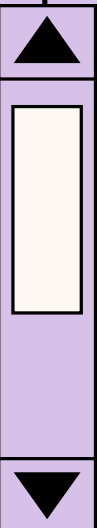


# OPTIMIZING



OCD

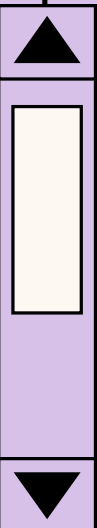


Understanding OCD  
and how to live with it.

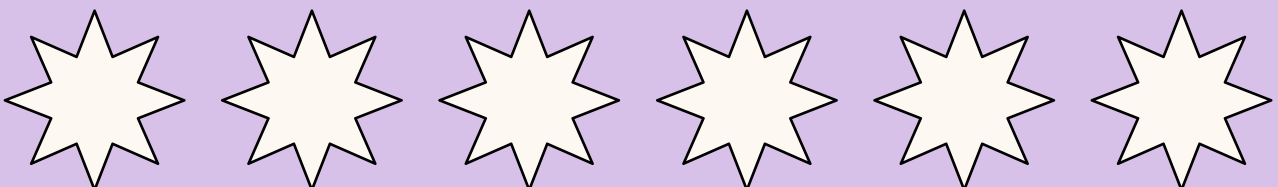


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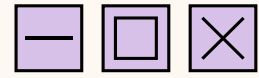


*trust your*  
**JOURNEY**





# INTRODUCTION



## WHAT IS OBSESSIVE-COMPULSIVE DISORDER?



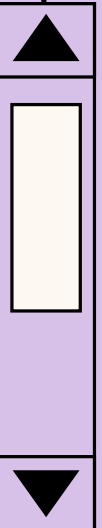
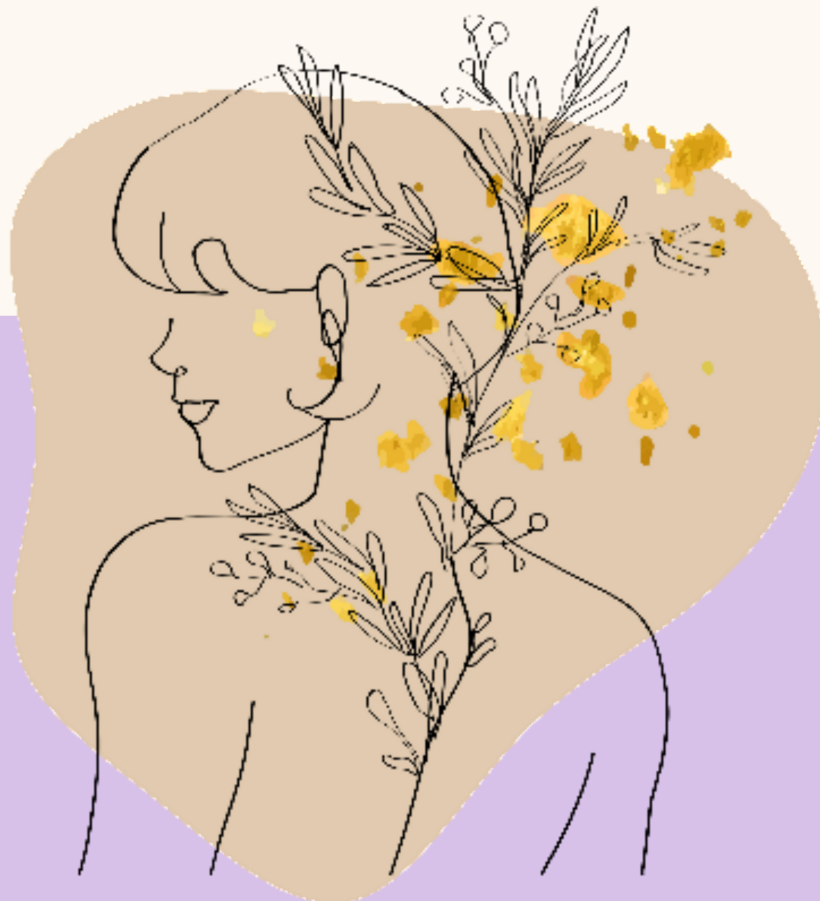
**ACCORDING TO THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS (NAMI):**

Obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) is, “characterized by repetitive, unwanted, intrusive thoughts (obsessions) and irrational, excessive urges to do certain actions (compulsions).”

## **WHAT IS A MENTAL HEALTH TOOLKIT?**

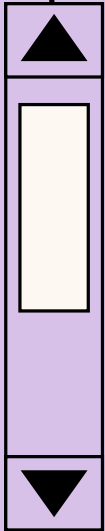
This mental health toolkit is intended to help individuals with OCD navigate numerous challenges by:

- Providing tips on how to cope with OCD and related symptoms
- Offering support for individuals struggling with OCD
- Providing resources that can help those who are affected and those around them





## IMPORTANCE OF UNDERSTANDING OCD



- OCD and related symptoms have a strong impact on those who have the disorder.
- The intrusive, unwanted thoughts can cause anxiety, depression, and other stress-related issues.
- Educating others about what this disorder really is will help validate and support individuals diagnosed with OCD.

## WHAT CAUSES OCD?

It is unknown what the exact cause(s) of OCD are and there is no cure, but there are ways to cope.

- OCD may stem from communication problems between the front of the brain and the posterior (back) parts of the brain.
- People with a parent, sibling, or child who have OCD are more likely to develop it.
- PANDAS (Pediatric Autoimmune Neuropsychiatric Disorders Associated with Streptococcal infections) can also be a cause for childhood OCD.



Scan for more information about the causes of OCD.



# SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF OCD

## Obsessions X

*Obsessions* are unwanted thoughts, feelings, or images that cause fear and anxiety.

Examples:

- Unwanted or “forbidden” thoughts (can be about topics such as sex or religion)
- Fear of germs or contamination
- Having things in a specific order or way
- Feeling uncomfortable with uncertainty

## Compulsions X

*Compulsions* are repetitive behaviors that a person with OCD feels they need to do to relieve anxiety from obsessive thoughts.

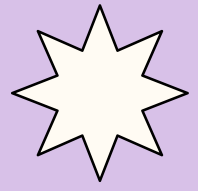
Examples:

- Excessive cleaning or washing
- Compulsive counting
- Repeatedly checking things
- Having things in a specific order or way





# THEMES OF OCD



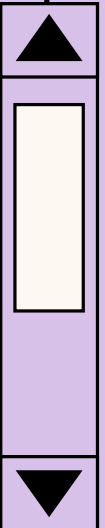
Relationship OCD



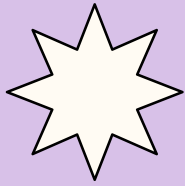
False Memory OCD



Magical Thinking OCD







# THEMES OF OCD



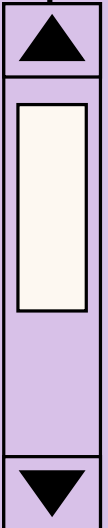
Sexual Orientation  
OCD



Pedophilia OCD



Harm OCD





# THEMES OF OCD



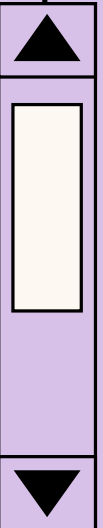
Hit-and-Run OCD



Perinatal OCD

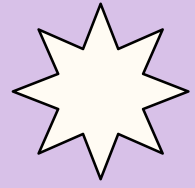


Postpartum OCD





# THEMES OF OCD



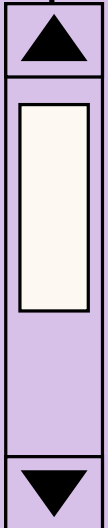
Hoarding OCD



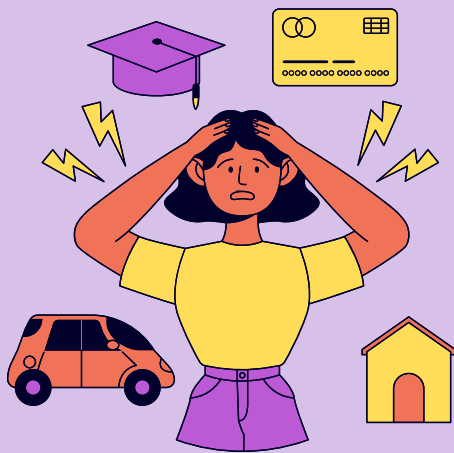
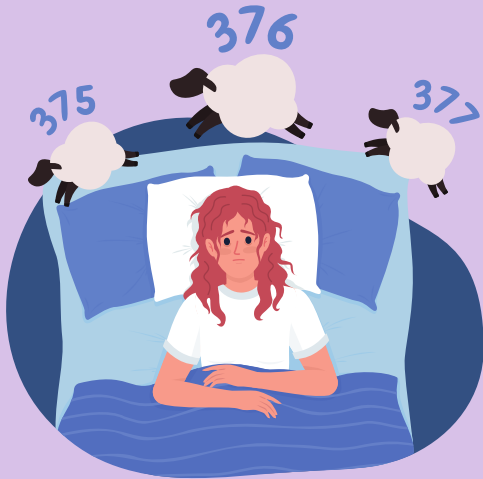
Religious OCD



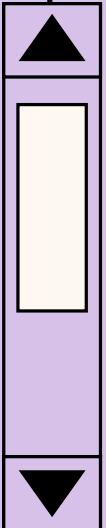
Scan here for more information on themes of OCD.



# CHALLENGES OF LIVING WITH OCD



- Difficulty completing household responsibilities (cleaning, cooking, laundry, etc.)
- Loss of motivation or interest in things you would normally enjoy
- Difficulty focusing on school or at work
- Avoiding certain things to prevent facing triggers
- Struggling to explain your thoughts to loved ones
- Difficulty managing time
- Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep

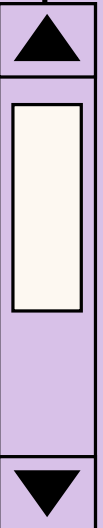
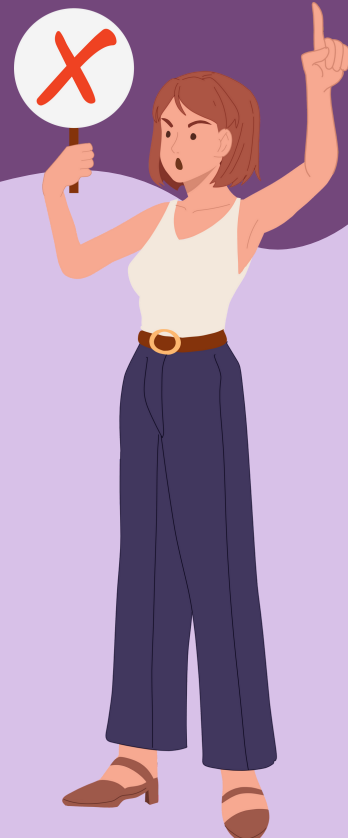


# COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT OCD

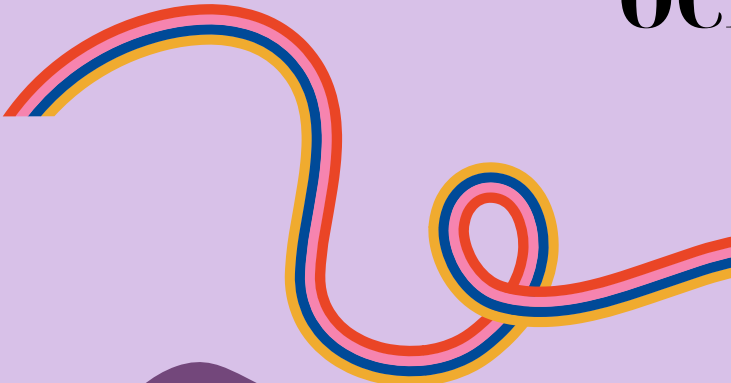
OCD thoughts are  
unconscious  
desires/feelings

Everyone has a  
little OCD

It's easy to tell if  
someone has OCD



# COMMON MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT OCD



OCD is all about  
cleanliness and  
neatness

OCD is not  
treatable



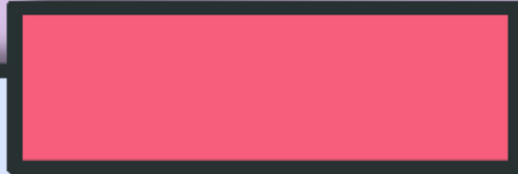
**\*REMEMBER\***

These misconceptions are *NOT* true and can be harmful to someone with OCD. It is important to remember that people with OCD may feel that they cannot trust their own minds.

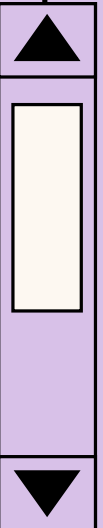
People with OCD can  
simply stop thinking  
about their obsessions  
and compulsions



# TREATMENT



Treatment for OCD may look different for each and every person. However, according to the International OCD Foundation, the most effective treatments are cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), specifically Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP), and medication.





# TREATMENT

## 🔍 ERP Therapy

*you can*

ERP involves meeting with a licensed psychological professional who helps clients confront the intrusive thoughts, images, or situations that trigger anxiety and/or OCD. During the Response Prevention, the client will learn how to resist giving into compulsions or a trigger response. The goal is for the client to learn this skill on their own to help cope with their OCD symptoms.





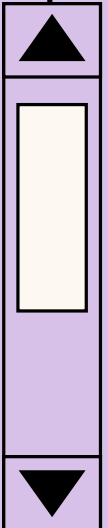
# TREATMENT

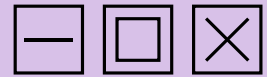
## 🔍 Cognitive - Behavioral Therapy ✕

CBT involves talking with a licensed psychological professional who helps their clients recognize negative thought patterns and learn how to better handle difficult situations.



During CBT, clients learn how to cope by redirecting their thoughts and responding to them in a better way. This type of therapy can be beneficial for numerous conditions including, but not limited to, OCD, depression, PTSD, eating disorders, and personality disorders.





# TREATMENT



## Medication



Certain medications can be used to help treat OCD in combination with CBT or ERP treatment. Those who benefitted report their symptoms were reduced by 40-60%. Not every medication will work for everyone. Medication is prescribed by a doctor and should be taken as directed. Questions & concerns about side effects should be directed to your doctor.



Scan here for more information about OCD treatment.



# COPING STRATEGIES

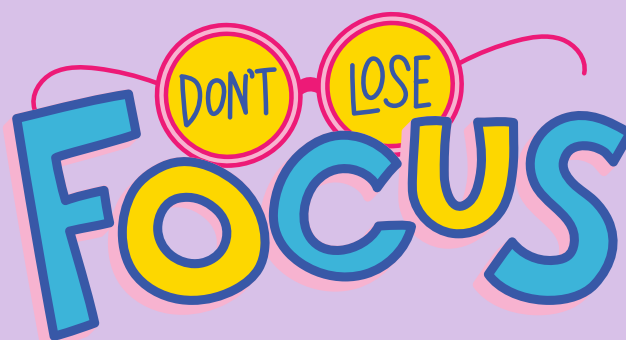
## Journaling

Keeping an OCD journal can help you identify triggers and keep track of how often or how severe these triggers occur. It can also help you see your thoughts physically which may provide reassurance.



## Refocus Attention

By distracting yourself from the thoughts, you are teaching yourself to not feed into them. You can mentally refocus yourself (e.g., list everything of a certain color that is present around you) or you can physically refocus yourself (e.g., do jumping jacks, take a walk, sing a song, build Legos).



# COPING STRATEGIES

## Mindfulness

Keeping yourself in the present may help prevent you from ruminating (obsessing) about the future. To practice mindfulness, you acknowledge your thoughts and remind yourself that everything will pass.

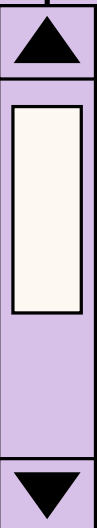


## Reward Yourself

A reward is an effective incentive not to ruminate over your thoughts. For example, if you do not complete a compulsion for 30 seconds, then you can have a candy bar. Also, it is important to celebrate your small achievements. Remember, OCD is a journey.



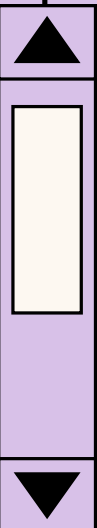
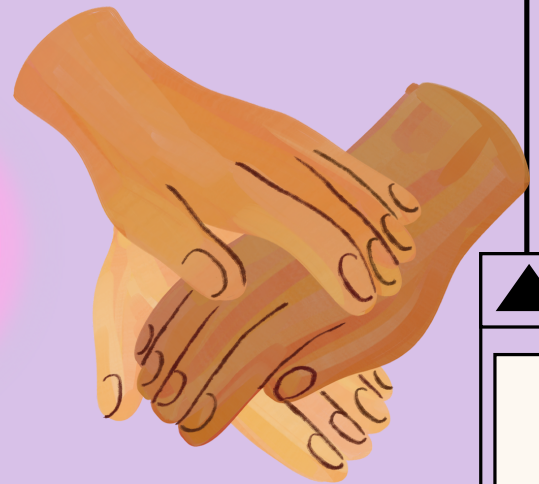
Scan here for more information about OCD coping strategies.



# A MESSAGE FROM FELLOW OCD FIGHTERS

## ANONYMOUS

"OCD ruled my life for a long time. Most days it felt like my mind had a mind of its own. Intrusive thoughts and time-consuming compulsions were impairing how I functioned until I realized that I didn't have to suffer in silence. Recovery is an ongoing process, but with therapy and medication, I am learning how to cope. Now I know that I am not alone and that it's possible for me to co-exist with my disorder."



## ANONYMOUS

"OCD is a commonly misunderstood disorder and often underestimated in its ability to ruin lives. It ruled my daily life for some time. Some days, I'd suffer so intensely that I would go to bed with subconscious hopes that I wouldn't wake up the next day, so that I wouldn't have to endure the same pain that I had experienced just hours prior. It is a vicious illness that turns abstract thoughts into tangible problems. My life began to improve when I let go of the notion that I could rid myself of OCD altogether, and instead learned to live alongside it. Life with OCD does not have to be an unending episode of pain, but rather a battle that someone can progressively get better at fighting."



# OCD APPS

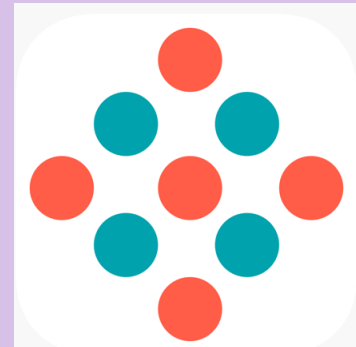


## OCD.app

- Consists of 47 levels of mini games.
- The first few levels focus on positive self talk.
- Focuses on negative thinking, coping, self-esteem, etc.

## NOCD

- Helps address mindfulness and exposure response prevention treatment.
- Provides guidance through episodes, tests to indicate severity of symptoms, information tools, and more.



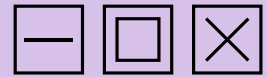
## Talkspace

- Pairs users with a licensed therapist.
- Track your journey.
- Ability to call, text, videochat with therapist.

## OCD Challenge

- Online program that helps users manage symptoms.
- Activities that are specific to users' symptoms.
- Uses ERP and CBT as inspiration.





# RESOURCES



NAMI Mercer Helpline  
Call (609) 799-8994 x 17 OR  
Email at [helpline@namimercer.org](mailto:helpline@namimercer.org)



NAMI Helpline (M-F; 10 AM - 10 PM, EST.)  
Call 1-800-950-NAMI (6264) OR  
Email at [helpline@nami.org](mailto:helpline@nami.org)



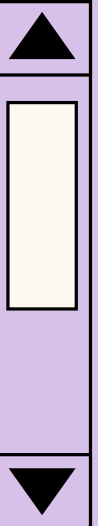
24/7 NAMI Crisis Text Line  
Text 741741



24/7 New Jersey Suicide Prevention Hopeline  
Call (855) 654-6735



24/7 Suicide and Crisis Hotline  
Call 988



# CONCLUSION



If you or someone you know struggles with OCD or other related disorders, you are strongly encouraged to look into mental health resources that would help and guide you to a greater sense of wellbeing.

From someone who has experienced having OCD firsthand, always remember that you are not alone and there is *always* hope. You may feel that OCD has a tight hold on you, but you are stronger than you think. You are in control of your own mind—do *not* let OCD tell you anything different. It may seem like you will be in this state forever, but there are resources to help you cope with and better understand OCD and related symptoms. Remember to recognize your own accomplishments, no matter how small! This journey is not going to be easy, but I believe in you, and I am proud of how far you have come. We are in this together.

- Olivia Paone

NAMI Mercer Intern

