

Obsession Brainstorming Exercise

Common Expressions of OCD:

Contamination and cleaning – I have an intense fear of germs, dirt, or other contaminants that leads me to compulsive cleaning or avoiding behaviors. List examples:

Symmetry and ordering – I have an overwhelming need for things to be aligned, balanced, and ordered in a particular way. List examples:

Responsibility for harm or mistakes – I feel an overwhelming responsibility for harm that may come to others. List examples:

Violence and aggression – I suffer from thoughts, images, and fear of violent aggressive things. (This can be fears that you will do or say these things or persistent thoughts about them.) List examples:

Sexuality – I suffer with overwhelming thoughts and images that come to my mind, impulses that I feel, and intense fears related to sinful sexual things. List examples:

Checking – I feel a compulsion to check and double check.

- Locks, stoves, light switches
- Water taps, gas valves
- Signs of illness or arousal
- If my feelings are appropriate
- The news to see if there were accidents or violence
- If personal items are with me
- Packing and repacking
- If I'm a Christian

List examples:

Scrupulosity – I have intense fears or doubts about my faith and my ability to follow Christ.

List examples:

What situations, actions, or biblical commands do you find yourself trying to avoid?

What situations come up that lead you to seek reassurance from others?

What persistent, unpleasant, or senseless thoughts and doubts do you have that provoke anxiety or distress?

What thoughts or images do you have that you feel you should try to control and resist?

What kinds of thoughts about taboo (immoral, deviant, or aggressive) topics do you have that make you feel unsure of who you really are or what you believe?

What thoughts do you have that make you feel afraid of acting in ways you believe you shouldn't act?

What upsetting thoughts, images, or ideas do you have that you would prefer not to tell other people about?

Questions and descriptions, though slightly altered, have been taken from [Getting Over OCD: A 10-Step Workbook for Taking Back your Life](#), 2nd Edition, chapters 1 and 2 by Jonathan S. Abramowitz, PhD.