

# Parents

## OCD in kids and teens, how best to help your children

### 1) Learn all you can about OCD

Being at OCD awareness day shows you are well on your way. Continue to read about OCD and ERP treatment, talk to your child's therapist, and get connected to the international OCD foundation.

### 2) Make your child's OCD bully the problem, not your child

Kids who suffer from OCD can be teased by other kids and can be thought of by teachers or family members as lazy. Remember that your child is struggling to cope with a vulnerability and work to be patient with your child during the treatment process. Get on your child's team against OCD.

### 3) Encourage your child to face rather than avoid fears

Approaching fears is the best long-term strategy for shrinking OCD. Encourage your child by modeling with your own actions. Work on approaching fears yourself and talk about facing fear as a family. Also model and value uncertainty and flexibility.

### 4) Work to decrease accommodations

Accommodations are things you do when your child's OCD starts to boss you around. Work with your child's therapist to slowly reduce accommodations.

#### USE THE FEAR THERMOMETER

You can use this tool to talk with your child about their fears and get a sense of which challenges are and are not manageable

#### GO AT THE RIGHT PACE

Taking small steps is important. Try and work on only what you your child and therapist have agreed upon

#### REWARD YOUR CHILD'S EFFORTS

Fighting the OCD bully is hard work and rewards can help. They can reward effort and encourage consistent practice

#### CONSTRUCTIVE SELF-TALK

Critical self talk makes fears worse and decreases motivation. When kids start to say to themselves "I can't do this," "I am a failure" the work of fighting back against OCD becomes much more difficult. Help your child develop positive realistic self-statements that focus on effort. "I can handle this." "I'll get 'em next time!"

#### TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

Helping your child fight the OCD bully can be hard work. You are at your best when you feel calm and strong. Develop strategies to take care of your own needs.



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