

## Questions to ask when choosing an OCD therapist

*"What percent of your practice is made up of OCD cases?"*

- It's great if the answer is at least 50%.

*"What is your approach to treating OCD?"*

- If they don't mention ERP, they don't specialize in OCD. If they mention ACT and I-CBT in addition to ERP, it's a good sign.

*"Did you have any specific training on treating OCD?"*

- A specialized ERP and ACT training background would be desirable.

*"How long will it take until I am cured?"*

- There is no quick fix for OCD. Beware of anyone promising a fast "cure."

*"Will you be willing to include my family members in the treatment?"*

- It's important that the therapist is open to including family members in sessions.

*"What if my child/teen with OCD is unwilling to engage in therapy?"*

- OCD specialists can usually help parents change their own behavior (and, thus, help the child) using approaches such as SPACE.

## Anxiety & OCD Clinic



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# Do you suffer from OCD?

# A Guide to Diagnosis & Treatment

## Do you have OCD?

To be diagnosed with OCD, you need to have **obsessions** and **compulsions**.

Obsessions are unwanted, intrusive thoughts that lead to distress. Compulsions are things you do to try to reduce the distress.

Many people have no visible compulsions, but have mental rituals, such as counting, "figuring it out", mental review, neutralizing, and replacing a "bad" thought with a "good" one.

Although compulsions may decrease distress in the short term, they increase it in the long term. Gradually, compulsions start taking over your life.

## Common Obsessions

1. **Contamination.** Fear of germs, dirt, body fluids, chemicals, or sickness, or of being emotionally "contaminated" by "bad" people.
2. **Responsibility** or **checking** for past or future mistakes or **harm** to yourself or others.
3. **Fear of losing control** and acting on an impulse to harm yourself or others, or behaving inappropriately.
4. **Religion or morality.** Fear of offending God or doing immoral things.
5. **Sexuality.** Unwanted sexual thoughts or images, such as fear of being gay or of inappropriate sexual behavior.
6. **Perfectionism or symmetry.** An urge to repeat a behavior, check, or rearrange things until it feels "just right."
7. **Illness anxiety.** Preoccupation with having or getting a serious physical or mental illness.

## How is OCD treated?

The main approach to the treatment of **OCD** is **ERP (Exposure and Response Prevention)**, a specialized treatment that helps re-train your brain not to succumb to OCD's demands.

Additional approaches, such as **ACT** (Acceptance and Commitment Therapy) and **I-CBT** (Inference-Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy) are very helpful, especially when combined with **ERP**.

These therapies are just as effective if you have no visible rituals! Incorporating specialized group OCD therapy makes treatment more effective and less lengthy.