
COMPULSION

Behaviors that are repeated in an effort to avoid fear and anxiety caused by obsessions may become compulsions. Compulsive behavior is specific according to rules and rituals set by the individual. Common compulsions include chronic hand washing, cleaning the same room or object repeatedly, over grooming, or repeating a song or word uncontrollably. Some sufferers "check" objects, such as door locks, appliances to see if they are turned off, drawers to be sure they are shut, or turning a light on and off. Ordering from Home Shopping, collecting items, saving something, needing constant approval, or making phone calls may become a compulsion. You may be able to think of something personal that nearly became a compulsion in your life but you were able to get help. Compulsions may distract you from working on more painful issues. Perhaps you are seeking help right now?



Like other symptoms of anxiety and post trauma – compulsions may be controlled at some levels with support and encouragement. Order, frugality, and neatness work for most people on some level. This is when people might say, "OCD (obsessive compulsive disorder) is O.K. for me." But when compulsions are strong, they can become a force that may paralyze everyday life even in the strongest of individuals. You may experience compulsive eating, drinking, gambling, lying; even work can become compulsive. Seeking treatment before the compulsions become a way of life is wise and a sign of strength.

Getting free from the *MAZE* of compulsions.

You can recover and be free from the pain of performing these rituals. You will learn why you do them and recognize triggers to the acts. You and your counselor will become therapeutic detectives working to gain clues as to how everyday behaviors became compulsions. In many cases repetitive behaviors have been going on, on some level, for a long time. You will learn positive coping skills and specific exercises with which to face obsessions, fears, or anxieties. Learning to rethink takes time. It is important to allow yourself time. Many veterans had a firm framework about life and have to work with their counselor to form a new way to look at their life outside the service even if they have been out for years. A counselor can assess your needs and make appropriate referrals for ongoing support. In time, with support, you will be free from the power of compulsions. Treatment can offer relief and support. You are not alone. There are reasons for how you think and what you are doing. Step out of the box and begin to heal. You have the power to call someone for help.

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