



Archways is a private, fee for service psychological clinic that offers cognitive and behavioural therapies for mood and anxiety disorders.

We offer evidence-based therapy for adults, children and adolescents.



Special OCD Edition

Winning the Game with OCD

Cognitive-behaviour therapy (CBT) continues to be the gold standard non-pharmaceutical treatment for obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD)*. Before embarking on a course of CBT, it can be helpful for individuals to change their frame of reference, and begin to view OCD in a new light.

In my practice I have found that teaching my clients to think differently about their OCD has proven not only beneficial, but necessary for treatment compliance. Teaching clients that OCD is something that happens to them, instead of part of them, is intrinsic to this idea. If individuals can learn to successfully separate themselves from their “disorder”, they can redirect blame from themselves to the OCD.

“It’s not me, it’s my OCD”

Jeffery Schwartz (author of “Brain Lock”**) has written a chapter titled “Relabeling OCD”. This may be a useful chapter for individuals to refer to, especially if they have a tendency to self-blame. Once a better understanding of this relabeling process has been established, individuals are in a better position to grasp the idea of “The Game”.

The Game

When clients arrive at our office, they are losing The Game with OCD. They have been fighting for a long time, trying to pacify the obsessions by checking, washing, repeating, rationalizing, and distraction. What they often don’t realise is that OCD is sitting on the side lines laughing at them. All their energy has been used trying to

fight off the anxiety – by engaging in compulsions. But unfortunately, the compulsions directly fuel the OCD. With this extra fuel, the OCD generates more obsessions leading to a state of anxiety and often terror.

“(the anxiety is) like waiting for your exam results in which you know you’ve done really badly, the consequences of which means having your leg sawn off”

Unsolicited quote from anonymous patient

Changing the Rules

To win The Game with OCD, the individual must change the game rules. So far, OCD has dictated the rules by telling the individual to ritualize to reduce anxiety. So instead, individuals must make their own rules: do the exact opposite of what the OCD wants you to do, and you’ll start winning The Game.

Old rules:

“If I don’t wash my hands then I’ll get sick (or make someone sick). And I can’t handle that!!!”

New rules:

“If I don’t wash my hands then I’ll feel uncertain and anxious. That will be hard but I can handle it.”

As you can imagine, this can be a bit of a tough sell when we introduce this idea to our clients! But we explain that OCD is illogical, and as such the treatment sounds a little illogical too. But

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have the courage to just try it. Over time OCD begins to relent and fall asleep. There it will stay dormant until it thinks you have forgotten how to play a winning game and at that time it will likely throw a new obsession your way. If you are ready for it, you can shut it down fast with your new game-winning strategies.

Now that individuals are better prepared to engage in The Game with OCD, they will be more ready to embark on a course of evidence-based CBT. Hopefully throughout this process they will be able to get mad at the OCD, instead of at themselves!

Joanna McBride, M.A., C.Psych.Assoc.

References:

* Warren, R. & Thomas, J. C. (2001). **Cognitive-behavior therapy of obsessive-compulsive disorder in private practice: An effectiveness study.** Journal of anxiety disorders, 16, 277-285.

** Schwartz, J. M. (1997). **Brain Lock: Free Yourself from Obsessive-Compulsive Behaviour.** Harper Perennial, 1997.

OCD Book Recommendations

There are many wonderful resources for OCD. Here are a few of our favourites:

- ❖ **Overcoming Obsessive Thoughts.** By Christine Purdon & David A. Clark. New Harbinger Publications, 2005
- ❖ **The OCD Workbook.** By Bruce Hyman & Cherry Pedrick. New Harbinger Publications, 2010
- ❖ **Brain Lock: Free Yourself from Obsessive-Compulsive Behaviour.** By Jeffery Schwartz. Harper Perennial, 1997
- ❖ **The Imp of The Mind: Exploring the silent epidemic of obsessive bad thoughts.** By Lee Baer. Penguin Group, 2002

More excellent OCD resources are available at: www.ocfoundation.org

Dare to Believe

To mark the upcoming **OCD Awareness Week** (October 8-14) the International OCD Foundation and McLean Hospital will host **“A Night to Believe”** in Boston showcasing creative ways in which people express OCD through art. Archways Centre for CBT is hosting a **local viewing party** for this live-broadcasted event. Information on local resources for OCD will be available. Coffee and dessert provided.

If you have OCD, or know of someone who does, please make sure you let them know about this special event.

When: Saturday, October 13, 6-9PM (the live broadcast starts at 7 PM)

Where: Canadian Mental Health Association, 648 Huron St., London

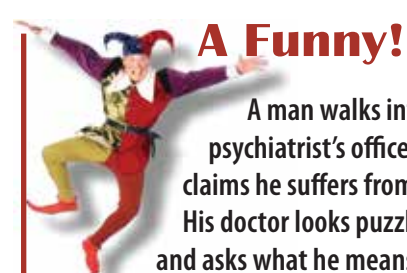
Who: Anyone is welcome – **FREE!!**

How: RSVP to Susan at info@archways.ca or **519-472-6612**

Did You Know?

On average, it takes 14-17 years from the time OCD begins for people to get the right treatment.

(ocfoundation.org)



A Funny!
A man walks into his psychiatrist's office and claims he suffers from CDO. His doctor looks puzzled and asks what he means.

“It’s like OCD but everything as to be in alphabetical order”!



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