manageable.

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is a common technique used for people struggling with OCD. This method teaches people with OCD how to confront their fears and reduce anxiety without acting out on compulsions. The most effective type of CBT for OCD is called Exposure and Response/Ritual Prevention (ERP).

A doctor may also prescribe antidepressant medications, but for best results medication should be used in combination with ERP therapy.

Help from Family and Friends

It is important to realize that the behaviors performed by someone suffering from OCD are caused by the illness and are not intentional.

The symptoms of OCD may lead to social withdrawal, depression, and even suicidal thoughts. It is important for close family members and friends to be there for an individual suffering from OCD, and let them to know that they can get help.

It is also important to recognize the warning signs of suicidal thoughts, as suicidal thoughts occur in up to as many as half of those suffering with OCD.