

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

ON OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE DISORDER



OCD is a mental health condition that causes individuals to have unwanted thoughts, feelings and fears. These fears, or obsessions, are repetitive and persistent. Obsessions lead to compulsions, which are behaviors that are performed with the intention to reduce the anxiety caused by the obsession.

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder generally presents in childhood and adolescence. In fact, OCD impacts 1 out of 200 kids in the US.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Obsessions and compulsions can show up in several different ways, and your child may be hesitant to talk about their fears and rituals associated with OCD. These rituals can cause feelings of embarrassment, shame, and confusion. However, the fear associated with the obsessions make the rituals feel non-negotiable - the ritual is the only way to feel some sense of relief as they believe it is how they are preventing the bad thing from happening.

Signs of OCD:

- Difficulty concentrating on homework or hobbies
- Needing consistent reassurance that things are okay (or seeming unsure if they are okay)
- Indecisiveness
- Everyday tasks taking longer and longer (getting ready, bedtime routines, homework)
- Getting upset or angry if things aren't done or placed a certain way

TREATMENTS

Your child's primary care provider and therapist are great resources to talk through options and next steps when it comes to treating your child's OCD.

For mild to moderate OCD, exposure and response prevention (ERP) therapy can help your child develop skills to regain control over their lives. Through the course of this treatment, a clinician will help your child overcome the intense fear associated with OCD through planned exposures. Your child will learn strategies for preventing their compulsions, while also learning to manage their anxiety.

For more severe cases, most clinicians recommend utilizing ERP therapy and medication in tandem. Your child's PCP can give you information on medication options that may help your child get the most out of their time in therapy.

RESOURCES

Please visit essexpediatrics.com/resources/ for links and additional resources.

Resources for caregivers:

- **Talking Back to OCD** by John Marsh
- **Breaking Free of Child Anxiety and OCD: A Scientifically Proven Program for Parents** by Eli R. Lebowitz
- **The Mindfulness Workbook for OCD** by Jon Hershfield
- **International OCD Foundation** - <https://iocdf.org/>

Resources for kids:

- **What to do when your brain gets stuck - A kid's guide to overcoming OCD** by Dawn Huebner
- **Unstuck** - this is a family-friendly documentary about OCD
- **The Mindfulness Workbook for OCD** by Jon Hershfield
- **The OCD Workbook for Teens:** by Jon Hershfield

Essex Pediatrics Mental Health Group:

- **Breaking Free of Childhood Anxiety and OCD 4 Week Parenting Series** - check our website for upcoming dates
- **Parent Consult Clinic** - A one time meeting with a therapist on our team to discuss ways to support your child. Please call the front office to schedule.