

THE OMG

OCD Check

A parent guide for noticing intrusive thoughts, compulsions, reassurance seeking, and the OCD cycle.

The goal is not to diagnose OCD. The goal is to notice when a teen may be caught in a cycle of intrusive thoughts, distress, and behaviors that bring short-term relief but keep the cycle going.

Notice the cycle. Get curious. Do not feed the certainty.

When a teen seems stuck in repeated fears or rituals, ask: “Could OCD be driving this pattern?”

1	INTRUSIVE THOUGHTS Are there unwanted thoughts, images, urges, or “what if” fears that keep returning and feel difficult to dismiss?
2	DISTRESS Do the thoughts trigger intense anxiety, shame, guilt, disgust, doubt, or a strong feeling that something is “not right”?
3	REASSURANCE Are they repeatedly asking: “Are you sure?” “Am I okay?” “Did I do something wrong?” or asking the same question in slightly different ways?
4	CHECKING + REVIEWING Are they checking, confessing, comparing, Googling, replaying conversations, reviewing memories, or mentally trying to prove the fear is not true?
5	AVOIDANCE Are they avoiding people, places, activities, objects, words, situations, or decisions because these trigger the thought or feeling?
6	RITUALS + COMPULSIONS Do they feel they have to repeat, count, wash, arrange, pray, say something “just right,” cancel a thought, or perform another action until it feels safe or complete?
7	IMPACT Is the cycle taking significant time or interfering with school, sports, sleep, friendships, family life, independence, or everyday routines?

LOOK FOR A PATTERN - NOT A SCORE. One behavior does not mean your teen has OCD. Look at repetition, distress, time consumed, and interference with daily life.

Change the conversation

The goal is not to argue with the thought or prove it wrong. Ask questions that help your teen notice what OCD may be asking them to do.

Instead of: “There is nothing to worry about.”

Try: “I can see this feels very real and uncomfortable. What is OCD asking you to be certain about?”

Instead of: “Yes, I promise you are okay.”

Try: “I notice OCD is asking for reassurance again. I’m here with you, but I don’t want to help OCD get more certainty.”

Instead of: “Why would you even think that?”

Try: “Intrusive thoughts can feel upsetting. You can tell me about the thought without me judging you.”

Instead of: “Just stop thinking about it.”

Try: “Does the thought keep coming back even when you don’t want it to?”

Instead of helping with every check or ritual

Try: “Is doing this helping solve a real problem - or helping the anxiety feel better for a moment?”

Instead of immediately fixing the fear

Try: “Do you want me to listen, sit with you while the feeling passes, or help you talk with someone who understands OCD?”

One powerful question

“Is this helping my teen solve a real problem - or helping OCD get certainty and temporary relief?”

When to consider more support

Consider an evaluation with a qualified mental health professional when intrusive thoughts, compulsions, reassurance seeking, checking, avoidance, or mental rituals are persistent, distressing, time-consuming, or interfering with school, sports, sleep, relationships, or everyday life.

Important: Intrusive thoughts can involve upsetting themes, including harm, sexuality, morality, religion, contamination, or fear of making a mistake. Having an unwanted intrusive thought does not by itself mean a young person wants to act on it. A clinician should assess concerning thoughts in context.

NOTICE THE CYCLE. DON’T FEED THE CERTAINTY.

Understand what’s underneath. Then help them move forward.

About the OMG OCD Check

The OMG OCD Check is an educational framework created by One Mindset Go Counseling to help parents notice possible OCD patterns and begin healthier conversations with their teenagers. It is not a diagnostic assessment and does not replace individualized medical or mental health care.

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Educational references: [AACAP](#) and [International OCD Foundation](#) pediatric OCD resources.