

HELLO!



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- If you are reading this it means your child has recently filled in our 'struggling to talk about OCD?' booklet.
 - We hope that you found this tool helpful to open up conversations about OCD and learn more about how your child is struggling.
 - We know it can be quite daunting to look through the booklet once it has been handed to you, especially if they have ticked boxes which have made you feel worried about how to respond, and that's why we have created this page.
 - We have created some headings so you can navigate to the part which applies to you.

My child won't fill it in, what now?

Some children and young people may still find it hard to communicate their symptoms, even if it's in writing format. If they don't feel comfortable filling it in just yet, you could leave it with them and suggest that they keep it safe so when they do feel ready, they can fill it in to hand to you. You could also suggest the possibility of reading through some of the young ambassadors' work on our website, so they can see other young people writing about their OCD symptoms, to normalise their experiences. Here is the OCDUKYA page; www.ocduk.org/ocdukya/



My child has ticked an obsession that sounds distressing, and I am unsure of how to approach them about it.

Firstly, this is a big step for your child or young person. Even just ticking a box can be scary and anxiety inducing. We would recommend telling them how proud you are and show them you have recognised their bravery by sharing their struggles. It would be helpful to tell them at this stage that everyone has sad, scary, violent, or distressing intrusive thoughts from time to time, regardless of if they have OCD or not. It isn't the thought that is the problem – it is the reaction to those thoughts that defines OCD. You could then move on to asking them 'If you feel comfortable to, would you like to tell me a bit more about these thoughts, and how they make you feel?'. You could then move on to telling them that sharing this information is a step that you recognise to be difficult, but a step that will help them moving forward. The more you know, the more you can help.

My child has put a star next to some of the obsessions they have ticked, what do I do?

The star means your child doesn't feel ready to expand on that particular symptom just yet. Be clear with them that you understand right now they don't feel ready to talk further about the obsession or compulsion they have ticked, but it is something that needs working towards someday. For now, tell them you respect their wishes, and tell them you are here whenever they feel ready to talk further.



My child will let me read the booklet, and not their other parent – what do I do?

Sometimes children and young people find it easier to share their struggles with one specific person, and although this can feel personal, it often isn't. There may be many reasons why your child would rather not share this booklet with their other parent. Maybe they don't want to upset them, maybe they are worried they will see them differently, or maybe they only want one person to know – and that just happens to be you. Regardless, just the fact they are willing to share their struggles with one person is a huge step. You could try to negotiate a plan where you decide what information they are comfortable with you to share with their other parent, and what they may need more time with. Make clear boundaries that although some things they may not want their other parent to know, as a co-parent there will be some things you need to communicate on for their wellbeing.

Can I share this booklet with their therapist?

Absolutely. Sharing this booklet with your child's therapist could be a great way to keep everyone on the same page. The more the therapist knows about your child's struggles, the more they can tailor the therapy to their needs. Make sure that your child agrees with sharing this booklet with their therapist before doing so.



My child has written ‘give me reassurance’ in the ways to help section. I heard that giving reassurance will feed the OCD, what shall I do?

You are right, reassurance seeking is a compulsion because it is a behaviour intended to neutralise an obsession. We advise that you have this conversation with your child and explain that you understand why they would like more reassurance, but by doing this we are giving the OCD bully what it wants.

Is your question not listed?

If you have a question about this booklet, please email parents@ocduk.org and we will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

