

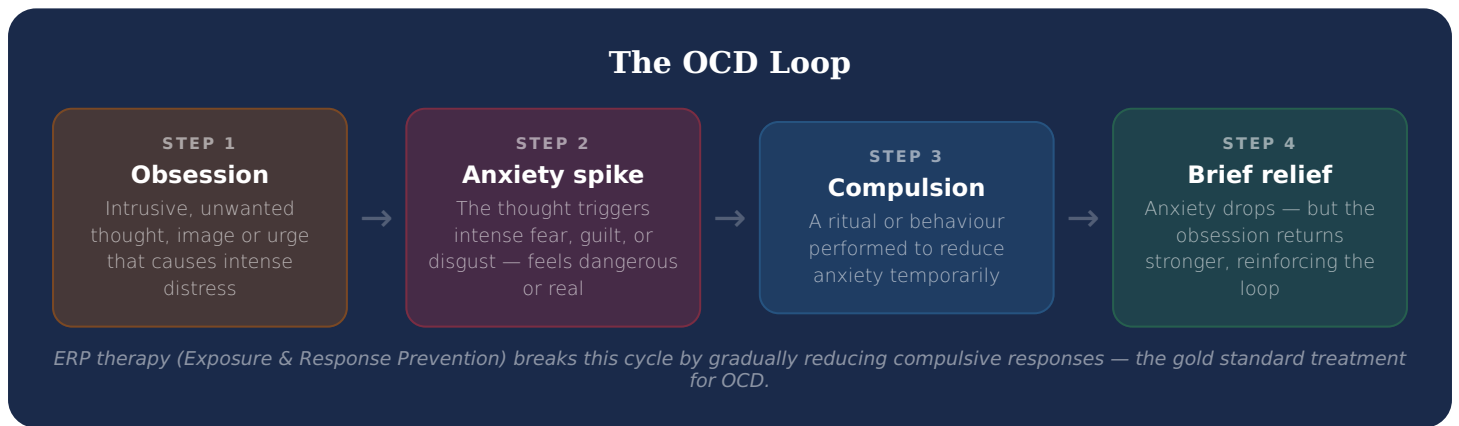


Understanding **OCD** — A Guide for Families

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder · Signs, myths & how to help · Mumbai

OCD is not about being "clean" or "organised." It is a **serious, chronic mental health condition** where the brain gets stuck in loops of intrusive thoughts and repetitive behaviours. It is not a personality quirk — it is a medical illness with highly effective treatments including ERP therapy and medication.

THE OCD CYCLE — WHY WILLPOWER ALONE DOES NOT WORK



COMMON SIGNS OF OCD — WHAT FAMILIES OBSERVE



Obsessions (intrusive thoughts)



Compulsions (rituals & behaviours)

01

OBSSESSION

Fear of contamination

Persistent fear of germs, dirt, illness — convinced touching objects will cause harm to self or loved ones.

02

COMPULSION

Excessive washing or cleaning

Washes hands 20-50 times daily until skin cracks; spends hours cleaning surfaces that are already clean.

03

OBSSESSION

Harm obsessions

Distressing thoughts of accidentally or deliberately harming loved ones — terrifies the person who has them.

04

COMPULSION

Checking rituals

Checks locks, gas, switches, or plugs dozens of times; cannot leave home without repeated checking loops.

05

OBSSESSION

Need for symmetry or "just right"

Intense discomfort unless objects are perfectly aligned or tasks completed in a precise, exact order.

06

COMPULSION

Counting & repeating

Repeats actions a set number of times, counts silently, or redoes tasks until it "feels right."

07

OBSSESSION

Religious or moral scrupulosity

08

COMPULSION

Seeking reassurance

Overwhelming fear of sinning, blasphemy, or moral failure — prays or confesses excessively to neutralise guilt.

Repeatedly asks family "Are you sure I didn't hurt you?" or "Did I lock the door?" — never satisfied by the answer.

MYTHS FAMILIES BELIEVE — AND THE CLINICAL FACTS

MYTH

"Just stop — it's all in your head."

FACT

OCD involves **measurable brain circuit differences**. Telling someone to "just stop" is like telling a diabetic to just produce insulin.

MYTH

"Helping with rituals keeps them calm, so it must be good."

FACT

Family accommodation feeds OCD and worsens it long-term. Short-term calm = long-term harm. A psychiatrist will guide gradual, safe reduction of accommodation.

MYTH

"OCD people are violent — the harm thoughts mean they'll act on them."

FACT

Harm obsessions are **ego-dystonic** — the person is horrified by the thought and will not act on it. This is the opposite of violent intent.

MYTH

"OCD cannot be treated — they'll always be like this."

FACT

ERP therapy combined with medication produces significant improvement in 60-70% of patients. Early treatment leads to better outcomes.

HOW FAMILY MEMBERS CAN HELP — AND WHAT TO AVOID

✓ HELPFUL FAMILY BEHAVIOURS

- ✓ Learn about OCD — understanding removes blame and shame
- ✓ Support them to attend therapy consistently
- ✓ Gently encourage — never force — facing feared situations
- ✓ Praise effort and courage, not outcome or ritual reduction
- ✓ Maintain a calm, non-reactive home environment
- ✓ Attend family therapy sessions when recommended
- ✓ Set compassionate limits on accommodation with therapist guidance

✗ BEHAVIOURS THAT WORSEN OCD

- ✗ Giving repeated reassurance when asked the same question
- ✗ Participating in rituals to keep the peace
- ✗ Expressing frustration, anger, or mocking the rituals
- ✗ Forcing abrupt ritual-stopping without therapist guidance
- ✗ Telling them "it's not a big deal" or "just ignore it"
- ✗ Sharing the belief that the obsession is real or dangerous
- ✗ Avoiding topics or situations to prevent OCD episodes

FREE TOOL

Take the Y-BOCS OCD Severity Screening — a clinically validated quiz used by psychiatrists to assess OCD symptom severity and track treatment progress.
drpavansonar.com/ocd



Dr. Pavan Sonar

MBBS · DPM · DNB Psychiatry · MS Counselling & Psychotherapy · Sexologist · Life Coach
drpavansonar.com

Andheri West · Bellevue Hospital
Malad West · Riddhivinayak Hospital
Malad East · New Sanjeevani Hospital
Borivali West · Bhagat Polyclinic

+91 85918 40141

Medical Disclaimer: This guide is for general educational purposes only and does not constitute medical advice or diagnosis. OCD must be assessed and treated by a qualified psychiatrist. ERP therapy should only be conducted under professional supervision. Please consult Dr. Pavan Sonar for a personalised evaluation and treatment plan.