

OCD Themes

The background features a complex pattern of overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in shades of purple, blue, and pink. White dashed lines form intricate, swirling patterns across the scene. A small, light blue plus sign is positioned to the right of the main text.

+

Harm OCD

- Features

- Ego dystonic; intrusive thoughts that are violent/aggressive

- Obsessions

- Fear of harming self/others
- Being responsible for harm to self/others because not responsible enough
- Fear of “snapping”/losing control/acting on thoughts due to feeling overwhelmed

- Compulsions

- Avoidance of trigger objects/areas, people, and situations that may spark thoughts
- Reassurance seeking
- Researching offenders to compare self to them
- Compulsive prayer or mental rituals
- Compulsive flooding
- Checking behaviors (behavioral and mental)

- Treatment

- Scripting
- Encountering feared objects
- Saying triggering words

Pedophile OCD

- Features

- Fear of being attracted to children

- Obsessions

- Fear of "snapping"
- Fear of touching a child inapproachably
- Fear of developing a desire to have sex with children
- Fear of bodily sensations being a sign of being a pedophile
- Fear others identifying you as a pedophile

- Compulsions

- Avoidance of places with children
- Avoidance of physical contact with children
- Mentally reviewing behaviors
- Checking groin responses
- Analyzing appropriateness of thoughts related to sex and children

- Treatment

- Scripting
- Reading articles of child molesters
- Watching mainstream films

Scrupulosity

A subtype of obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) involving religious or moral obsessions. Scrupulous individuals are overly concerned that something they thought or did might be a sin or other violation of religious or moral doctrine. They may worry about what their thoughts or behavior mean about who they are as a person.

Common **obsessions** seen in scrupulosity include excessive concerns about:

- Fear of committing blasphemy, or offending/angering God
- Fear of having committed a sin or that one has failed to adhere to moral, ethical, philosophical, or other laws/rules
- "I must know for certain that all my choices are right or ethical"
- Obsessions with absolute purity
- Fear of going to hell or being punished by God or of facing cosmic judgment
- Fear of being possessed
- Fear of death
- Fear of the loss of impulse control, being selfish, doing things that are offensive
- Doubting what you truly believe or feel correctly
- Needing to acquire certainty about religious beliefs
- Viewing things in absolutes (ex. Rituals, attendance, etc.)

Compulsions may include:

- Ritualized, repetitive prayer- out loud or in one's mind; also confession
- Repeatedly seeking reassurance from religious leaders and loved ones
- Repeated cleansing, purifying rituals or self-punishment, self-sacrifice
- Thought neutralization
- Theorizing
- Checking behaviors
- Avoidance

Hyper-awareness

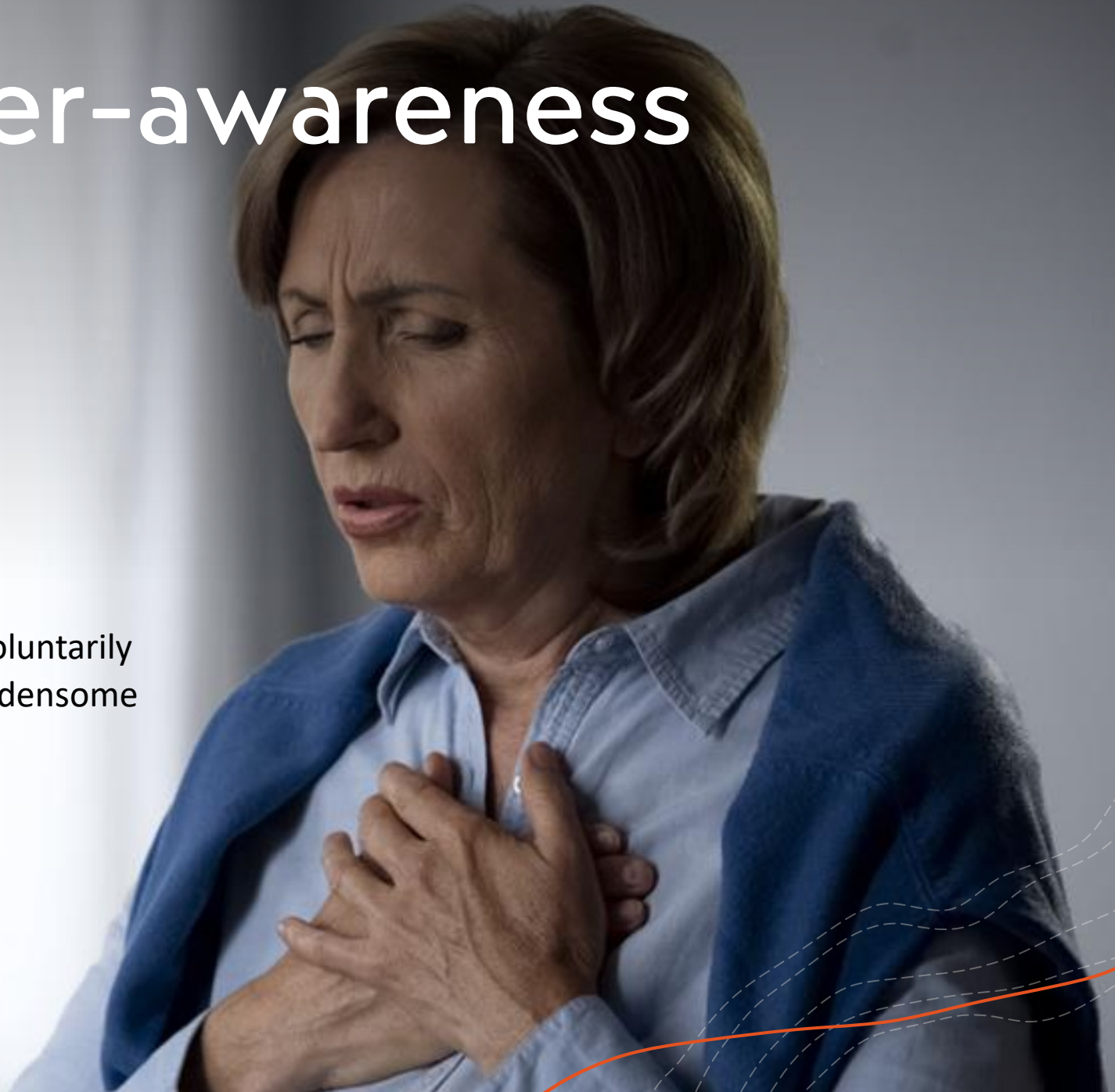
- Awareness of bodily function (e.g. breathing, blinking)
- Awareness of physical sensations
- Awareness of body positioning
- Awareness of remembering songs, words, or benign images
- Awareness of your own thinking process

Obsessions:

- I will never go back to doing these things involuntarily
- My awareness of these things will be too burdensome to handle

Compulsions:

- Mental review/checking
- Reassurance seeking
- Avoidance of triggers



Hyper-responsibility

Characterized by recurrent and persistent intrusive (unwanted) thoughts, urges or images about being responsible for something terrible happening along with compulsive, repetitive behaviors or mental acts aimed at reducing anxiety/distress or preventing a feared outcome from happening, all of which cause distress and impairment in functioning.

Common Obsessions:

- Excessive fear that something you did or did not do caused harm to someone else and it is all your fault
- Excessive fear of being pregnant and not knowing it after using alcohol
- Excessive fear you did something terrible in the past and just don't remember it (also referred to as false memory OCD)
- Excessive fear you caused permanent emotional or physical harm to someone else
- Excessive fear you hit someone while driving and didn't know it
- Excessive fear you poisoned someone or did not cook something thoroughly and will make someone sick

Common core fears:

- Being a bad person (fear of losing identity, not being who you thought you were)
- Going to Hell/prison (fear of losing meaning/purpose in life)
- Feeling responsible, regretful, guilty for the rest of your life
- Being socially rejected and alone, losing people you love, being looked at as a bad person (fear of being abandoned/alone)



Health

Obsessions

- What if I did not remove that tick correctly and some of it is still in me, so I end up sick?
- I can't remember things like I used to, I bet I have dementia
- If I get COVID, I'm not going to be able to work and I'll lose my job. I won't be able to handle that.

Compulsions

- Compulsive researching
- Reassurance seeking
- Going to the doctor excessively
- Checking vitals/body

Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity

- Features
 - Fear of being uncertain of sexual orientation or gender identity
- Obsessions
 - Fear of living in denial
 - Fear that life situations suggesting different orientation
 - Fear of correlates indicating being the "wrong" orientation
- Compulsions
 - Mental review
 - Reassurance seeking
 - Avoidance of triggers
 - Checking
 - "testing"
- Treatment
 - Scripting
 - Completing values based activities
 - Exposure to neutral stimuli



Contamination

Features

- Concerns that one or several items are unacceptably unclean and will cause other things to become unclean and/or lead to a negative outcome (such as sickness)
- Some concerns may surround the feeling of disgust (and not uncleanliness) when exposed to particular stimuli

Obsessions

- Items used by the public (doorknobs, light switches, buses, hand rails)
- Fecal matter or things that are near fecal matter
- Other bodily fluids or things that could be nearby
- Poison or anything that could be perceived as poisonous
- Cleaning agents, expired food, environmental contaminants, X-rays, chemicals, medicine, preservatives, alcohol, drugs
- Anything associated with illness
- Anything with a strong disgust response without any specific concerns about illness, germs, etc. (usually things that are sticky, wet, moist)

Contamination

Compulsions

Washing/cleaning (frequency, ritualized way, both)

Avoidance (of contaminated items or clean things when feel contaminated)

Mental review of rituals and whether there was exposure

Reassurance seeking

Memory hoarding of contact with contaminants

Treatment

In-vivo exposure - pick things that are objectively reasonably safe

Imaginal exposure

Enhance tolerance of uncertainty and distress

The goal is not "to feel better"

Obsessions

- This does not feel right, I cannot stop until it feels complete. I can't sit with the discomfort of it not being right/complete

Compulsions

- Repeating a behavior
- Fixing
- Evening up

- Awareness that an object or behavior is not symmetrical with another object or behavior
- A feeling of unease when completing an activity
- An item feeling like it does not belong in a specific location

Symmetry/Just Right



Features

Fears about the genuineness of one's feelings and intentions in a relationship

Difficulty tolerating the uncertainty in the relationship about whether it will last, if the person is the "right" match, etc.

Obsessions

"What if I don't really love my significant other?"

"What if this person isn't actually the right fit for me?"

"What if I'm just going to hurt my significant other and ruin their life if I leave?"

"What if it's going to be a disaster and I just need to leave now?"

"What if I can't stop thinking about X that triggers me about my partner?"

Ex. Sexual past, past relationship, philosophical differences, physical attributes

Relationship OCD



Compulsions

Mental review of everything pertaining to the relationship

Compulsive confessing of doubts about the relationship

Seeking reassurance about the relationship from partner or others

Mental checking of emotions associated with the relationship

Theorizing about alternatives to the relationship as it is

Avoidance of situations that trigger relationship obsessions

E.g. trying not to notice attractive people, avoiding participating in discussions about sex or relationships, avoiding being alone

with triggering people

Treatment

In-vivo exposures (looking at pics that trigger the obsession, watching movies, listening to songs, visiting places,

Imaginal exposures (scripting)

Values-based activities and choices

Reducing avoidance

Relationship OCD

False Memories/Stuck Thought

Obsessions

- What if I was sexually abused and don't know it? I need to figure it out or else I'll never be able to be happy
- What if I can never look at my friend without thinking about the number 12?
- What if I'm never able to let go of my previous relationship because I can't make perfect sense of it?

Compulsions

- Avoidance
- Reassurance seeking
- Mental review

Perinatal & Postpartum

- A greater than expected percentage of women with OCD attribute the onset or worsening of their symptoms to pregnancy or the postpartum
- Effects between 1%-3% of childbearing women
- Typically comes on rapidly, sometimes within a week of giving birth
- Most often involves scary obsessions related to harm befalling the newborn infant
- Can lead to shame, incorrect diagnosis, and inappropriate interventions (dystonic vs. Syntonic)



Perinatal & Postpartum



Common Obsessions

- The idea that the baby could die in her sleep (S.I.D.S).
- The thought of dropping the baby from a high place.
- The thought of putting the baby in the microwave.
- An image of the baby dead.
- Unwanted impulses to shake the baby to see what would happen.
- Thoughts of yelling at the baby.
- Thoughts of poking the baby in the soft spot in her head (fontanel).
- Thought of stabbing the baby.
- Thoughts of drowning the baby during a bath.

Perinatal & Postpartum

Common Compulsions:

- Checking on the baby
- Compulsive reassurance seeking
- Reading parenting books/listening to podcasts
- Avoidance
- Prayer

Research indicates that up to 80% of all new mothers report nasty, senseless, unacceptable, unwanted thoughts that are similar to those described by mothers with perinatal OCD

The trouble begins, however, when a new parent mistakenly misinterprets these normal thoughts as indicating something very significant and threatening.



- Applying a rigid set of rules that cannot be bent or modified
- Treatment
 - practice flexibility
 - Bend the rules
 - Have things be imperfect and sit with distress/create response prevention plans surrounding urges to correct



Prefectionism

Existential

Obsessions

- How do I know I am being the person I'm supposed to be? What if I'm not being that authentic person in different areas of my life? What if I don't see myself as others see me?
- What happens after we die? What if I never figure it out but always have these thoughts? How does life have a beginning and end? How does it not?

Compulsions

- Reassurance seeking around the meaning of life
- Trying to find THE philosophical answer
- Excessive rationalizing or analyzing your motivation/intention

