

## Support Group for Therapists with OCD

2015 IOCDF Conference

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8 - 9 p.m. Thursday, July 30, 2015

Being a therapist with OCD comes with a unique set of opportunities and challenges. On the plus side, we have the personal experience that enables us to truly empathize with our clients who are struggling with mental disorders. However, we also have some special challenges. How do we handle it when our OCD is triggered by something said or done in session? How do we manage the OCD tendency to feel that we have to be “perfect” because we are therapists? How do we help clients with some of the very same issues with which we might struggle, such as shame and self-criticism? Join us for the second annual meeting of this support group, where therapists with OCD will meet to interactively discuss all these issues and more. In addition, we’ll discuss how to form your own ongoing therapist phone support group with the other therapists you’ll meet tonight.

### Agenda

- Welcome and introductions (8 to 8:10 p.m.)
- Tonight’s topics (8:10 to 8:45 p.m.)
- Starting your own therapist support group (8:45 to 8:55 p.m.)
- Final thoughts and questions (8:55 to 9:00 p.m.)

### Agenda

#### *Welcome and introductions*

- Name, and city or state where you practice
- Types of clients/patients you see
- Main types of OCD obsessions and compulsions you experience
- What you’re most looking forward to at the conference this year

#### *Tonight’s potential topics*

- What is hardest for you about being a therapist with OCD?
- Have you incorporated mindfulness into your own recovery and/or do you use it with clients? How has it affected your recovery?
- Brené Brown has a book entitled *The Gifts of Imperfection*. Do you see imperfection as a gift in general and/or in your work with clients?
- How do treat yourself when one of your clients doesn’t make the progress either of you would like?
- For past conference attendees, what’s hardest/easiest about being at the conference?

#### *Starting your own therapist support group*

The phone support group I lead has 6 active members. I have run phone support groups with as many as 10 members, but it can be challenging with that many people on the call to give everyone a chance to participate. We do our meetings via phone for 1 hour every month, but you can meet as frequently as your members would like.

*Finding members:* There are potential members of your new group in the room tonight and/or at the Therapists with OCD SIG meeting on Saturday. Find a few other people and exchange contact

information. You might also meet other therapists throughout the conference who would be interested in participating.

*Confidentiality:* In my group, we verbally agree to keep what we talk about and member's participation confidential.

*Scheduling:* You can use the free online scheduling tool called Doodle ([www.doodle.com](http://www.doodle.com)) to find a time and date that works for everyone. Or you can just pick a time/day to meet each month, for example the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of every month at 11 a.m. ET.

*Conference calling:* Most smart phones have a conference calling feature, and the leader can dial in each person. You can also sign-up for free conference calling services, such as <http://www.FreeConferenceCall.com/>. These services provide a number that everyone can dial, as well as an access code you use to connect to the other people on the call.

*Managing the calls:* The calls can be quite informal. We usually chat for the first few minutes and then “go around the room” virtually and let everyone share an update of how they are doing and what they'd like support on or any topics they'd like to talk about, and that guides the direction of the rest of the call. Sometimes we also talk about a specific topic. We also have each other's email and cell phone numbers, so we can ask for and provide support to each other as needed between sessions.

*New potential topics for discussion*

1. What are you hoping to get from your participation in the support group? (Good topic for the inaugural call)
2. Have you ever felt like you need to say to clients, “Take my advice...I'm not using it!” when you suggest they do exposures or assignments that you actually need to do, too? How does that interaction affect your own recovery?
3. What have you found most effective for preventing lapses or relapses in your own OCD recovery?
4. How do you decide when/if to self-disclose about your own OCD to clients?
5. Do you tell your clients to be nice to themselves and then beat up on yourself? Take the self-compassion assessment developed by Kristin Neff, PhD at <http://self-compassion.org/test-how-self-compassionate-you-are/> and discuss the use of self-compassion in OCD recovery.
6. How can mindfulness help with our recoveries from OCD? What have you learned from meditation or mindfulness practices that could be useful for bolstering recovery?
7. Watch David Steindl-Rast's TED Talk on gratitude. We can definitely be grateful for being in recovery, but is there any way to be grateful for having OCD? Why or why not?
8. See the movie *Inside Out*. Which emotion is chairing the “console” in your mind and how does that affect you and your work with clients?
9. What's been the most helpful advice you've ever received for managing OCD?
10. What do you wish you had known years ago in relation to OCD or mental health? How does that affect how you provide services to your own clients?

Questions? Please feel free to call me at 404-632-4804 or to use the form on my website at <http://www.shalanicely.com/contact-shala/> to get in touch. Thanks for your participation!