

GUIDELINES FOR FAMILIES COPING WITH OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE
DISORDER

1. Keep it cool at home. Use a quiet manner.
2. Lower expectations temporarily - compare progress this month to last month rather than last year or next year. Compare his/her progress with him/herself not anyone else.
3. Overlook rituals and checking. See these as coping strategies. Don't participate in rituals.
4. Don't be judgemental of his/her behavior. Accept it as the best he/she can do right now.
5. Do not pressure him/her to verbalize anxiety (only makes matters worse).
6. Help channel energy into activities - jogging, swimming, dancing, etc. Activity is more likely to calm him/her down than talking it out.
7. Allow verbal expression of rage and anger. Listen to what he/she says. Try not to be defensive.
8. Help him/her develop confidence in own decisions and choices by allowing him/her enough time to make them him/herself. Never make decisions for another person (unless a young child) but help them make it.
9. Do not confront him with what he/she says or does - reflect the feelings behind the action and allow further discussion.
10. Do not pressure him/her but stick to the time allocated by therapist. If not in therapy cut down on the time of the activity slowly.
11. Always explain changes - make only reasonable demands.
12. Limits calm things down. Everyone needs to know what the rules are. Set limits on the amount of time he/she talks beyond 10 minutes. Conversation beyond 10 minutes may not be productive. Do not restrict rituals.

14. Ignore what you can't change. Let some things slide. Never ignore violence or suicidal threats.
15. Say what you have to say clearly, calmly, and in a positive way.
16. Follow doctors orders. Take medications as they are prescribed. Take only medications that are prescribed.
17. Carry on business as usual - reconnect with friends, hobbies, and family routines.
18. No street drugs or alcohol. They make symptoms worse.
19. Pick up on early changes and signs - consult with therapist and/or doctor.
20. Solve problems step by step - make changes gradually. Work on one thing at a time.
21. If he/she's on a behavioral modification program, assist him to follow his assignments by allowing his/her own time and space to do them. Don't get involved (unless a young child).