Resources for Romantic Partners of Those with OCD

When you love someone with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD), you are impacted as well. You may find yourself confused about the disorder, pulled to assist with compulsions or change your behavior, and uncertain about how to support your partner and take care of yourself. Dr. Michelle Witkin and Dr. Josh Spitalnick have pulled together information to support romantic partners based on the most recurring topics, needs, and questions that arose from longtime, ongoing support groups for partners.

Dr. Witkin and Dr. Spitalnick published an article in an International OCD Foundation Quarterly Newsletter about the group and being a romantic partner, titled "**Things We've Learned from Supporting Partners of OCD Sufferers**" which can be accessed by clicking the title.

The Vocabulary:

- **TOCs:** A way to organize anxiety symptoms into 3 categories, Triggers, Obsessions, and Compulsions
- **Compulsions/Rituals/Safety Behaviors:** Responses or reactions to Obsessions used to reduce or manage obsessions/anxiety or answer the uncertainty created by obsessions. Compulsions can be behavioral (visible) and/or mental (invisible)
- **Family Accommodations**: engaging with your partners rituals or doing rituals with them. When you change your behavior to accommodate the OCD and help your partner avoid distress.
- **Reassurance Seeking (RS):** An example of ritual between the OCD sufferer and another person, often a loved one, where the sufferer asks questions or conveys concerns with the hope that you, the caregiver or partner, say or do something to help them feel less anxiety or feel more certainty
- **Ruminations**: MENTAL (not behavioral) rituals or compulsions (we cant see them but they are active thoughts that act just like hand washing or behavioral rituals
- **"Pure O" OCD:** The phrases "Pure O" or "purely obsessional" OCD have been used interchangeably over the last 10-15. It is not an official clinical term, it is not a formal diagnosis or medical term approved within the professional community."Pure O" is most commonly understood to consist of non-stop repetitive thoughts (obsessions) that are disturbing and overwhelming about topics that are existential, perverse, taboo, sexualized, or seemingly harm-focused.
- **ERP**: **Exposure and Response Prevention**
- **ACT** = **Acceptance and Commitment Therapy**
- **I-CBT** = **Inference-Based CBT**
- **IOCDF:** **International OCD Foundation**

Books

- *When a Family Member Has OCD: Mindfulness and Cognitive Behavioral Skills to Help Families Affected by Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (Hershfield)*
- *Loving Someone with OCD: Help for You and Your Family (Landsfield, Rupertus, Pedrick)*
- *The Family Guide to Getting Over OCD: Reclaim Your Life and Help Your Loved One (Abramowitz)*
- *When a Loved One Won't Seek Mental Health Treatment (Pollard, et al)*
- *Relationship OCD: A CBT-Based Guide to Move Beyond Obsessive Doubt, Anxiety, and Fear of Commitment in Romantic Relationships (Rajaee)*
- *Thriving in Relationships When You Have OCD: How to Keep Obsessions and Compulsions from Sabotaging Love, Friendship, and Family Connections (Mariaskin)*

Audio/Video Podcasts

- **The OCD Family Podcast**
- **The OCD Stories**
- **Nathan Peterson's OCD and Anxiety Youtube Channel**

Family Accommodations and Addressing Family Dynamics

- **Family Guidelines and Recommendations**
- **Family Accommodations 101 (Yale School Public Health)**
- **Understanding Your Loved Ones OCD (IOCDF and Grayson)**
- **Crowded Relationships: Learning to Break Up with OCD When It Intrudes on Intimate Relationships (OCD Family Podcast hosted by Nicole Morris, with Guests Dr. Witkin & Dr. Spitalnick)**

OCD Self-Help Resources (as a supplement to OCD treatment or a way to begin treatment if a specialist is not available):

- **OCD and the 6-Moment Game by Reid Wilson, Ph.D.**
- **Your OCD Toolkit by Kimberley Quinlan, LMFT**
- **OCD and Anxiety Online** – Nathan Peterson's (LCSW) courses including multiple on OCD and one on supporting someone with OCD

OCD overview and Subtype Content

- **Made of Millions Website in OCD** (OCD Overview with many subtypes described)
- **Overview and Resources on various Subtypes**
- **Info on "Pure O" OCD**
- **Info on Intrusive Thoughts, Mental Rituals and OCD Themes**

Relationship OCD (ROCD)

- Online resource for ROCD **(ROCD.net)**
- Nathan Peterson's YouTube channel (Anxiety and OCD) video on ROCD
- The OCD Stories about ROCD **with Dr. Sheva Rajaee**

Health Anxiety

- Overcoming Health Anxiety Resource Center and Website
- Overcoming Health Anxiety Support Groups and Community