

INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS

A NEWSLETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF PSYCHIATRY'S OCD CARE TEAM

HAPPY SPRING & SUMMER!

New seasons and warmer weather bring about many changes and with these changes comes the opportunity to be more flexible in our thinking and behavior. Challenging the rigidity that comes along with OCD and practicing more flexibility can, at times, feel impossible. That's why, I encourage you to start working on flexibility in the smallest possible ways. Try brushing your teeth with your non-dominant hand or better yet write with your non-dominant hand. Switch up the route you take to work. Change your phone background or lock screen. Put your clothes on in a different order. And if you want to up the ante, try fast forwarding a few seconds in a TV show/movie or skip a paragraph while you're reading. Tough stuff AND great starting points for increasing flexibility.

Speaking of practicing flexibility and adapting to ongoing changes, our OCD program has some upcoming changes and happenings. We will have two new group offerings (one that is once a month and one that is weekly) and we will begin to work a more hybrid schedule. This means that while most sessions will remain virtual, there will start to be some options to be seen in-person starting in May. We also moved to a new building for those in-person visits. We are still located on the Anschutz Medical Campus but have moved to the Health and Sciences Building. Another upcoming change is that, at the end of May we will say goodbye to our wonderful social work intern, Travis Neace. He has been a big help to our program over the last 8 months and we wish him luck in his future endeavors.

Other exciting upcoming happenings are that the OCD and Anxiety Programs will be offering a virtual training for clinicians on OCD and ERP. Continuing education credits will be offered (19.5 CEs) for this three-day training. The OCD Program also had 4 proposals accepted for the International OCD Foundation (IOCDF) in-person conference that is happening in Denver, CO, July 8th-10th and then 2 proposals accepted for the IOCDF's virtual conference that is happening November 4th-6th. For more info on the presentations and times, check out the rest of the newsletter.

Whew! That's a lot of change!

Remember, change can be hard AND it can also be exciting. If we practice flexibility by shifting our perspective/view of a situation, that will help us move towards acceptance and better mental and physical well-being.

Be well,
Emily, Stephanie, Rachel, Anna, Abby, Scott, Kasey, Megan, & Travis



Department of Psychiatry

SCHOOL OF MEDICINE

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO ANSCHUTZ MEDICAL CAMPUS

OUR TEAM

Dr. Rachel Davis MD - Medical Director and Psychiatrist

*Emily Hemendinger LCSW, MPH, CPH – Lead OCD
Therapist/Licensed Clinical Social Worker and DBS Coordinator*

Dr. Stephanie Lehto PsyD – OCD Therapist/Licensed Psychologist

Dr. Megan Dery DO – Psychiatrist

*Dr. Abigail Norouzinia PhD – OCD Therapist/Licensed
Clinical Psychologist*

*Kasey Benedict LCSW -OCD Therapist/Licensed Clinical Social
Worker*

*Anna Korbel LSW – Clinical Social Work Faculty
Fellow/OCD Therapist*

*Dr. Scott Cypers – Licensed Psychologist/Therapist
with Johnson Depression Center*

Travis Neace BASW – MSW candidate/OCD intern therapist

GROUP OFFERINGS

Mondays at 12pm

*For students (all ages above 18 years old)
with OCD and related disorders*

**NEW* Mondays at 4pm (monthly)*

Intro to ERP - for new group members

**NEW* Mondays at 5pm*

*For adults ages 18+ with OCD and related
disorders*

Tuesdays at 5pm (waitlist)

*For adults ages 18+ with OCD and related
disorders*

Wednesdays at 5pm (waitlist)

*For adults ages 18+ with OCD and related
disorders*

Thursdays at 4pm (waitlist)

*For adults ages 18+ with OCD and related
disorders*

Fridays at 4pm (waitlist)

*For adolescents 13-17 years old with OCD
and related disorders*

*We do have a waitlist for individual and
group therapy, please reach out to be added
to our waitlist and/or send you other
referrals.*

*Are you a clinician who wants to know more
about OCD and ERP? We offer trainings,
consultations, and supervisions!*

**[CLICK HERE FOR MORE RESOURCES ON
OCD AND ERP FOR CLINICIANS AND PATIENTS](#)**

WE'VE MOVED!

*Effective April 26th , we have officially moved offices and are now located in the
Anschutz Health Sciences Building. We will continue to mostly see patient's
virtually with some flexibility for in-person sessions.*

STAFF SPOTLIGHT: DR. STEPHANIE LEHTO!

Stephanie Lehto, PsyD is a clinical psychologist working with the OCD program and Student/Resident Mental Health. Dr. Lehto received her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from the University of California Riverside, and her Masters and Doctor of Psychology from Midwestern University, Glendale, AZ. Dr. Lehto has worked with the Eating Recovery Center for her pre-doctoral and post-doctoral training, and transitioned to the OCD program in June 2020. Dr. Lehto enjoys making situations awkward, crafting, and jogging while pretending she is in a zombie apocalypse.

INTERNATIONAL OCD CONFERENCE COMING TO DENVER JULY 8-10, 2022

When individuals first get diagnosed or wonder about their OCD or have a child/loved one suffering from OCD, it can be overwhelming to find support and resources. The first place two resources that I tell people about are the International OCD Foundation (IOCDF) and NOCD (Know OCD and Say no To the Compulsion Disorder). Both are wonderful resources to help those who suffer from OCD. Besides resources and tools, part of what these organizations provide is support through conferences.

The International OCD Foundation has a yearly conference that includes researchers who study OCD, practitioners who help treat those who suffer from OCD, as well as includes individuals and families who deal with OCD. All of these folk come together once a year to create a supportive community. It is a fabulous experience for all that attend, and a real pick me up for those who suffer from OCD.

This year not only is the conference in our hometown, but members from the CU Anschutz anxiety and OCD program are presenting on the work they do everyday. This includes the following talks:

Accommodation in OCD: How to be a parent when your adult child has OCD
Friday, July 8th - 12:30 PM MT

How to make a PB&J Sandwich and other flexibility tools for getting unstuck
Sunday, July 10th - 9:45 AM MT

Youth programming for high schoolers: Removing the OCD from Social Media: How to Have More Social and Less Media
Sunday, July 10th - 8:00 AM MT

Youth programming for high schoolers: The People Pleaser's Guide to Being Assertive
Saturday, July 9th - 12:30 PM MT

You won't want to miss their talks and the conference as a whole. You can treat it as an exposure in itself, and part of the pathway to help fight your OCD through knowledge and community connection.

To learn more, talk with your providers or **[CLICK HERE](#)** to either sign up for this conference or learn more about additional conferences.

SUMMER EXPOSURE BINGO!

Have an honest conversation with family or your partner about ways that they are feeding your OCD and strategize ways you can be on a team together against OCD.

Eat food off the floor.

Start a task and then stop before it's finished.

Put your purse or bag on a public bathroom floor while going to the bathroom.

Share silverware, while eating a meal or dessert, with a close friend or loved one.

Do your morning or evening routine out of order.

Say something embarrassing to someone you know or don't know.

Give a close friend or person permission to say they won't answer a question they previously answered.

Wear your hair, jewelry, or clothing in a way that feels "uneven".

Wash your clothes without detergent and then wear them.

Give a loved one permission to ask you whether your question is an OCD question and if they will feed your OCD by answering it. Then respond non-defensively.

Wear two different socks that also feel different when you wear them.



Give a loved one permission to have you make a decision without their input or opinion.

Put your fingers in something sticky, like syrup, then lick your fingers and do not wash your hands afterward.

Resist asking your partner for reassurance about your relationship and be in the moment for an entire day or evening.

Eat a food with a texture that bothers you.

Go a whole day without hand washing.

Give a person you live with or spend time with permission to kindly tell you when what you're doing is an OCD behavior, and then challenge yourself to use a skill to intervene.

Share a bite of food (ex. Pizza) with a friend or trade a drink from their glass.

Purposely mess up your counting compulsion and end on a number you don't like.

Put something outside of its usual place in your home

Identify an area of your OCD you haven't been challenging yourself in and take one step today to challenge it.

If you have a negative superstition about a number, practice doing something that many times and sitting with the negative emotions and core fears that arise.

Mess something up that is usually in a particular order.

MINDFULNESS/SELF COMPASSION MOMENT

Think of a situation in your life that is difficult, that is causing you stress (distressing emotions, loss/grief, intrusive thoughts, etc).

Call the situation to mind, and see if you can actually feel the stress and emotional discomfort in your body.

Now, say to yourself:

*1. This is a moment of suffering
That's mindfulness. Other options include:*

*2. Suffering is a part of life
That's common humanity.*

Now, put your hands over your heart, feel the warmth of your hands and the gentle touch of your hands on your chest.

Say to yourself:

3. May I be kind to myself

You can also ask yourself, "What do I need to hear right now to express kindness to myself?"

This practice can be used any time of day or night, and will help you remember to evoke the three aspects of self-compassion when you need it most.

Neff, K. D. (2012). The science of self-compassion. In C. K. Germer & R. D. Siegel (Eds.), *Wisdom and compassion in psychotherapy: Deepening mindfulness in clinical practice*. The Guilford Press.

