

# CBT Therapy For Managing Intrusive Thoughts

*Living with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder OCD and managing intrusive thoughts can feel like being stuck in a never-ending loop of negativity and compulsions.*



LONDON, LONDON, UNITED

KINGDOM, April 24, 2023 /EINPresswire.com/ -- It is easy to feel like these thoughts are a reflection of an individual, but they're not. Rather, OCD is ego-dystonic, which means the person's thoughts and behaviours associated with the condition are usually at odds with their personal beliefs and values.

One of the most common symptoms associated with OCD and other anxiety disorders is intrusive thoughts – these are recurring, unwanted, and distressing thoughts or images that can cause significant distress and interfere with daily functioning. Intrusive thoughts can manifest in different ways, such as repetitive worries about contamination or harm, intrusive sexual or violent thoughts, or excessive concerns about one's morality or values.

About Onebright: <https://onebright.com/>

While it is common for people to ruminate from time to time, in OCD, this rumination is impacting significantly on daily life. In the UK, OCD is thought to be much more common than people realise, with estimates of those with the condition suggesting between [1-2% of the population have OCD](#). That's anywhere between 600,000 and just over one million people.

People living with undiagnosed OCD often don't realise the impact of the intrusive thoughts, and so these cases can be missed, misunderstood or misdiagnosed as another mental health condition. Other mental health conditions with similar symptoms include anxiety disorders and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) – mental conditions that are treatable with Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT).

Why is CBT an ideal treatment for managing intrusive thoughts?

CBT is a structured, evidence-based approach to therapy that aims to help individuals identify and modify negative thinking patterns and behaviours that contribute to mental health issues, including anxiety, depression, and OCD.

In the context of intrusive thoughts, CBT focuses on helping individuals to identify and understand the thoughts and beliefs that trigger their anxiety, as well as develop strategies to manage and reduce the distress caused by them.

The aim of [CBT Therapy](#) in treating intrusive thoughts is not completely to get rid of these thoughts. Intrusive thoughts cannot be avoided, but instead, CBT helps a person with OCD to identify, challenge and manage the patterns of thought and compulsive behaviours that cause their anxiety and distress.

How can CBT help individuals manage intrusive thoughts?

Cognitive restructuring

CBT aims to help individuals identify and challenge negative thinking patterns that contribute to anxiety and distress. Individuals may have unhelpful beliefs or assumptions about the meaning or significance of their thoughts. For example, they may believe that having an intrusive thought about harming someone means that they are a bad person or that they are at risk of acting on the thought.

Working alongside a nationally accredited therapist using techniques and tools learned in CBT can help individuals challenge these beliefs and improve their ability to manage them. This can be done by examining the evidence for and against thoughts and beliefs, testing them out via a behavioural experiment, and developing more balanced interpretations of intrusive thoughts.

Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP)

Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) is a technique used in CBT therapy to help individuals reduce their anxiety and distress related to intrusive thoughts. ERP involves gradually exposing individuals to the situations or stimuli that trigger their anxiety or intrusive thoughts while preventing the individual from 'putting them right' or 'balancing' them with compulsions or avoidance behaviours.

Over time, continued exposure helps reduce the anxiety and distress associated with a particular intrusive thought and reduce the need for compulsive behaviours.

Mindfulness and Acceptance-Based Strategies

Mindfulness and acceptance-based strategies are increasingly being integrated into CBT for mental health conditions that can cause intrusive thoughts. These approaches aim to help individuals develop a self-compassionate and accepting attitude towards their thoughts and feelings. Individuals learn to observe and accept their thoughts without trying to control or suppress them.

Relaxation and stress-reducing techniques

In addition to the cognitive and behavioural strategies discussed above, CBT can also incorporate relaxation and stress-reduction techniques to help individuals. These techniques can include deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, guided imagery, and mindfulness meditation.

These techniques can also be helpful for improving sleep quality, reducing muscle tension, and promoting overall well-being.

#### Intrusive thoughts are treatable with CBT Therapy

Intrusive thoughts can be distressing, but with the help of a skilled CBT London therapist for online and UK-wide face-to-face therapy, it is possible to treat and regain quality of life.

Onebright therapists are fully licenced and have been helping people regain control over their thoughts and reduce the impact of intrusive thoughts on their daily functioning for over 10 years.

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