Relationship Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (ROCD):

A module based treatment approach
Heterogeneous

Intimate relationship are important

OCD and intimate relationships
  • Functioning, marital distress, less likely to get married

OCD symptoms impair relationship quality
How we came to study relationship obsessions?

- Clients
- More complex than OCD
- No Studies
- No documented solutions
Recently

Relationship-related obsessive-compulsive symptoms
John, 32

- IT consultant, lives with partner
- 3 years in relationship
  - (12 months living together)
Relationship-Related OC Symptoms

Centering on the relationship itself
- My feelings
- Partner’s feelings
- “Rightness” of relationship

Partner’s flaws
(Appearance, morality, etc.,)

Relationship-centered OC symptoms

Partner-focused OC symptoms
ROCD Experience

- Obsessive form
- “pop into head”
- Egodystonic
  - values and experience
- Unwanted
- Associated with neutralizing behaviors
- Significant distress/Impair functioning
ROCD

Answer criteria of OCD

• Obsessions
  • intrusive thoughts, images or urges
  • the person attempts to neutralize and recognizes as a product of their own mind
  • not excessive worries about life problems

• Compulsions
  • compulsive reassurance seeking (e.g., “sanity checks”)
  • checking (e.g., monitoring of emotions)
  • comparing (e.g., looks, feelings in past relationships)

• Causes significant distress and dysfunction
**Relationship obsessive-compulsive disorder** - Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

In psychology, relationship obsessive-compulsive disorder (ROCD) is a form of obsessive-compulsive disorder centred on relationship-related obsessions...

Another post from another rOCD sufferer | relationship OCD:
relationshipocd.com/2013/05/.../another-post-from-another-rocd-sufferer...▼

May 16, 2013 - Hi everyone. I would like to share an inspiring story from another rOCD sufferer. Her name is Natalie. Natalie's story was much longer than this...

Tip #13 Lies and more rOCD lies | relationship OCD:

Sep 11, 2012 - A ROCD brain is like Pinocchio. It likes to tell a lie here and then by sending false messages. The only difference is that it has no nose to grow...

relationship OCD: the recovery journey
relationshipocd.com/▼

Treating rOCD like a card game where you trade Pokemons (spikes, symptoms) or expecting Google to sort them out. Like there is a magic answer. There is no...

Tip #32 The answer is not in … - Revisiting OCD - The wound – Follow up on ...

ROCD is killing me - MDJunction
www.mdjunction.com ▶ OCD Forums ▶ General & Support ▶
Relationship-Related OC Symptoms

Centering on the relationship itself
• My feelings
• Partner’s feelings
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Relationship-centered OC symptoms
ROCI

Partner’s flaws (Appearance, morality, etc.,)

Partner-focused OC symptoms
PROCSI
Relationship Obsessive Compulsive Inventory (ROCI; Doron, Derby et al., 2012a)

12 items

- Feelings towards one’s partner (α=.84)
  - I feel that I must remind myself over and over again why I love my partner
- The "rightness" of the relationship (α=.89)
  - I constantly doubt my relationship
- Partner's feelings (α=.87)
  - I find it difficult to dismiss doubts regarding my partner's love for me
Partner focused Obsessive-Compulsive Symptom Inventory (PROCSCI; Doron, Derby et al., 2012b)

- 24 items
  - Partner's perceived in six domains
    - When I am with my partner I find it hard to ignore her physical flaws
    - I am troubled by thoughts about my partner's social skills
    - I am constantly bothered by doubts about my partner's morality level
Domain specific Self-vulnerability (relationships)

Intrusion (I am bored)

Appraisal (maybe I don’t love my partner)

Response (compulsive monitoring of own emotions)

Domain specific triggers (dinner with partner)

OCD – beliefs

Insecure Attachment Strategies

Catastrophic relational beliefs
Domain specific vulnerability

Response

Domain specific triggers

Attachment Strategies

Appraisal

Intrusion

OCD – beliefs
Catastrophic relational beliefs
Self Structure
- Contingency on relationship domain
- Contingency on partner value
- Sensitivity in relationship domain

Personality Characteristics
- Narcissistic tendencies
- OCPD
- Attachment Insecurities

Self Vulnerability
Self Structure

Personality

Domain specific
Self-vulnerability

Intrusion

Appraisal

Response

Increased Attention (inwards and/or outwards)

Domain specific triggers

Attachment Strategies

OCD – beliefs
Catastrophic relational beliefs

Contextual
Interaction with partner
Romantic cues

Emotional States
Boredom
Anger
Anxiety

Increased Attention (inwards and/or outwards)
Obsessive Beliefs
“if not perfect it is worthless”
“having a thought means it is important”
“harmful events will happen unless I’m careful”

Relationship Beliefs
“if I leave, I will hurt my partner”
“regret is unbearable”
"you should only marry once“
“leaving my partner will have disastrous personal and social consequences”

Intrusion
“I am bored”

Catastrophic Appraisal
“Maybe I don’t love him/her, I have to leave”
“I have to make sure I love my partner”
“I will regret this forever”
Relationship beliefs

Self Structure

Personality

OCD-related beliefs

Domain-specific Self-vulnerability

Intrusion

Appraisal

Response

Increased Attention (inwards and/or outwards)

Contextual

Interaction with partner

Romantic cues

Emotional States

Boredom

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Domain-specific triggers

Insecure Attachment Strategies

Increased Attention (inwards and/or outwards)
Catastrophic Appraisal

Insecure Attachment Strategies

Response
Catastrophic Appraisal Response

Exacerbation of distress

Emotional regulation attempts

Insecure Attachment Strategies

Response

Emotional responses
- Anxiety
- Guilt
- Shame
- Jealousy

Cognitive-Behavioral responses
- Reassurance (self/others)
- Monitoring (feelings/behaviors)
- Comparisons
Emotional responses
Cognitive-Behavioral responses
Attachment Strategies

Response

Domain specific self-vulnerability

Self criticism
Conditioning

Prevents refuting

OCD-related beliefs
Relationship beliefs

Intrusion

Reinforcing relationship doubts
Emotional responses
Cognitive-Behavioral responses
ROCD Responses
Commitment
ROCD responses
Rusbult Investment Model

- Investment
- Commitment
- Alternatives
- Satisfaction
Rusbult Investment Model

Investment

Commitment

ROCD

Alternatives

Satisfaction
Commitment

Investment

Satisfaction

ROCD

Alternative

Satisfaction
Insecure Attachment Strategies

OCD – beliefs

Catastrophic relational beliefs

Domain specific Self-vulnerability (relationships)

Response (compulsive monitoring of own emotions)

Appraisal (maybe I don’t love my partner)

Intrusion (I am bored)

Domain specific triggers (dinner with partner)

Commitment

ROCD

Response (compulsive monitoring of own emotions)
ROCD

Development
Assumptions
biases

Maladaptive Relationship beliefs and OCD-related beliefs

Insecure attachment representations
Self vulnerabilities
Schemas

Assumptions biases

NATs

Negative relationship appraisals

May be latent

Triggering event

Symptoms
Cognitive, behavioral, emotional, physiological

Predisposing general vulnerabilities (biological/psychological)
Early experiences

Parenting

Parenting models (parental conflict, idealized parents)
- Criticism
  - Preoccupation with relationships
- Conditional parenting in specific domain
- Overprotective parenting
Research findings
ROCD/OCD
  - Correlated but distinct

Depression

Relationship/sexual satisfaction

General worry

Processes
  - Self vulnerabilities
  - Attachment and emotional regulation

Maladaptive relationship biases