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Socioeconomics of OCD

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Our genetic makeup aside, OCD may be effected by various environmental factors. To be more specific, our society, economy, and education might contribute to obsessive thoughts and compulsive behaviors.

It is important to understand that nobody is to blame for your OCD, but there are some factors, which could influence the symptoms. Since you are the one who has all the power in creating a better life for yourself, understanding the socioeconomics of OCD can help you cope better.

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Quiz: Psychology 101 Part 2

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Media

Although using humor is a healthy coping mechanism, joking too much about a certain topic can sometimes result in negative consequences. For instance, if we often joke about OCD, with time we might grow to perceive it as a whimsical matter, rather than the serious issue it is.

Online media is a vast territory, where one harmless joke can easily reach millions of people. You have to consider that some of them suffer from OCD and might find that particular joke offensive. It's not about being pretentious or overly sensitive, it's just that you grow tired of being treated like your condition is not a serious one.

Consumerism

Consumerism seems to be the cornerstone of modern economics. The more we buy, the better our economy functions. We are constantly being told that money should circulate and that material possessions equal happiness.

However, a lifestyle dictated by consumerism can lead to problems, such as hoarding and compulsive shopping. Of course it is not the presence of commercial goods that leads to these behaviors, since they are driven by inner conflict. Still, consumerism provides an unhealthy coping mechanism for them.

Whether inner conflict finds expression in compulsive buying, or hoarding money and goods, both behaviors are equally damaging and yet can be alleviated, with determined efforts.

Education

Most countries still use an outdated system based on standardized tests and a pre-established set of procedures that each student must follow in order to graduate.

On one hand we encourage diversity and individuality, and on the other we put everyone in the same pot by using standardized measures and rigid categories. Children are taught from an early age that personal value and worth are equal to high performances and productivity. But productive for whom? Are they allowed to set their own standards? Children who are talked to with patience and understanding, and who are taught to set standards for themselves, based on their own values, may be happier and more effective.

We are now starting to see an increase in the belief that learning should be an intrinsically fun activity, and this is an approach that helps both children and adults cope with anxiety in a healthier manner.

The Impact of Education

To add to that, the symptoms of OCD may sometimes be effected by the individual's level of education and occupational status as well. It is believed that people with better education are more likely to understand the inner workings of OCD and therefore seek help for themselves and their loved ones. However, anybody, despite of their previous education and current occupational status, can educate themselves on the topic of mental health, since learning about it can enable one to obtain healthier coping strategies.

Consider Your Own Standards

Although socioeconomic factors could influence the symptoms of OCD, you cannot change the mechanisms of our world overnight. Nevertheless, what you can do is contribute to a better world and treat yourself better.

Consider what it is that you dislike about the effects of society on yourself and whether you have internalized those effects. Then, think about your own values and how they correspond to the way you have been setting standards for yourself and others.

Treating yourself with understanding and kindness, while striving to improve your mental health and be happier, is a good strategy to help you cope with your OCD.

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