

Life After Treatment: Navigating Hidden Traps That Can Sabotage Your Recovery

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Summary Handout

Hidden trap	How do you know if it's affecting you?	How do you address it?	Resources
Self-punishment as a ritual	You beat yourself up a lot (and may not even realize you're doing it!), rarely feeling good about you or anything you do.	Using self-compassion, and remember...it won't feel good for a while because it's an ERP!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Everyday Mindfulness for OCD</i> by Hershfield and Nicely, ch 2-3.
Being overly nice	You go way out of your way to make others happy, beyond what most people would do, and the thought of NOT doing so makes you uncomfortable.	Try to do things the way someone without this issue would: leave a normal-sized tip, don't smile at everyone, don't hold the door, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • See the slides for specific ideas of exposure exercises you could do to be not so nice. 😊
People pleasing (subset of being overly nice)	You excessively ask others for reassurance about everyday things or for their opinions before you make decisions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell people to tell you "maybe yes, maybe no" when you ask them for reassurance! • Put your shoulders back and accept uncertainty that you have no control over what others think of you! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is Fred in the Refrigerator? Taming OCD and Reclaiming My Life</i> by Nicely, ch 16.
Micro-monitoring your recovery	You "take your OCD temperature" every day. What that an obsession? How anxious am I? How many obsessions have I had today? Is that more or less than yesterday? Am I more or less anxious than yesterday? Etc.	Tell yourself that you're going to have symptoms sometimes, and it's fine, it's part of being in recovery. Micro-monitoring them is a compulsion that's likely to make your OCD worse!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Freedom from Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder</i> Updated Edition by Grayson, ch 15. • <i>Everyday Mindfulness for OCD</i>, "Mindfully Monitoring the Signs of Relapse" p. 159.

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Your emotions feel frightening and overwhelming at times	When you feel a challenging emotion, you share it with someone and confirm with them that it's ok to be feeling this way.	Take self-compassionate care of your emotions. "I'm feeling _____. I can handle feeling like this. My feelings are like the weather, and it's ok to feel _____ right now." If emotions feel too overwhelming, you might benefit from DBT (dialectical behavior therapy).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Emotional Agility</i> by Susan David, PhD. • <i>Escaping the Emotional Roller Coaster</i> by Patricia Zurita-Ona, PsyD • Dialectical behavior therapy therapists*
Perfectionism	You never feel what you do or who you are is good enough	Do exposure exercises where you're purposely imperfect to help you enjoy the process of life (see slides for some specific examples)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Freedom from Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder</i> Updated Edition by Grayson, p. 34 and 201-206. • <i>The Gifts of Imperfection</i> by Brène Brown, PhD
Wanting the world to make sense	You get overly irritated or annoyed when situations don't make logical sense and perhaps even ruminate on "how stupid" they are.	Work on being flexible in situations of all types: things don't go as planned? Practice rolling with it!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Is Fred in the Refrigerator? Taming OCD and Reclaiming My Life</i>, ch 18.
You walk around feeling as if there's a target on your back	You feel hypervigilant, always waiting for the "other shoe to drop," and so you stay on guard.	Do the exposure of putting your Shoulders Back and acting as though you have a great life and letting yourself enjoy it!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>When in Doubt, Make Belief</i> by Jeff Bell, ch 4. • <i>Is Fred in the Refrigerator? Taming OCD and Reclaiming My Life</i>, ch 15.
You make excuses to slip	You tell yourself that you can do things to manage the traps above later, but later rarely comes...	Take a few minutes each day to practice addressing the things in this handout and strengthen your recovery!	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 13 OCD Excuse Modes Handout

*<https://behavioraltech.org/resources/find-a-therapist/>