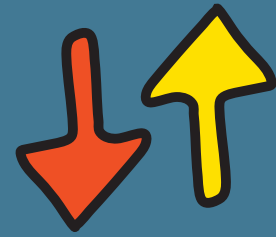


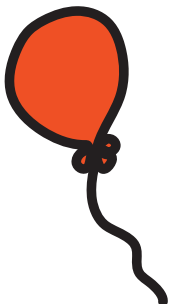
# How is OCD Treated?



Obsessive Compulsive Disorder can be impairing to a child's day-to-day activities. However, there is treatment available that can significantly reduce symptoms and make them manageable. Treatment for kids with OCD may involve two approaches: specialized therapy and medication prescribed by a psychiatrist. Taking medicine is not for everyone, so it's advised parents rely on information and guidance from professionals who are trained to treat OCD in kids.



The first line of recommended treatment is often **Cognitive Behavioral Therapy with Exposure and Response Prevention (CBT with ERP)**. ERP involves gradually exposing a person with OCD to things that make them uncomfortable but not allowing the individual to engage in rituals. Treatment also involves providing skills to cope with anxiety. Over time, the person begins to experience less anxiety and is able to cope better. Learning to practice ERP can be scary at first, yet eventually it becomes automatic and helps break the reinforcement of OCD symptoms. For more resources on OCD visit <https://kids.iocdf.org/>.



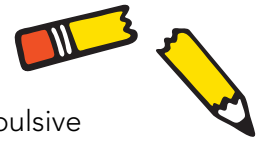
If you or a child are in need of support, call our 24/7 Kids & Teens Helpline at **904.202.7900** or text **LIFE** to **741741**. If there is an immediate safety concern, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

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# OCD Worksheet and Exposure Hierarchy



Use this worksheet with a mental health professional to better understand Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) and guide your Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) treatment. Complete the worksheet below by describing situations and triggers for anxiety, obsessions and compulsions.

List your symptoms of OCD and rate each on a scale from 0 (not stressful) to 10 (severely stressful):

<b>Situations/Triggers</b> What causes your anxiety, stress and OCD symptoms?	<b>Distress Rating</b> (0 to 10)



<b>Obsessions</b> What intrusive or upsetting thoughts do you have?	<b>Distress Rating</b> (0 to 10)



<b>Compulsions</b> What do you feel compelled to do when trying to reduce anxious thoughts or discomfort?	<b>Distress Rating</b> (0 to 10)

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# Challenging Anxious Thoughts and OCD Obsessions



Intrusive and upsetting thoughts are a common symptom in kids who experience Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD). These thoughts are often not based in reality and focus on bad things happening in the future. For example, a child may start to think that if they don't engage in a certain ritual, a family member will be hurt. The anxiety that results from the irrational thought reinforces the compulsive behaviors in an effort to avoid the feared outcome.

It can be helpful to ask your child or teen certain questions that explore the truth or “evidence” for these thoughts. This can reduce the strength or validity of obsessive ideas when they arise. Regularly challenging anxious thoughts can also help children change them as time goes on. Parents may sometimes feel like these thoughts are “wrong” or irrational, yet it's important to avoid invalidating how the child feels in order to keep the lines of communication open.



When asking your child or teen about their thoughts, obsessions and compulsions, consider these conversation starters:

**What is the anxious thought or obsession that's been on your mind lately?**

**What feelings do you have when you think about this?**

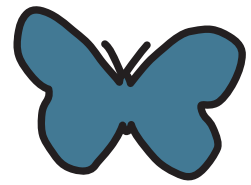
**How do you know that this thought is true? Is there any evidence to support it?**



**What might you say to a friend who was having this same thought?  
How would you comfort them?**

**Have the bad things you fear and obsess about ever happened when you've not done a ritual?**

If something bad did happen, is there a more balanced explanation for that outcome? What else could have caused it?



What good things or positive feelings have happened when you don't react to obsessions?



When you think about this obsession in a more balanced and positive way, how is it different?

How might your feelings change if you found evidence that the thought was not completely true?

What activities could help you in the moment when you're having an anxious thought or obsession?



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