

OCD

- An unshakeable belief that something bad will happen if a particular ritual is not carried out
- People know it isn't true but find it hard to resist
- Related to superstition. One example of a relationship between the belief, failing to do the ritual, and a negative outcome is sufficient
- Most common expressions are hand washing, touching items in order, checking (gas, doors, switches), not touching items such as door handles (germs), ritualised hair combing
- Distressing & incapacitating & people want to be rid of it
- Most common treatment – medication + cognitive behaviour therapy (CBT)

From OCD-UK:

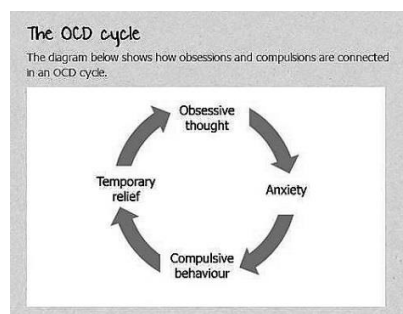
For some reason being alone and struggling with OCD at Christmas feels twice as bad than at other times of the year, I remember a Christmas Day about 15 years ago spent in a London bedsit in bed all day shivering and lonely because it was cold outside, the boiler light had gone out and it 'felt' too contaminated for me to go out and relight the boiler.

It has traditionally been considered that there are four main categories of OCD. Although there are numerous forms of the illness within each category, typically a person's OCD will fall into one of the four main categories:

- Checking
- Contamination / Mental Contamination
- Hoarding
- Ruminations / Intrusive Thoughts

For many people with OCD there is often an overinflated sense of responsibility to prevent harm and an over-estimation about the perceived threat that an intrusive thought signifies. It is these factors that help drive the compulsive behaviours, because the person with OCD often feels ultimately responsible for trying to prevent bad things happening.

From MIND:



Obsessions

Obsessions are unwelcome thoughts, images, urges or doubts that repeatedly appear in your mind; for example, thinking that you have been contaminated by dirt and germs, or experiencing a sudden urge to hurt someone.

These obsessions are often frightening or seem so horrible that you can't share them with others. The obsession interrupts your other thoughts and makes you feel very anxious.

I get unwanted thoughts all through the day, which is very distressing and affects my ability to interact with others and concentrate on my studies and work.

Compulsions

Compulsions are repetitive activities that you feel you have to do. This could be something like repeatedly checking a door to make sure it is locked or repeating a specific phrase in your head to prevent harm coming to a loved one.

The aim of a compulsion is to try and deal with the distress caused by the obsessive thoughts and relieve the anxiety you are feeling. However, the process of repeating these compulsions is often distressing and any relief you feel is often short-lived.

Getting ready for each day involves so much hand washing, mental rituals, and doing things in the same order everyday... Sometimes, I feel like staying in bed and avoiding the day.