



Overcoming Obsessive Thoughts: How to Gain Control of Your OCD

By David A. Clark, Christine Purdon

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Although once thought to be a rare and unusual condition, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) has become increasingly a part of everyday discourse as it has gathered more and more media attention. News magazines and programs have done features on the disorder and its range of symptoms, and popular culture has depicted characters suffering from OCD, such as the eponymous detective in the UPN television program, *Monk*.

One facet of OCD that is just beginning to be widely known is that people with the disorder can present a wide range of symptoms. Some people with OCD wash compulsively, others hoard objects, while still others-the audience of this book-struggle with obsessive thoughts. The most effective treatment techniques vary from symptom to symptom. This is why New Harbinger launched, with the publication of **Overcoming Compulsive Hoarding**, a series of books designed to bring the latest coping strategies for specific OCD symptoms to the people who need them most. Since that first book, we have brought readers two more titles: **Overcoming Compulsive Washing** and **Overcoming Compulsive Checking**. The professional community and OCD sufferers alike have warmly received all three books.

This fourth book in the series addresses the needs of those who struggle with obsessive thoughts they perceive as violent, disgusting, or blasphemous. Psychologists estimate that more than 50 percent of OCD sufferers experience aggressive, religious, or sexual thoughts. The goal of this book is to help people understand the impact of their control efforts on their obsessional thoughts. It works to help them recognize that thoughts, in themselves, are not threatening, dangerous, or harmful. Rather, it is the compulsive strategies they develop for coping that make the thoughts seem so harmful. The book offers safe and effective exposure exercises readers can use to limit the effect obsessive thoughts have on their lives. In addition to self-care strategies, the book includes information about choosing and making the most of professional care.

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Editorial Review

Review

“Purdon and Clark are among the world's top experts on the nature and treatment of unwanted obsessional thoughts. In this book, they describe powerful methods for conquering this problem, based on their own research as well as studies by other leading scientists. Although most self-help books on OCD include sections on dealing with unwanted thoughts, this excellent book provides the most thorough discussion of this topic that I've seen. Whether you have disturbing religious thoughts that you can't get rid of, irrational, unwanted, aggressive or sexual impulses, or other sorts of upsetting thoughts, this book is for you!”

—Martin M. Antony, Ph.D., ABPP, director of the Anxiety Treatment and Research Centre at St. Joseph's Healthcare and professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioural Neurosciences at McMaster University, both in Hamilton, Ontario

From the Publisher

Fourth in this successful series, this book provides individuals who suffer from repetitive, repugnant thoughts, images, or impulses with information and skills they can use to reduce their distress over and preoccupation with these thoughts.

About the Author

David A. Clark, PhD, L. Psych., is professor of psychology at the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton, NB. He has published numerous articles on cognitive theory and therapy of depression and obsessive-compulsive disorder and is a founding fellow of the Academy of Cognitive Therapy. He is coauthor of *Scientific Foundations of Cognitive Theory and Therapy of Depression* with Aaron Beck and Brad Alford, and he has recently published the Clark-Beck Obsessive Compulsive Inventory with the Psychological Corporation. He has received a number of research grants to study the cognitive basis of distress. He is also an active member of the Obsessive-Compulsive Cognitions Working Group and is associate editor of *Cognitive Therapy and Research*.

Christine Purdon, PhD, C. Psych., is associate professor of psychology at the University of Waterloo in Waterloo, ON, and is also a consulting psychologist with the Anxiety Treatment and Research Centre at St. Joseph's Healthcare in Hamilton, ON. She is a licensed psychologist who has been researching and treating obsessional problems for the past decade. She received three early career awards for her contributions to research on obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and is a member of the Obsessive-Compulsive Cognitions Working Group, an international research group devoted to examining the role of cognitive appraisal in the development and persistence of OCD.

She is a member of the Academy of Cognitive Therapy and divides her time between conducting research on OCD; assessing and treating OCD and other anxiety problems; and training residents, PhD students, and students in other mental health professions in cognitive-behavioural therapy and treatment of anxiety disorders. She is currently coauthoring a comprehensive book on treatment of OCD for professionals under contract with the American Psychological Association Press.

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