

How to Recognize OCD in Children and Teens

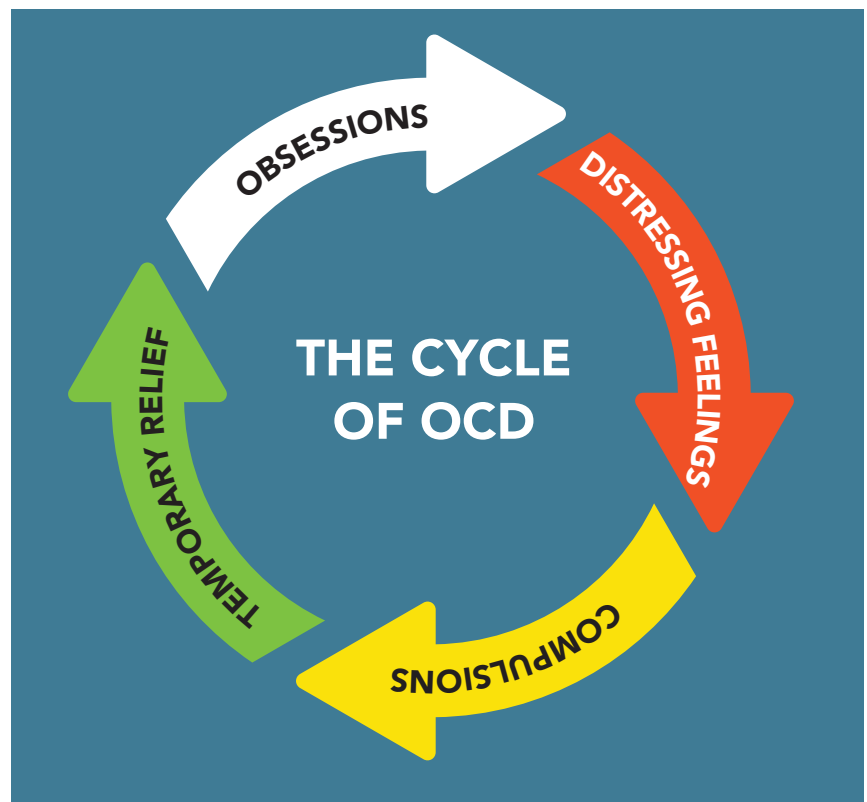


Worrying and having doubts about things from time to time are common experiences among kids. However, some children and teens can't stop worrying — no matter how much they want to. Those worries frequently make children feel the urge to behave in certain ways or repeat things over and over. When this occurs, a diagnosis of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) might be appropriate.



What is OCD?

Kids with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder may experience excessive worrying, intrusive thoughts (obsessions), as well as rituals (compulsions), or things that one feels compelled to do in order to prevent something bad from happening. OCD is similar to having a false alarm, since it causes children to worry about something that is not immediately harmful or dangerous. This disorder is usually diagnosed in kids between the ages of 7 and 12. At least 1 in 200 children and teens in the United States have OCD.



The stress brought on by OCD can make children feel scared, out of control and alone. OCD often occurs in a cycle that is strengthened by intense anxiety and the motivation to reduce feelings of discomfort.



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