

# Tips for navigating Complex Trauma (CPTSD)

## AND Anxiety or OCD

The essence of OCD is that you experience intrusive/unwanted thoughts that are typically not congruent with your values or sense of self and the presence of compulsions, which are mental or physical behaviors that you engage in to alleviate the anxiety that is brought upon by the intrusive thoughts. Struggling with being OK with uncertainty is also a factor.

**Even though you(s) may not have OCD, if you experience ANXIETY, you likely also struggle with INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS.**

**TIP #**

**1**

Do not white-knuckle it when you are exposing yourself to fearful stimuli.

We do not want to re-traumatize all of the selves that we have ever been/are.

We need to be mindful that we are actively reparenting our little selves/parts

**When you do exposures, please be kind**

# Our Brain is Neuroplastic and can be REWIRED

TIP #

2

Let's be mindful about the messaging we are sending all of the selves we have ever been/are.

In order to be mindful, we need to know what we are working with. What's going on in our minds??



I invite you to practice MINDFUL OBSERVATION for just one minute at a time. This means you are watching/observing your thoughts without latching on to them or responding to them

# MORE ON MINDFUL OBSERVATION

For those of us with CPTSD, it is helpful to literally know the content of our thoughts because it may be related to our past traumatic experiences and will require a different approach than just Exposure and Response Prevention Alone.

example: in 1 minute, I noticed the following thoughts when I took a break from making these slides (there were more, but you get the point)

"I'm not a good therapist"

"I suck at public speaking"

"I can't breathe"

"I'm doing something wrong"

"The house is a mess"

"I'm gonna get sued"



# MORE ON MINDFUL OBSERVATION

When you notice your thoughts, you can identify Themes

Here are some of my themes:

"I'm not good enough"

Contamination

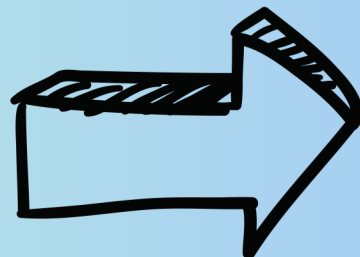
Sexual intrusive thoughts that are not congruent with me

Something bad is going to happen

**Go through your themes and see if you can classify them as trauma based or OCD, or both/mix**

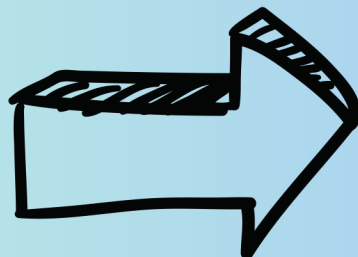
# Classifying my intrusive thoughts/Labeling in a non-critical way

"I'm not good enough"



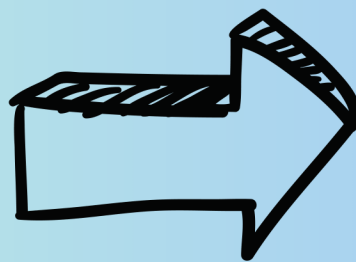
TRAUMA BASED

CONTAMINATION



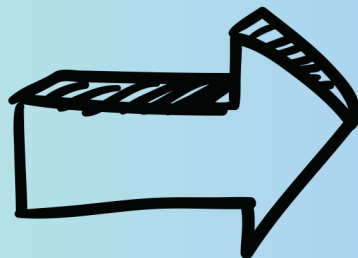
Fueled by trauma, but **LARGELY** OCD because there are compulsions

Sexual Intrusive thoughts that are not congruent with me



OCD

Something bad is going to happen



Trauma Based



**Remember, gold standard therapy for OCD is Exposure and Response Prevention; however, Complex Trauma requires self-compassion to be part of treatment**

**As well as befriending and getting to know our parts, such as our critic; not to mention, processing of traumas among other important components of trauma therapy**

**This is a very tricky thing to do and would be awesome if you had some guidance doing it, such as with a trauma informed OCD therapist**



**Tip #**

**3**

**Actively Engage in Self-Regulation;  
Be KIND to your nervous system**

**Which of the 5 senses has the strongest PULL for you(s)?**

**You can appeal to a specific sense to help connect you back to your body if that feels safe or good to you**

**OR**

**You can bring attention to what feels soothing in the environment, such as the sound of the birds, the sight of the blue sky, the smell of pine trees...**





Tip #

4

Live a life in accordance to your  
**PRESENT-DAY Values**

**VS**

Letting the **INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS** dictate how you live

I invite you to identify your top 5 values, and perhaps narrow it down to your top 3 to help you bring your focus back to what **IS TRULY IMPORTANT TO YOU(S)**



## Here is a common list of values in alphabetical order (close to alphabetical order)

Accountability  
Achievement  
Activism  
Adaptability  
Adventure  
Altruism  
Ambition  
Authenticity  
Autonomy  
Balance  
Beauty  
Career  
Caring  
Climate-  
Consciousness

Creativity  
cleanliness  
Collaboration  
Commitment  
Community  
Compassion  
Competence  
Confidence  
Connection  
Contentment  
Contribution  
Cooperation  
Courage

Curiosity  
Dignity  
Diversity  
Efficiency  
Eco-  
Consciousness  
Environment  
Equality  
Ethics  
Excellence  
Fairness  
Faith  
Family  
Financial  
Stability



## VALUES LIST CONTINUED

forgiveness

Freedom

Friendship

Fun

Generosity

Grace

Gratitude

Growth

Harmony

Health

Heritage

Home

Honesty

Hope

Humility

Humor

Inclusion

Independence

Initiative

Integrity

Intuition

Job Security

Joy

Justice

Kindness

Knowledge

Leadership

Learning

Legacy

Leisure

Love

Loyalty

Making a  
difference

Nature

Openness

Optimism

Order

Organization

parenting



## VALUES LIST CONTINUED

	Resourcefulness	Tradition
Patience	Respect	Travel
Patriotism	Responsibility	Trust
Peace	Risk-taking	Truth
Perseverance	Security	Understanding
Personal	Self-Discipline	Uniqueness
Fulfillment	Self-expression	Usefulness
Power	Self-Respect	Vision
Pride	Serenity	Vulnerability
Recognition	Service	Wealth
Reliability	Simplicity	Wellbeing
	Spirituality	Wholeheartedness
	Stewardship	Wisdom
	Success	
	Sustainability	
	Teamwork	
	Thrift	
	Time	





# Regarding OCD Intrusive Thoughts ONLY:

TIP #

5

**ACCEPT AND EXPECT**

the **INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS** to be in the background

TIP #

6

**Engage in  
RESPONSE PREVENTION**

This means RESIST from engaging in mental or physical compulsions to alleviate the anxiety or distress experienced from the OCD intrusive thoughts or Anxious Thoughts.

For a list of mental compulsions, visit this link:

[mindfultherapypractice.com/more-about-ocd\\_](https://mindfultherapypractice.com/more-about-ocd_)

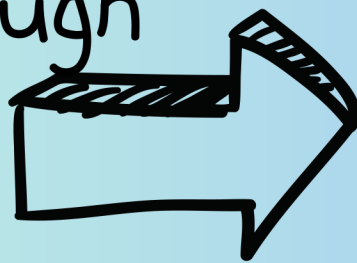
TIP #

7

## Choosing your Desired Beliefs to Replace critical, hurtful, and negative internal messaging

Let's return to our negative thoughts:

"I'm not good enough"



I/We are good enough

Contamination related thoughts



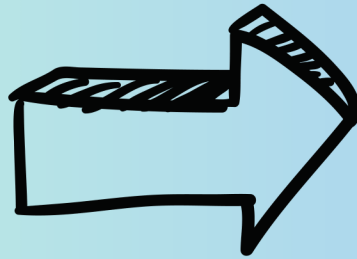
Simply just use observation language without imposing value or prediction or opinion on observations

example: That is a trampoline surface vs That is a dirty surface



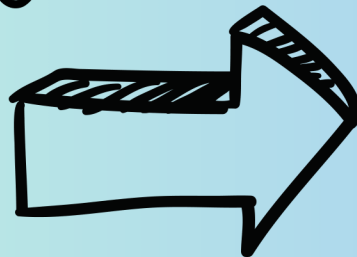
# Letting OCD/Intrusive Thoughts BE Without Responding To Them

Health related  
Intrusive Thoughts  
"I'm going to become  
psychotic"



Here you can  
acknowledge your  
fear and just let it be,  
and refrain from  
looking up your  
symptoms

Sexual intrusive  
thoughts that are not  
congruent with me



Notice it's there and let it  
be. Do not try to STOP  
having these thoughts;  
Come back to the present  
moment

Remember to Be Kind to all of the Little Yous  
A hand on your heart to acknowledge suffering is nice