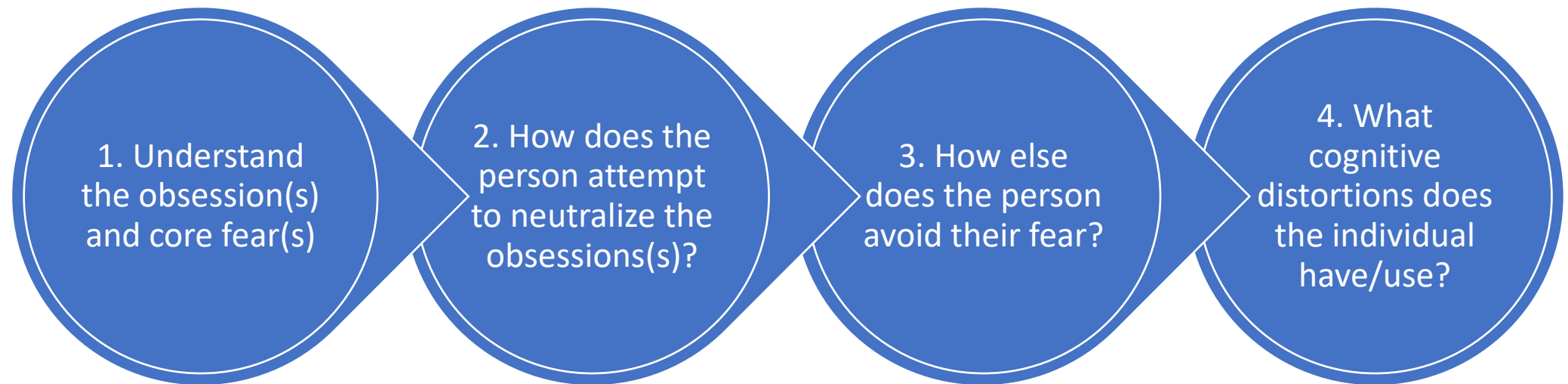




# Cognitive Behavioral Assessment

# Cognitive Behavioral Assessment



# Three Components of Obsessions

## Triggers

- External: “contaminated” objects, tasks involving responsibility, asymmetry, e.g. bump in the road, article about ethics
- Internal: disturbing thoughts or images about sex, violence, or immorality

## Intrusive thoughts/feelings

- “I might have just hit someone.” “I might have committed insurance fraud.” “I might have missed a finding on an MRI.” “I am a bad person.” “I feel disgusting.” “I feel uncomfortable.”

## Core fears (feared consequences)

- “I will end up isolated and alone in prison.” “I will get fired.” “Someone will die, and I will have to feel guilty forever.” “I cannot tolerate feeling this way.”

\*Jonathan Grayson’s Obsessive Concerns Checklist

# Feared Consequence: If I don't ritualize, this will happen

- Proximal, specifiable catastrophic events
- Interminable, intolerable distress: not just right/disgust
- Interminable, intolerable distress: uncertainty

(A. Pollard IOCDF 2017)



# Downward Arrow to Identify Core Fear

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- Trigger: bowel movement
- Intrusive thought: “I might smell like poop.”
- Why is that bad? People will smell me → they’ll talk about me behind my back → I won’t know they’re talking about me → they’ll think I’m gross → they’ll start to avoid me → I will be isolated and lonely



# Different Core Fears for Same Obsession

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- Contamination
  - Get sick and die
  - Get g.i. illness and vomit → feel out of control → scary, cannot tolerate
  - Psychological contamination → become like the “bad” person → do evil things → go to hell
  - “just right” contamination → will not be able to tolerate feeling uncomfortable → will not be able to function in life
  - Get sick → not be able to function in school → not graduate → be unable to get a job → end up homeless and miserable
  - Get sick → have to keep functioning in school → be extremely miserable → it will be unbearable



# Avoidance

- Primary: staying away from the trigger
- Secondary: rituals/compulsions  
→ seeking safety when stimulus cannot be avoided

# Primary Avoidance

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- Sleeping
- Distracting
- Ignoring
- Not leaving house
- Isolating
- Substance use
- Procrastinating
- Skipping class or work



# Compulsions (secondary avoidance)



**Negative reinforcement (removal of negative experience/helping escape distress)**

Involves no pleasure  
Ego-dystonic



**Types: Behavioral and Mental**

# Secondary Avoidance - Compulsions



- [\\*Y-BOCS Symptom Checklist](#)
- [\\*Compulsive Activities Checklist](#)  
(Jonathan Grayson)



# Rituals

- Preventing and restoring
- Analyzing and figuring out
- Controlling and stopping feelings
- Controlling and stopping thoughts
- Wishing

Rituals are done to avoid *anxiety* just as much or more than to avoid the *feared consequence*.

# Behavioral Compulsions

Washing

Checking

Reassurance-seeking

Repeating

Straightening

Organizing

Confessing

Researching

Maintaining routines

\*Jonathan Grayson's Compulsive Activities Checklist

# Mental Compulsions

Counting

Mental Reviewing

Reasoning

Scenario bending

Figuring it out

Thought or image replacement

Thought neutralization or suppression

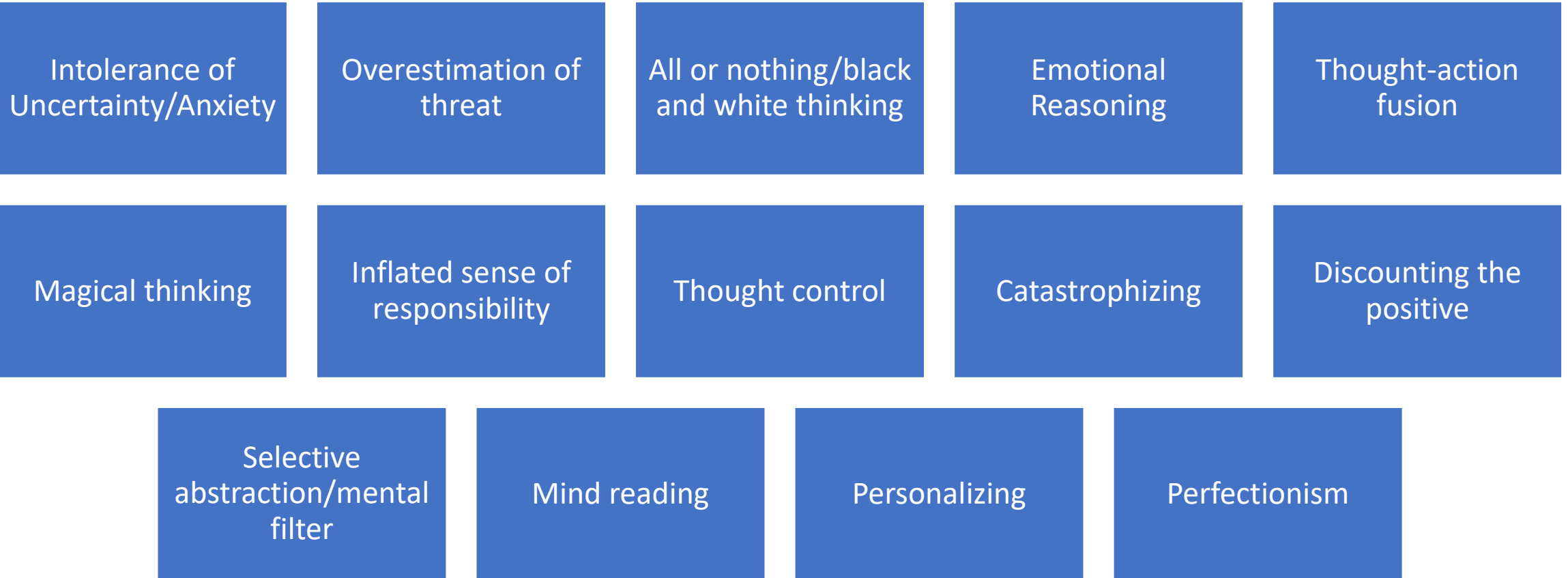
Mental rehearsal

Memory hoarding

Praying

Mental self-punishment

# Cognitive Distortions



\*Common Cognitive Distortions Used by People with OCD



# Cognitive Distortions Quiz



# Cognitive Distortions in OCD: Intolerance of Uncertainty

- ▶ Life is either all good or all bad. There is no “content”
- ▶ I need to check and re-check my straightener to know, for sure, that it is not plugged in. If I don't check, it might burn down my house, and I need to know that won't happen.
- ▶ If I step on a crack, it'll break my dog's back
- ▶ I cannot have an error on my paint by numbers



# Cognitive Distortions in OCD: Intolerance of Anxiety

- ▶ If I do not remove the needle I found in the staircase, someone's kid or dog will step on it. That will be my fault. I need to move it
- ▶ Because I feel sad, everyone must hate me
- ▶ I need to check and re-check my straightener to know that it is not plugged in. If I don't go back and check, I will be too anxious and not be able to concentrate at work
- ▶ The risk of my dog getting a tick is very high



# Cognitive Distortions in OCD: Overestimation of threat

- ▶ The risk of me getting cancer from sun exposure is very high
- ▶ If I cannot figure out, for sure, that I didn't run over someone with my car I will not be able to focus at work
- ▶ People are either good or bad. Good people don't do bad things, so I must be bad.
- ▶ If I don't count to 10 successfully, my dog will die



# Cognitive Distortions in OCD: All or None/Black and White thinking

- ▶ What if I hit someone with my car? What if I go to jail for a hit and run?
- ▶ Because I feel guilty, I must have committed a crime.
- ▶ I am either ethical or unethical. There is no in-between
- ▶ If I don't count to 10 successfully, something terrible will happen



# Cognitive Distortions in OCD: Emotional Reasoning

- ▶ If I think about my dog getting hit by a car, it is just as bad as him being hit by a car
- ▶ Because I feel anxious, there must be danger.
- ▶ I did well on the test. It must have been an easy test, my studying didn't matter.
- ▶ My sister isn't responding to my text message. She must be mad at me.



# Cognitive Distortions in OCD: Magical Thinking

- ▶ If I write down what I'm thinking, it will be as bad as doing the action
- ▶ If I feel angry, I might snap and hurt someone
- ▶ It is my job to double-check my colleagues' notes, otherwise they may not be doing them right and insurance won't cover the treatment stay
- ▶ If I think of someone with low intelligence while touching my head, I will lose my intelligence



# Cognitive Distortions in OCD: Thought Action Fusion

- ▶ When I touch the pole on the light rail, my hand will no longer function until I wash my hands
- ▶ Because I feel dirty, I must be dirty
- ▶ If I have an intrusive thought of having sex with a child, it means I am a pedophile
- ▶ If I had responded X way, it would have been completely different, and I wouldn't be able to handle it



# Cognitive Distortions in OCD: Inflated sense of responsibility/hyper-responsibility

- ▶ If I do not tell the construction crew that there is a cone getting run over on the freeway, the cone will be destroyed. I need to tell them.
- ▶ If I don't count the siren beeps, my surgery won't be successful
- ▶ If I have a thought of having sex with my dog, I must have done it
- ▶ I need to review all my sexual experiences to determine if I'm gay or not



# Cognitive Distortions in OCD: Thought Control

- ▶ The risk of getting HIV is very high for me
- ▶ I don't remember my drive home, I must have hit someone and killed them
- ▶ What if there is no purpose of living?
- ▶ I should be able to stop my thoughts, I must not be a good enough Christian.



# Cognitive Distortions in OCD: Catastrophizing

- ▶ My dog didn't come to me when I called. He must hate me
- ▶ Ever since I started learning about the heart, I've noticed every time my heart rate goes up
- ▶ I was probably offensive in my text to my supervisor; I must have hurt his feelings and he will never want to work with me again
- ▶ I did a hard exposure, but my SUDs didn't fall 50%. I must have failed the exposure.



# Cognitive Distortions in OCD: Discounting the Positive

- ▶ Every time I've had a thought of stabbing my mom I did not, but I know it is different this time.
- ▶ Having the thought of stabbing my mom is just as bad as stabbing my mom
- ▶ Because I thought of stabbing my mom, I must want to stab my mom
- ▶ I am either good or bad, and if I have thoughts of stabbing my mom, I must be bad



# Cognitive Distortions in OCD: Selective Abstraction/Mental Filter

- ▶ Someone with fear of getting HIV noticing others with sores and bandages on everyone around him, believing he is cursed for potential exposure
- ▶ Someone reviewing their past mistakes trying to “figure out” how to never make a mistake again
- ▶ Someone avoiding using knives because they think it will prevent them from snapping and stabbing their cat
- ▶ Someone with fears of their partner not being “the one” creating a list of everything wrong with the relationship



# Cognitive Distortions in OCD: Mind Reading

- ▶ I am either clean or dirty
- ▶ Because I feel like I failed, I must have failed, and I'll be kicked out of my program
- ▶ My dad is more at risk for COVID. I need to clean everything that comes through the door
- ▶ My best friend didn't tell me about moving, she must want to get away from me because she thinks I'm crazy



# Cognitive Distortions in OCD: Personalizing

- ▶ I need to check and re-check my treatment plan, to ensure it says just the right goals and does not have typos
- ▶ What if I can never be happy?
- ▶ Since I started working in Colorado, I've noticed that Colorado is mentioned in EVERY movie
- ▶ My friend didn't get her dream job. This is my fault, because I included her weaknesses AND strengths in the background check



# Cognitive Distortions in OCD: Perfectionism/always being right

- ▶ What if I hit someone with my car? What if I go to jail for a hit and run?
- ▶ Because I feel guilty, I must have committed a crime.
- ▶ I can't handle having my eyeshadow not blending the same on each eye
- ▶ My friend didn't respond to my text message because she hates me