



# Job Sharing with OCD Survival Skills

1. Circle three (or more) skills on the Tips and Skills for Managing OCD on the Job handout that you can use to be more functional in your work role (or write your own ideas here).
2. On a scale of 1-10 (with 10 being the most ready), how ready are you to incorporate these skills into your life?
3. What changes/events/planning/steps need to happen to move this number closer to a 10?

## Accommodations

4. On your Reasonable Accommodations – Suggestions handout, circle the accommodations, both recovery-oriented and possibly OCD-enabling, in which you are currently participating.
5. Make a big X through the possibly OCD-enabling accommodations that you'd like to reduce or eliminate. What recovery-oriented accommodations and/or internal and/or external resources will you need to do so?



# Self-Disclosure Decisional Balance

	Potential Benefits	Potential Costs
Decision <u>to</u> Disclose		
Decision <u>not to</u> Disclose		

At this time, my decision is to:



# Tips and Skills for Managing OCD on the Job

## Maintaining a Schedule

- **Getting to bed**
  - Set alarm at night to remind you to take medications - especially helpful if you take sedating medications.
  - Develop an enjoyable "habit" (not a ritual) before bed, e.g. taking a bath (if bathing is not a compulsion), drinking hot tea, or reading a book.
  - Practice good sleep hygiene: Don't use the bed as a place to play on the phone, read, or watch TV, If having difficulty falling asleep, get out of bed then go back to bed when you are tired, utilize mindfulness/relaxation strategies to fall asleep (but not in response to obsessional/anxious triggers)
- **Getting out of bed**
  - Schedule an enjoyable yet functional routine (e.g. getting up 30 minutes early to drink coffee and sit by a light box).
- **Making it to work**
  - Make the consequences of being late high - e.g. schedule important meetings first thing in the morning.
  - If you have something particularly important in the morning, schedule an Uber/taxi to pick you up at a specific time - the threat of inconveniencing a driver may be helpful motivation.
- **Disengaging from work**
  - Schedule important or enjoyable obligations at the end of the day (to encourage you to leave work on time).

## Managing feelings of being overwhelmed

- Put everything that is in your head on a notecard or in a calendar. Cross it off when the event or project is complete. Use Google Home. (Careful if list-making/Googling is a compulsion)
- Break larger projects down into smaller tasks.

## Problems with set-shifting (changing from task to task)

- Take quick breaks to help with changing from task to task.
- Change environments to help with changing from task to task (e.g. go to a coffee shop to get a specific task done).
- Use apps such as Focus Keeper or Clear Focus (with timers)
- Identify your most productive time of day and schedule larger/more difficult tasks for that period.

## Perfectionism

- Aim for at least occasional "satisfactory" or even "needs improvement" on evaluations
- Make mistakes on purpose. See what you can "get away with." Do things the "wrong" way on purpose sometimes.
- Remember, if you don't feel guilty or lazy, you are quite possibly being compulsive. Reframe guilt, anxiety, and uncertainty as positive indicators that you're pushing back against OCD.
- Set time limits for tasks - get input on reasonable time limits. Engage (trusted) co-workers to hold you accountable for these time limits.
- Look at others' work for ideas of "normal" (once, not repeatedly)
- Utilize imaginal scripts to target fears of making mistakes/turning in projects before they are "perfect".

### **Reassurance Seeking and Confessing**

- Be mindful of your intentions and goals when meeting with supervisors or colleagues.

### **Hyper-responsibility/fear of letting others down**

- It is ok to close your door sometimes (if you have one).
- See how many times a day you can say "no" to someone.
- Put phone on "do not disturb."
- Turn down ringer on desk phone.
- Use out of office email reply.
- Forward phone to email.

### **Email**

- Set time limits
- Send the first draft (no revisions allowed unless to shorten and make imperfect)
- If problems writing emails that are too long: write the email then summarize it with a time limit.
- Make small errors on purpose.
- Set aside specific times each day to answer emails (rather than answering them as they come in).
- Turn off email notification or don't open Outlook, etc.
- Schedule in-person meetings instead of emailing - postpone questions and instructions until this meeting.
- Postpone questions (e.g. write emails but don't make a decision on whether to send until the end of the day/week/month).

### **Maintaining a healthy ERP Practice**

- Be purposeful when framing work as an exposure opportunity. If choosing a career, consider making a career out of your OCD. =)
- Practice mindfulness, returning focus to the present moment and task at hand while sitting with the discomfort caused by the trigger.
- Make therapy and self-care a priority.
- Keep a set of notecards with exposure phrases on your desk
- Keep a log of anxiety level/triggers/fears/compulsions to hold yourself accountable and "name" your OCD.

# Reasonable Accommodations

## – Suggestions

Recovery-oriented	Possibly OCD-enabling
Time off for therapy/MD appointments (may fall under FMLA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowed to be late for work</li> <li>• Self-paced workload</li> <li>• Flexible work hours (if not the norm)</li> <li>• Allowed to work from home (if this is not the norm)</li> </ul>
Part-time work	
Modified work hours	
Divide large assignment into smaller tasks and goals	
Schedule tasks in longer blocks of time rather than breaking up throughout the day (to help with set-shifting)	
Allowed to dictate instead of type	Allowed extra time on assignments and projects
Allowed to make-up time if time missed due to illness	Re-distribute difficult/anxiety provoking duties to others
Take breaks to use stress management skills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Extra break time used for rituals</li> <li>• Allowed extra telephone calls (if used to seek reassurance)</li> </ul>
Allowed to tape meetings or provided with typed minutes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allowed to skip mandatory meetings</li> <li>• Obtaining meeting minutes in order to avoid attending anxiety inducing meetings</li> </ul>
Provide time/plan to transition from task to task or meeting to meeting	
Provide appropriate reminders of deadlines	Extensions on deadlines
Scheduled meetings with supervisors to monitor progress and address concerns	Extra meetings if used to seek reassurance



Reduce distractions in work environment	Allowed excessive control over work environment (e.g. no one else allowed to touch)
Pleasant distractions in the workplace, e.g. allowed to play music on a headset	
Provide examples of “normal” or “expected” products	Waiting for supervisor/colleagues to excessively edit/redo work to diffuse feelings of responsibility
Provide sensitivity training to coworkers and supervisors	Not welcoming feedback due to the triggering nature of the interaction/material
Balance constructive criticism with positive feedback/praise	
Provide adequate notice for upcoming changes	
Increased natural lighting and full-spectrum lighting	
Presence of a service animal (emotional support animals may not be allowed)	
Written work agreements that include clear expectations and consequences of not meeting performance standards	
Provide written job instructions	
Use of electronic organizers and timers with prompts	

References:  
 Spencer MM. (2011). Reasonable Accommodation for People with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Retrieved on May 9, 2017 from: <https://www.avvo.com/legal-guides/ugc/reasonable-accommodation-for-people-with-obsessive-compulsive-disorder>

Job Accommodation Network (JAN). (2013). Job Accommodations for People with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. *Effective Accommodations Practice Series*. Retrieved on May 11, 2017 from: <http://askjan.org/media/anxi.htm>

