

# Worksheet 1

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: What Is OCD?

### Your OCD Symptoms



Now list your obsessive thoughts and compulsive actions. Don't forget to identify possible avoidance and safety behaviors.

OCD	Obsessive Thoughts	Compulsive Actions	Avoidance and Safety Behavior
Contamination			
Responsibility for Mistakes or Disaster			
Order and Symmetry			
Hoarding and Collecting			
Aggressive, Sexual, Religious / Moral Obsessive Thoughts			



# Worksheet 2b

## THEORETICAL BACKGROUND: What Is OCD?

### Pause for a Moment: Letter to Your OCD



Alternatively, write a pro-con list.

#### Pro-Con list

Pro	Con
- _____ _____	- _____ _____
- _____ _____	- _____ _____
- _____ _____	- _____ _____
- _____ _____	- _____ _____
- _____ _____	- _____ _____

# Worksheet 3

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #1: Are Bad Thoughts Abnormal?

### Exercise #3: Take a More Lenient Approach



Acceptance: the following things I want to learn to accept on myself and others:

#### Myself

- *Example: Sometimes I let things drop. Sometimes I'm a bit clumsy and that is the way it is.*

#### Others

- *Example: When I'm riding with my bike, pedestrians often block the bicycle lane. I am not able to change anything about it and getting upset doesn't help.*

# Worksheet 4

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #1: Are Bad Thoughts Abnormal?

### Exercise #5: Acceptance and Appreciation for Yourself and Others



#### Praise Yourself

People with OCD often focus on their own mistakes and shortcomings. Change your point of view: Write down regularly (e.g. every evening) occasions, on which you did something good for others or yourself.

<b>Date</b>	<b>What Did I Do, What Was Good for Myself Today?</b>	<b>What Did I Do, What Was Good for Others Today?</b>
<b>Example</b>	<i>I made myself a really nice breakfast; I did some sports today; I told my boss, that I won't work extra hours</i>	<i>I comforted a friend; I called my grandma; I helped my colleague with a task</i>
Mon.		
Tues.		
Wed.		
Thurs.		
Fri.		
Sat.		
Sun.		

# Worksheet 5

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #2: Do Bad Thoughts Lead to Bad Deeds?

### Exercise #1: Can Thoughts Move Things?



Take a feather or some other very light object, like a piece of paper, and place it on a table in front of you.

Now try to move this object in a certain direction with your thoughts alone!

Repeat this exercise and make a tally sheet. Check how often it worked ✓ and how often it didn't work x.

	✓	x
Feather / piece of paper moved		

### Exercise #2: Magical Thinking



Many people with OCD know that their thoughts cannot actually influence external things. But still they continue to have a certain doubt about it.

Try the following:

	✓	x
Predicting 10 playing cards precisely		
Guessing a number between 1 and 100 right		
Predicting all result of premier league games precisely		
Remove stain		
Own example:		
Own example:		

# Worksheet 6

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #2: Do Bad Thoughts Lead to Bad Deeds?

### Exercise #4: Thought-Action Fusion (TAF)



If you have the feeling that your thinking is able to change things, please try the following “easy” exercises:

#### Can Thoughts Induce Actions?

Try to cause the following to happen by just using the <b>power of your mind.</b>	✓	x
Make an old lady on the street spontaneously throw away her walking cane		
Make a man tear off his T-shirt		
Make the person to whom you are talking spontaneously say the word “downstream”		
Make your counterpart get the giggles		
Make the subway move backwards		
Own example:		
Own example:		

One goal of the exercise is to show that your thoughts are not as powerful as you may think. Another is that it involves shifting the focus of your worry without simultaneously suppressing obsessive thoughts or avoiding the situation. As we have seen, both suppression and avoidance just reinforce the problem.

Flukes are possible in some exercises; therefore, you should make a tally sheet. If a prediction is correct look at the cases in which you have been wrong before.

# Worksheet 7

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #2: Do Bad Thoughts Lead to Bad Deeds?

### Exercise #4: Thought-Action Fusion (TAF)



#### Can Thoughts Change Objects?

Try to change the following objects by just using the <b>power of your mind</b>	✓	x
Change the color of a car		
Cause a statue to lose one arm		
Turn water into cola		
Make a traffic signal change to blue		
Increase the size of a fire hydrant		
Reconstruct a broken bottle out of its shards.		
Turn a pizza into a hamburger		
Let a soccer ball shrink to the size of a tennis ball		
Own example:		
Own example:		

One goal of the exercise is to show that your thoughts are not as powerful as you may think. Another is that it involves shifting the focus of your worry without simultaneously suppressing obsessive thoughts or avoiding the situation. As we have seen, both suppression and avoidance just reinforce the problem.

Flukes are possible in some exercises; therefore, you should make a tally sheet. If a prediction is correct look at the cases in which you have been wrong before.



# Worksheet 8

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #2: Do Bad Thoughts Lead to Bad Deeds?

### Exercise #4: Thought-Action Fusion (TAF)



#### Can Thoughts Influence Results?

Try to make the following events happen by just using the <b>power of your mind</b>	✓	x
Activate a car alarm		
Make the second hand of a clock stop		
Turn on a fan		
Open a window		
Make a flying bird land in a certain place		
Unplug the iron		
Close a tap		
Own example:		
Own example:		

One goal of the exercise is to show that your thoughts are not as powerful as you may think. Another is that it involves shifting the focus of your worry without simultaneously suppressing obsessive thoughts or avoiding the situation. As we have seen, both suppression and avoidance just reinforce the problem.

Flukes are possible in some exercises; therefore, you should make a tally sheet. If a prediction is correct look at the cases in which you have been wrong before.

## Worksheet 9

### THOUGHT DISTORTION #3: Must Thoughts Completely Obey My Will?

#### Exercise #4: Delight in Your Thoughts



#### My Complaisant Companion

Example: Comic figure, fantasy figure (good fairy, guardian angel, ...), film figure (e.g. Professor Dumbledore from „Harry Potter“), famous person, ...

**Name of my companion:**

**Looks / voice:**

**Fictive walk on the beach...**

What he/she said:

What were helpful words or sentences:

What do I want to remember:

# Worksheet 10

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #4: Is the World a Dangerous Place?

### Exercise #1: Get Informed!



What adverse events are you especially afraid of, and which ones do you think are especially probable? Write these down and get informed. Look up answers in reputable and objective sources—and not ones that cater to gloom and doom.

	<b>Obsessive fear</b>	<b>How high do I think is the probability for the event?</b>	<b>How high is the probability according to my research?</b>	<b>Other consequences / calming facts as a result from my research</b>
<b>Adverse event</b>	<i>Getting cancer</i>	<i>A lot of people die from cancer, so it has to be very probable to get it.</i>	<i>The majority of people doesn't get cancer.</i>	<i>Improvement in prevention, early diagnosis and treatment helped that the probability to die from cancer decreased for decades. From 1980 to now the mortality has decreased by more than 20 percent.</i>
<b>Worst Consequence</b>	<i>Die from cancer</i>	<i>Cancer is nearly always fatal.</i>	<i>More than half of all cancer patient can expect permanent cure.</i>	

## Worksheet 10

<b>Adverse event</b>				
<b>Worst Consequence</b>				

Source: <http://www.krebsinformationsdienst.de>

# Worksheet 11

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #4: Is the World a Dangerous Place?

### Exercise #2: Calculating Chains of Probability



Identify the factors that *must* line up perfectly for a feared event to occur. Each factor has a specific estimated probability of 0.01 (= 1%) to 0.5 (= 50%) to 1 (= 100%). Factors have to be *multiplied* by each other. Each additional factor considerably reduces the probability of the occurrence as a whole (read more about this in section “False Calculation of Probability”

► Thought Distortion #4: Is the World a Dangerous Place?).

*Example: Probability of a burglary resulting from an unlocked door: Factor 1: The door is not locked (0.4) x factor 2: A burglar is close to my apartment (0.3) x factor 3: ...exactly on the day when the burglar is close to my apartment, I forgot to lock the door (0.5) x factor 4: The burglar chooses my apartment, from all the possible other apartments (0.3.) x factor 5: The burglar doesn't get disturbed by anybody and can complete the burglary unnoticed (0.7). Even with high estimated single probabilities the probability for the feared occurrence is  $0.4 \times 0.3 \times 0.5 \times 0.3 \times 0.7 = 0.0126$ . This is a probability of 1,26%.*

Feared Occurrence:	Respective Probability (from 0.01 (=1%) to 1 (=100%))
Factor 1:	____ % = ____
Factor 2:	____ % = ____
Factor 3:	____ % = ____
Factor 4:	____ % = ____
Factor 5:	____ % = ____
Factor 6:	____ % = ____

The product results from a multiplication (x) of the numbers listed above:  
 $0.\_\_ \times 0.\_\_ \times 0.\_\_ \times 0.\_\_ \times 0.\_\_ = 0.\_\_$  This is a probability of \_\_\_\_%.

(0.5 e.g. are 50%).

# Worksheet 12

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #4: Is the World a Dangerous Place?

### Exercise #4: Gathering Corrective Experiences...Confrontation Therapy



Create your own “fear ladder”! Use the example in this chapter (►Thought Distortion #4: Is the World a Dangerous Place?) as an orientation.

Difficulty	Situation/ Exercise
1. (low)	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	
9.	
10. (high)	

# Worksheet 13

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #5: Must Bad Thoughts Be Suppressed?

### Exercise #2: Alternative Approach for Dealing with Negative Thoughts



Take an observational and distanced attitude toward your thoughts. Some people with OCD are helped when they connect their obsessive thoughts to an image or a scene and weaken them by directing these ideas with their mind.

Try to visualize the following scene for at least 1-2 minutes.

#### Scene Example:

Imagine that you are observing a violent storm from a safe shelter, and you can see that the first breaks in the storm are already evident on the horizon. Hang your obsessive thoughts on the blackest part of the passing cloud front. Now let the storm rage (e.g., lightning splits a tree; a tornado demolishes a house). Slowly, the storm will start to let up and reveal better weather ahead.

#### My personal scene:

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# Worksheet 14

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #6: Is Danger Necessarily Present When Feelings Alarm Me?

### Exercise #2: The Influence of External Factors on Thinking and Feeling



How do the factors below influence your well-being and your emotional world?  
Try to write down the influence of each factor accurately.

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Influence: This tends to make me aggressive, fearful, cheerful, sad, nervous, relaxed...</b>
<i>Example:</i> Alcohol	"Small amounts of alcohol loosen my tongue and help me relax. But when I have too much to drink, I quickly feel personally insulted by other people."
Stress	
Boredom	
Lack of Exercise	
Drugs	
Weather, light	
Medication	
Lack of sleep	
Other:	



## Worksheet 15

### THOUGHT DISTORTION #6: Is Danger Necessarily Present When Feelings Alarm Me?

#### Exercise #3: Making a Mountain Mountain Range out of a Molehill



Only for the courageous! OCD is a master of exaggeration and leads people to believe that improbable or even impossible scenarios could actually occur. When your OCD has for the umpteenth time made a mountain out of a molehill, take it to the next level and make a mountain range out of it. Escalate the scenario until it becomes grotesque, and embellish it as much as possible! This frequently diminishes the fear instead of increasing it. This “reverse psychology” is also called **paradox intervention**.

**Obsessive thought:** Your house burns down because of a defective stove.

**Conscious exaggeration:** *Because of the current drought, a firestorm spreads across the continent. Within a few days, the entire sky turns black. Life on Earth becomes almost impossible due to the lack of sunshine. Even though the trial against you is eventually dismissed, religious fanatics accuse you of being one of the Seven Horsemen of the Apocalypse. Satanists worship at the altar of the scorched remains of your stove.*

**My obsessive thought/s:**

**Conscious exaggeration:**

# Worksheet 16

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #8: Am I Responsible for Everything?

### Exercise #1: Not Judging with Double Standards



People with OCD, often without knowing it, make judgments based on a double standard: They apply a higher moral yardstick to themselves than to others on the basis of their upbringing.

Consider whether this applies to you. Imagine the following mishaps, answer the questions and then write down your answer in the table:

<b>Example:</b>	
<b>"Mishap":</b>	<b><i>Pickpockets stole my wallet</i></b>
What I would say to myself / think about myself:	<i>Terrible. I'm such a fool, this is typical for me.</i>
What I would say to a good friend:	<i>This can happen to everyone, it's not that bad.</i>
<b>Own example:</b>	
<b>"Mishap":</b>	
What I would say to myself / think about myself:	
What I would say to a good friend:	

Think about how hard and unsympathetic you would be or perhaps already have been with yourself in such situations. But if it was a friend you would probably sincerely comfort him or her and provide some good reasons why his mishap was minor, normal, and forgivable.

For any actual or presumed wrong behavior in the future, **tell yourself what you would say to a good friend in a comparable situation.**

# Worksheet 17

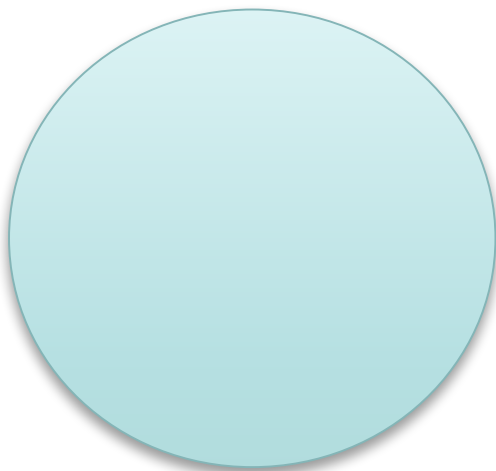
## THOUGHT DISTORTION #8: Am I Responsible for Everything?

### Exercise #2: Putting the Cart Before the Horse



Break down your own negative experiences. Divide the pieces of the pie below: Allocate the size according to how important circumstances, other people, or yourself were in the development of certain (most feared) occurrences. Begin with the circumstances and other people. There are slots for up to three people and three circumstances. Identify as many factors as possible. Then first write down your own influence. You will see that your own influence will be relatively small through this type of approach.

Your situation: \_\_\_\_\_



Factor	Influence
Circumstance 1	
Circumstance 2	
Circumstance 3	
Person 1	
Person 2	
Person 3	
Yourself	

# Worksheet 18

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #9: Good Is Not Good Enough

### Exercise #1: Nobody Is Perfect



#### 1. Pay Attention to Apparently Perfect People

Name a really perfect person. Every person has faults.

Do you think the world doesn't forgive faults? Turn on the TV! You will see that even the presenters on the daily news and stars lisp, muddle their lines or maybe don't fulfill the ideal of beauty, but still are popular and "good at business".

Person	Faults and flaws
Angela Merkel	<i>Example: Lisps,...</i>
The Pope	
Wayne Rooney	
Own example:	
Own example:	
Own example:	
Own example:	

# Worksheet 19

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #9: Good Is Not Good Enough

### Exercise #2: Nobody Is Perfect



#### 2. Make Conscious Errors

What Specific Fears Do You Have? (e.g., that people will laugh loudly at you in public)  
Write down an example of your own in the table.

<b>Error</b>	<b>Most Feared Consequence?</b>	<b>Actual Consequence?</b>
<i>Tying your tie the wrong way</i>	<i>Everyone notices the error. They laugh at you loudly and the boss insults you ("What's your problem? My 8-year-old daughter could do a better job.")</i>	<i>None of the male colleagues noticed. An older female colleague shakes her head, smiles indulgently, and points out the mistake. Then she says, "Don't worry, my husband does the same thing"</i>
<i>Mixed up facts of a story</i>	<i>They now think I'm a liar and not trustworthy</i>	<i>Nobody noticed except for myself</i>

## Worksheet 20

### THOUGHT DISTORTION #10: Can I Achieve the Ultimate Truth?

#### Exercise #1: Can Truth Be Achieved...and Is It Always Worth Striving for?



Make a list of up to five incidents where it would have been unfortunate if you had already known the outcome.

<b>Incident</b>	<i>Example: Surprise party</i>
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

Write down up to three issues for which no ultimate truth exists because they depend on taste, depend on the definition, can change, depend on culture,....

	1.	2.	3.
Depend on taste			
Depend on the definition			
Can change			
Depend on culture			
...			

## Worksheet 21

### THOUGHT DISTORTION #11: Does Brooding Help to Solve Problems?

#### Exercise #1: Stop Sign



A method for interrupting brooding consists of saying “stop” loudly or quietly. As soon as brooding thoughts come up say “stop” or another word. Support this with inner images or a bodily reaction. If possible, do something else (alternative behavior). Many roads lead to Rome. Experiment with this method and figure out what helps you the most.

#### Set Stop Signs

How?	Personal realization	Used? How successful was it?
<b>1. Brooding with interrupting loudly</b> <i>(e.g. saying "stop")</i>	My stop-word:	<i>Example: Yes, often used, most of the time it was helpful</i>
<b>2. Supporting inner image</b> <i>(e.g. imagining a stop sign)</i>	My image:	
<b>3. Supporting bodily reaction</b> <i>(e.g. making a fist with your hand)</i>	My bodily reaction:	
<b>4. Alternative behavior</b> <i>(e.g. movement exercise)</i>	My alternative behavior:	

#### Change the way of thinking:

How?	Used? How successful was it?
<b>Imagine a “bang”</b>	
<b>Slowing down central words</b>	
<b>Hopping in your thoughts</b>	
<b>“Nonsense questions”</b>	

## Worksheet 22 (Information Sheet)

### THOUGHT DISTORTION #12: OCD Is a Brain Disorder – So Does That Mean I Can't Do Anything to Change It?

#### OCD and the Brain



Almost every week new findings are published in scientific journals about brain changes in OCD. The correlations between some peculiarities in the brain and OCD have been a source of relief to some patients (“it’s not me—it’s my OCD”) while others become resigned out of a misperception that OCD involves irreparable dysfunction—just like a defective car.

This assumption is based on a wrong idea about the way our brain works. Here is a short summary of the most important facts:

#### The brain is the record of its use

- When we are happy or sad this automatically leads to a change of the current blood flow in the brain. Long-term influences lead to stronger changes. These processes are usually changeable and reversible.
- The brain changes which can be found by patients with OCD are minor and aren’t clearly speaking for irreversible defects.
- It isn’t clear whether the found changes can be evoked by the symptoms (as a consequence not as a reason) or if they have already been there before!
- Our thinking changes our brain. This has been shown often, e.g. an OCD therapy changes the brain in a similar way as medication.

#### Genetics

- The genes have an influence on our personality but this doesn’t put the final nail in the coffin. It channels possibilities which can be changed into other directions or stay mute by external influences or experiences.

#### Neuropsychology

- It is controversial, if people with OCD have other so-called neuropsychological impairments (problems of the higher mental functions, e.g. attention deficits and forgetfulness) in addition to the thought distortions mentioned here.
- Studies which show impairments in people with OCD compared with a control group often have methodological problems. Furthermore group differences cannot be generalized on the individual case!
- Also colleagues, who think that people with OCD have certain neuropsychological conspicuities must admit that these are rather small.



# Worksheet 23

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #13: Am I a Failure?

### Exercise #1: Reduce Exaggerated Generalizations



Individuals with depression tend to make exaggerated generalizations. They are apt to think things like: "Once a loser, always a loser." Instead of seeing things as "black and white," try to find more positive and constructive explanations for misfortunes and other negative events. Try to be as specific as possible: Avoid generalizations that include words such as *always* or *never* as well as imprecise and offensive terms such as *stupid* or *fool*. Now write down your own examples in the table below and work through them in the same manner as the first example.

Event	Exaggerated Generalization	Constructive Evaluation
<i>You can't get your pants to close.</i>	<i>"I'm fat and ugly."</i>	<i>"I might have gained a bit of weight, but that does not mean I'm ugly?"</i>

# Worksheet 24

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #13: Am I a Failure?

### Exercise #2: Be Aware of Your Strengths



Instead of concentrating on your perceived weaknesses and shortcomings, you should remind yourself of your strengths and talents.

We all have abilities, which are not shared by everyone and which we can be proud of. These do not necessarily have to be rare talents, world records, or ground breaking inventions.

Procedure	Examples	My Strengths
<p><b>1. Think about your own strengths</b></p> <p>What am I good at? What have I received compliments for in the past?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>I am technically talented.</i></li><li>- <i>I have an infectious smile.</i></li><li>- <i>I am a good listener.</i></li></ul>	
<p><b>2. Imagine specific situations</b></p> <p>When and where? What have I done and who has provided feedback?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- <i>I helped a friend paint her apartment. I was a great help to her, without me she wouldn't have managed.</i></li><li>- <i>My colleague told me yesterday that –no matter how bad his mood is – he is always charmed by my smile.</i></li></ul>	

# Worksheet 25

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #13: Am I a Failure?

### Exercise #4: Dealing with Positive and Negative Feedback



During childhood, many people learned to give more weight to criticism than to appreciation. This may also become a depressive thought trap! Try to find more positive/constructive evaluations for your own negative and positive events. Enter a particular situation in pairs: once with a good and once more with a bad outcome.

<b>Event</b>	<b>Depressive evaluation</b>	<b>More positive/constructive evaluation</b>
<i>You pass a test</i>	<i>"The questions were really easy, everyone could answer them."</i>	<i>"Great. I'm really proud of myself and will reward myself today."</i>
<i>You fail a test</i>	<i>"What a humiliation. I'm such an idiot."</i>	<i>"It's upsetting, but I can repeat the test. I will talk with someone who passed the test and figure out how they studied for it."</i>

# Worksheet 26

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #13: Am I a Failure?

### Exercise #6: Be Grateful



For the following exercise we ask you to think about the things you are grateful for. Also if you're not feeling good at the moment there will be something in your life which you are grateful for, also if the mental fight against the symptoms is blocking it.

#### For what am I grateful?

- *Example: I'm grateful that I have a park so close to my apartment in case I need fresh air or just want to stretch my legs.*

- *Example: Although my best friend and I fight once in a while, and this is exhausting, most of the time we get along great together.*

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# Worksheet 27 (Information Sheet)

## THOUGHT DISTORTION #13: Am I a Failure?

### More Exercises to Increase Self-Esteem



- Each evening, write down a few positive things that you have done (up to 5). Then, go through these things in your mind. Scientific studies have shown that things that we learn or think about just before falling asleep are memorized better.
- Tell yourself in front of the mirror, “I like myself!” or “I like you!” At first, you may feel a bit silly doing this, but try it anyway!
- Accept compliments and write them down. Try to remember situations, in which you felt really good—try to remember these with all your senses, perhaps with the help of photos, souvenirs, or other keepsakes.
- Do things you really enjoy like going to the movies or a café or watching an old movie on TV—ideally with others.
- Work out for at least 20 minutes—but don’t overexert yourself. If possible try endurance training, for example, a long walk or jogging.
- Listen to whatever music elevates your mood. – no matter whether this is hard rock, jazz, pop, or folk music...



“SB 096” by L. Marie  
(8/10/2015)

## Worksheet 28 (Information Sheet)

### THOUGHT DISTORTION #14: Does This Mean That I Won't Get Better and Might Even End Up Insane?

#### OCD ≠ Psychosis



Is OCD like a psychosis? No!

The most important differences between OCD and schizophrenia/psychosis/delusion are listed in the table:

Aspects	OCD	Schizophrenia/psychosis/ delusion
Degree of conviction	Strong doubts, insight into disorder at least partially present	Strong conviction, no or inadequate insight into disorder
Content	Concern is mostly related to the idea that something bad could happen to others or to oneself <i>by coincidence or inattention</i> such as causing a fire by forgetting to turn off the stove. Themes often involve taboo topics like dirt, sexuality, or aggression	Conviction that enemies intend us harm. Themes mostly relate to persecution and spying.
Course	Frequently chronic if untreated	Episodic, often with intermittent symptom-free periods
Boundaries with the outside world	<b>Uncertainty</b> whether one's thoughts may prompt thoughts or actions in others (direction of concern: <b>from self toward others</b> : thought-action fusion, see ►Thought Distortion #2: Do Bad Thoughts Lead to Bad Deeds?)	<b>Conviction</b> that other persons are inserting thoughts into one's mind or are prompting actions with their thoughts (direction of concern: <b>opposite than in OCD</b> )
Drug therapy	Mostly antidepressants	(High-dose) antipsychotics