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Obsessive Compulsive Disorder Checklist

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NORTHSTAR COMPASS

*Navigating
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EXCESSIVE WORRIES

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is characterized by repeated, unwanted thoughts and actions. The amount of time and energy required to address the obsessive thoughts make it difficult to live a healthy life. OCD can be debilitating, but help is available and change is possible. Excessive concern about doing something wrong, being sick, hurting others, looking just right, being orderly, saving things, preventing disaster, and being germ-free and clean, are common sources of obsessions and compulsions. Re-labeling concerns and tiresome habits as obsessions and compulsions reduces their power and sets the stage for change.

OBSESSIONS

- Unpleasant thoughts that come to mind against my will often upset me
- I usually have doubts about the simple, everyday things that I do
- I have little control over my thoughts
- I worry that my bad thoughts will come true
- When I start worrying, I can't easily stop
- Insignificant events worry me too much

COMPULSIONS

- I spend more time than most people cleaning, showering, or checking
- Other people have difficulty meeting my standards for order, cleanliness, safety, hard work, or decency
- Even when I know I've done something, it's hard for me to be sure
- I repeat certain actions over and over
- People think I'm a perfectionist, a "neat freak," hypochondriac, superstitious, rigid, or a "pack rat"

GENERAL OBSESSIONS

- I worry, with little reason, that my partner is doing something behind my back
- I worry too much about hurting others' feelings or making people mad
- I worry about household noises, how things feel, or other sensations
- I worry about losing my wallet or unimportant objects, such as a scrap of notebook paper
- I worry that I won't say things just right or use the "perfect" word.
- I worry about always doing "the right thing" or being honest, fair, or on time
- I worry about salvation, having sinful thoughts, blaspheming, or other religious concerns
- I worry that some part of my body is hideously ugly despite reassurance to the contrary



AGGRESSIVE OR SEXUAL OBSESSIONS

- I fear losing control with sharp objects, while driving, in high places, and in other ways
- I fear I will harm others or hurt babies, or I get violent images in my mind
- I avoid sharp or breakable objects such as knives, scissors, or glass
- I worry that I will blurt out or write obscenities or insults
- I worry that I might (accidentally) steal something
- I have unwanted sexual thoughts about strangers, family, friends, children, or others

THINKING AND COUNTING RITUALS

- I often have to repeat "good" thoughts or words to "erase" bad ones or to feel safe
- I often find myself praying for nonreligious reasons or have to pray "the right way"

- I feel the need to confess to things I never did
- I try to remember events in detail or make mental lists to prevent bad consequences
- I count floor tiles, books, nails in walls, my teeth, or other things to relieve tension

HEALTH AND ILLNESS RITUALS

- I repeatedly take my pulse, blood pressure, or temperature, or check for injuries
- I worry that I have (or might get) an illness despite reassurance from doctors that I'm okay

CHECKING AND REPEATING RITUALS

- I worry that lack of due caution will cause some misfortune, such as a fire or burglary
- I repeatedly check locks, windows, stoves, or other things to prevent misfortunes
- When driving, I stop to check that I haven't (accidentally) hurt someone
- I repeatedly ask or phone others for reassurance that everything is OK, that I haven't made them mad, that I haven't forgotten an appointment, or for other concerns
- I make sure I've repeated such activities the "right" number of times
- I repeatedly check my body odor or appearance to make sure I'm acceptable

ORDERING AND CLEANING RITUALS

- I must have certain things around me set in a specific order or pattern
- I always want my papers, pens, books, collections, or closets arranged just right

- I spend much time putting things in the right place, and I reposition rugs, pictures, etc
- I notice at once if things are out of place and get upset if others have rearranged them
- I vacuum my house, dust, change sheets, or wash floors more than once a week
- I spend a lot of time cleaning such things as faucets, counters, utensils, or my collections

GERMS, DIRT, DANGER, OR CONTAMINATION RITUALS

- I avoid shaking hands, public restrooms, doorknobs, raw meat, cleansers, dirt, sticky substances, emptying the garbage, changing kitty litter, or other problem situations
- I wash my hands many times a day or for long periods of time
- I often take very long showers or baths and wash to decontaminate rather than to clean

HOARDING RITUALS

- I save old newspapers, notes, cans, paper towels, napkins, wrappers, or other items
- I pick up useless objects from the street, garbage cans, garage sales, or other places
- Over the years my home has become cluttered with collections (that bother others)
- I often worry about saving money or food, even though I don't need to

GETTING HELP

Examining the items you checked in the list above can indicate where you struggle. Talking to someone about excessive worries, fears, and compulsions is an important and positive first step. A counselor or doctor can help if you have concerns. Help can come from family, friends, support groups, and pastors. Treatment that addresses medical, physical, emotional, family, occupational, and spiritual issues is, in the long run, most beneficial. Medications, such as anti-depressants, can be highly effective as anti-obsessional medications.

A FRIENDLY WORD OF CAUTION

Avoid asking for help from friends and relatives who are controlling, unqualified, disinterested, or rigid. Attempts to involve them in your recovery or getting them to treat you differently will only slow you down. Input that makes you obsess even more is probably as incorrect as it is unhelpful. Watch out for people who discourage recovery. They may be too helpful and offer to do things for or with you so you will not “get upset.” As you start to recover, they may become suspicious, accusatory, or irritable. Find kind, interested friends, family members, or professionals who will support your efforts at recovery.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Hal Baumchen, PsyD, LP, LADC is the President and Clinical Director of NorthStar Regional. He is a Licensed Clinical Psychologist (LP) and a Licensed Alcohol and Drug Counselor (LADC) with over 30 years of counseling experience.

He received his Master's Degree from Wheaton Graduate School, his Doctorate of Psychology (PsyD) from the Illinois School of Professional Psychology, and his Certificate in Co-Occurring Disorders from Adler Graduate School. He serves frequently as a seminar leader, and has taught workshops in the USA, Canada, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, South Africa, and India.

He is the author of *Journeys* and *Destinations*, two books on co-occurring disorders treatment, and the co-author of *Finding Hope Again: Overcoming Depression* with Dr. Neil T. Anderson.

This information in this publication is not intended as a substitute for professional help or to be used as a diagnostic tool. If you have serious difficulties with anxiety, depression, or other mental health issues, please seek professional help.