

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER



IN OCD, PEOPLE EXPERIENCE RECURRING, UNWANTED IDEAS OR THOUGHTS THAT MAKE THEM FEEL DRIVEN TO DO SOMETHING REPETITIVELY (COMPULSIONS). THE REPETITIVE BEHAVIORS, SUCH AS CHECKING ON THINGS, CLEANING OR HAND WASHING, CAN SIGNIFICANTLY INTERFERE WITH AN INDIVIDUAL'S DAILY ACTIVITIES AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS.

SOME EXAMPLES OF COMPULSIONS:

- **CLEANING** TO REDUCE THE FEAR THAT GERMS, CHEMICALS, OR DIRT WILL "CONTAMINATE" THEM SOME SPEND MANY HOURS WASHING THEMSELVES OR CLEANING THEIR SURROUNDINGS.
- **REPEATING** TO DISPEL ANXIETY, SOME PEOPLE UTTER A PHRASE OR NAME OR REPEAT A BEHAVIOR SEVERAL TIMES. THEY KNOW THESE REPETITIONS WON'T ACTUALLY GUARD AGAINST INJURY BUT FEAR HARM WILL OCCUR IF THE REPETITIONS AREN'T DONE.
- **CHECKING** TO REDUCE THE FEAR OF HARMING ONESELF OR OTHERS BY, FOR EXAMPLE, FORGETTING TO LOCK THE DOOR OR TURN OFF THE GAS STOVE, SOME PEOPLE DEVELOP CHECKING RITUALS. SOME PEOPLE REPEATEDLY RETRACE DRIVING ROUTES TO BE SURE THEY HAVEN'T HIT ANYONE.
- **ARRANGING** TO REDUCE DISCOMFORT, SOME LIKE TO PUT OBJECTS, SUCH AS BOOKS IN A CERTAIN ORDER, OR ARRANGE HOUSEHOLD ITEMS "JUST SO," OR IN A SYMMETRIC FASHION.

TREATMENTS FOR OCD ARE OFTEN A COMBINATION OF MEDICATION MANAGEMENT AND DIFFERENT THERAPY TECHNIQUES SUCH AS COGNITIVE BEHAVIORAL THERAPY (CBT) OR EXPOSURE AND RESPONSE PREVENTION (ERP).



OCD SYMPTOMS AND SEVERITY CAN VARY DRASTICALLY FROM PERSON TO PERSON. COMPULSIONS CAN BE EXTREMELY INTRUSIVE AND DEBILITATING. IT IS IMPORTANT TO SEEK HELP BEFORE THE SYMPTOMS BECOME TOO SEVERE. ADDITIONAL STRESSERS CAN EXASPERBATE SYMPTOMS AND MAKE DAY TO DAY LIFE MORE DIFFICULT.