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Myths About OCD

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As is the case with most mental health disorders, OCD is clouded by all kinds of myths and misconceptions. This is the main reason why psychoeducation holds such a crucial role in OCD therapy.

It is in people's nature to be impressionable, which is why popular media easily creates a general, and often misleading, impressions about mental health, through memorable images and characters. However, these misconceptions can sometimes become harmful for both people who struggle with OCD and their loved ones. So, let's take a look at 10 popular misconceptions about OCD and understand their lack of credibility.

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#1 Only Adults Can Have OCD

In most cases, OCD becomes a problem visible to others during adolescence. Although symptoms in adults may be easier to notice, children are also susceptible to this condition. Most commonly, OCD in children manifests in the form of increased worrying, fear of germs and dirt, increased orderliness.

#2 OCD Includes Only Cleaning

OCD is about preoccupations, which means that every thought has the potential to become

obsessive. The main reason why most people believe that OCD is about cleaning and hand-washing is the images that media often exposes us to. As you now know, OCD can have an array of other symptoms as well.

#3 OCD Is Untreatable

Despite symptoms that may negatively impact one's life, OCD is highly treatable. Whether it's through medication or psychotherapy, mental health professionals are now better prepared than ever to tackle this issue. In addition, the Internet is full of useful tips and tricks to overcome your obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviors, and of course – you can apply the tips from this course for significant improvement.

#4 OCD Is Caused by Stress

Stress will only intensify the negative effects of OCD, as it increases anxiety and therefore the individual feels a stronger need to engage in compulsive, anxiety-alleviating behaviors. However, stress cannot be considered the cause of OCD. As you now know, OCD develops mainly as a result of environmental factors and genetic predispositions.

#5 People with OCD Are Antisocial

Sometimes, obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviors get in the way of healthy socializing. In addition, some people who experience OCD try to hide their symptoms by avoiding social interactions. Remember that people with OCD would like to have a healthy social life, friends and love interests, as much as anyone else. However, they may be worried about being judged and criticized, so they need support and understanding from others.

#6 Everyone Is “a Bit OCD” From Time to Time

As you already know, people tend to joke about OCD, without considering what they are actually saying. This is a serious condition, and while the severity of symptoms may vary, there is no such thing as being “a bit OCD”. Remember that there is a significant difference between arranging your books in alphabetical order, because it's easier to find them that way, and being constantly tormented by obsessive thoughts and images.

#7 Obsessions Always Lead to Compulsions

Not all obsessions are followed by compulsions. A type of the disorder, called Primarily obsessional obsessive-compulsive disorder, or Pure-O OCD, is characterized by the experience of obsessive thoughts and images, without observable compulsions.

#8 Medication Is Most Effective

In some extreme cases, experts recommend a mix of OCD psychotherapy and medication. However, not everyone who suffers from OCD require drug therapy. Medication is prescribed only when the symptoms reach a critical level, thus indicating a neurochemical imbalance in

the brain. What is true for other anxiety disorders is also true for OCD – while therapy and medications may be equally effective at first, people who engage in psychotherapy have increasingly better long-term results.

#9 People with OCD Just Need to Relax

As you already know, OCD is not about stress or burnout. It's a serious condition, which can easily affect our daily lives. Although relaxation is part of the intervention, we cannot cure OCD just by "chilling" or "taking it easy".

#10 OCD Is Not Serious

OCD might not seem like a severe disorder, if you or a loved one haven't struggled with it. It is important to understand that people who experience OCD are in real pain. It's difficult to sit and watch how your obsessions slowly get the best of you, countless hours lost on futile rituals.

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