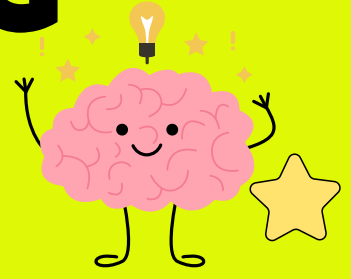


NAVIGATING OCD



UNDERSTANDING OCD

OCD stands for Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder, it is a mental health condition that affects how people think and act. It causes a person to get **stuck in a cycle** of:

- **Obsessions** – unwanted thoughts, worries, or images that pop into your head and make you feel really anxious or uncomfortable
- **Compulsions** – things you feel like you *have to do* over and over to try to feel better or more "in control"

COMMON SYMPTOMS

OBSESSIONS (thoughts that cause anxiety)

- Fear of germs or contamination
- Worrying that something bad will happen
- Unwanted thoughts about hurting someone or doing something bad
- Obsessing over moral or religious issues

COMPULSIONS (things done to feel better)

- Washing hands **over and over**, even if they look clean
- Rewriting homework because it didn't "feel perfect"
- Touching something with both hands to make it feel "even"

DELAY OR REDUCE RITUALS

Delay the Compulsion

- Give it time
 - Say: *"I'll wait 5 minutes before I wash my hands."*
 - Set a timer and do something distracting while you wait (listen to music, doodle, play a game).

👉 **Why it helps:** Even a small delay weakens the OCD cycle and teaches your brain it's safe to wait.

Reduce the Ritual

- **Do it less or shorter**
 - If you usually check the door 5 times, try checking it only **3 times**.

👉 **Why it helps:** You're showing your brain that nothing bad happens when you do less of the ritual.

Name the OCD

- **Talk back to it.**
 - Say to yourself: *"That's OCD talking – I don't have to listen."*
 - Some people even name their OCD (like "The Bully" or "OCD Monster").

👉 **Why it helps:** It puts distance between you and the thought – you're not your OCD.

Replace the Ritual

- **Do something different instead.**
 - If you want to count, squeeze a stress ball or hum your favorite song

👉 **Why it helps:** Replacing a compulsion with a calming or positive action builds new habits.

♥ SELF-COMPASSION REMINDER

- *It's okay if it's hard. These changes take time, and even small wins matter.*
- *"I'm not my thoughts, and I'm not my OCD."*
- *It's okay to feel anxious sometimes. What matters is that I'm trying, and that's brave. Every time I face a fear – even a little – I'm growing stronger.*