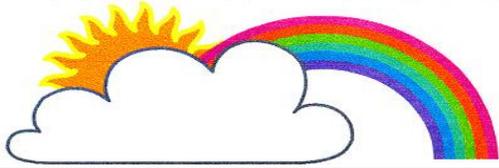


# NEVER say NEVER



*In the midst of the seemingly endless storm,  
look to the promise of the rainbow -  
the rain shall not prevail!*

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Summer 2015

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## OCD: THE VALUE OF HUMOR

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Painful, crippling, incapacitating, devastating. It drains the joy from life. It impairs our ability to function in the workplace and to sustain meaningful relationships. There's nothing funny about OCD. And yet the media gives us movies and TV, jokes, comics, and Internet memes to make us laugh at it. Does this not denigrate the experience of OCD by making light of its behaviors, portraying them as humorous quirks? Well, that depends.

It has become trendy to use "OCD" as an adjective, as in "He's so OCD," or as a synonym for "organized" or "anal," as in "How OCD are you?" These popular portrayals of OCD can be offensive because they trivialize and distort the actual experience of the disorder.

And yet, as they say, laughter is good medicine, and if you step back and look at it objectively, OCD can be very funny. People have different ways of coping with the challenges in their lives, and humor is certainly one of those ways.

In this issue of *Never Say Never*, we look at different kinds of OCD humor and try to ascertain when its use is good, and when it is bad.

**FALL PROGRAM, 1:00 SATURDAY, OCT. 24, 2015**

**AN OCDFM FIRST:** A panel including five of our favorite local OCD experts discussing how alternative Cognitive Behavioral methods can be used to assist or enhance the Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP) experience. Join us at St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Ellen Thompson Women's Health Center, Classroom #1A-B, 5320 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti, MI. See our website, [www.ocdmich.org](http://www.ocdmich.org), for flyer and map.

**THIS PROGRAM IS NOT TO BE MISSED**

# THE OCD FOUNDATION OF MICHIGAN

P.O. Box 510412  
Livonia, MI 48151-6412

Telephone (voice mail): (734) 466-3105

E-mail: [OCDmich@aol.com](mailto:OCDmich@aol.com)

Web: [www.ocdmich.org](http://www.ocdmich.org) \*

\* Thanks to Mark Fromm, President of Business Growth Today, Inc., for hosting our website.

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## **NEVER say NEVER**

is the quarterly newsletter of The OCD FOUNDATION OF MICHIGAN,  
a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.

Please note that the information in this newsletter is not intended to provide treatment for OCD or its associated spectrum disorders. Appropriate treatment and advice should be obtained directly from a qualified and experienced doctor and/or mental health professional. The opinions expressed are those of the individual authors.

To submit articles or letters, write or e-mail the OCDFM at the above addresses.

## ***LIST OF SELF-HELP GROUPS***

### **ANN ARBOR:**

1<sup>st</sup> Thursday, 7-9 PM  
St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Ann Arbor  
Ellen Thompson Women's Health Center  
Classroom #3  
(in the Specialty Centers area)  
5320 Elliott Drive, Ypsilanti, MI  
Call Bobbie at (734) 522-8907 or (734) 652-8907  
E-mail [OCDmich@aol.com](mailto:OCDmich@aol.com)

### **DEARBORN:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday, 7-9 PM  
First United Methodist Church  
22124 Garrison Street (at Mason)  
Call Joan at (734) 479-2416

### **FARMINGTON HILLS:**

1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Sundays, 1-3 PM  
Trichotillomania Support Group  
Beaumont Hospital Botsford Campus  
Administration & Education Center, Classroom C  
28050 Grand River Ave. (North of 8 Mile)  
Call Bobbie at (734) 522-8907 or (734) 652-8907  
E-mail [rslade9627@aol.com](mailto:rslade9627@aol.com)

### **GRAND RAPIDS:**

Old Firehouse #6  
312 Grandville SE  
Call the Anxiety Resource Center  
(616) 356-1614  
[www.anxietyresourcecenter.org](http://www.anxietyresourcecenter.org)

#### **Anxiety Disorders**

Meets every Wednesday, 4:30 to 5:30 pm and  
7 to 8:30 pm (two groups offered at this time to keep  
group size smaller)  
A weekly support group open to anyone who has an  
anxiety problem (including trichotillomania and  
Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder).

#### **Teen Anxiety Group**

Coming soon to school campuses.

#### **Yoga**

Every Wednesday, 5:30 to 6:30 pm  
A gentle yoga class. No experience is necessary.  
Schedules do change, so please call ahead to reserve  
a spot.

#### **Open Creative Time**

1st Wednesday, 6:00 to 7:00 pm  
Take your mind off your worries by being creative.  
Bring a project to work on or enjoy supplies that are  
available at the ARC.

#### **Social Outing Groups**

Offered once a month.  
Dates and times change.  
Check the ARC website for current listings.

### **LANSING:**

3<sup>rd</sup> Monday, 7-8:30 PM  
Delta Presbyterian Church  
6100 W. Michigan  
Call Jon at (517) 485-6653

### **LAPEER:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Wednesday, 7:30 - 9 PM  
Meditation Self-Healing Center  
244 Law St. (Corner of Law & Cedar Streets)  
Call Mary at (810) 441-9822

### **PETOSKEY:**

2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday, 7-9 PM  
The John & Marnie Demmer Wellness Pavilion  
820 Arlington Ave.  
Petoskey, MI 49770  
Call Kevin at (231) 838-9501  
E-mail [Runocd@gmail.com](mailto:Runocd@gmail.com)

### **ROYAL OAK:**

1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday, 7-9 PM  
Beaumont Hospital, Administration Building  
3601 W. Thirteen Mile Rd.  
Use Staff Entrance off 13 Mile Rd.  
Follow John R. Poole Drive to Administration Building  
Park in the South Parking Deck  
Meets in Private Dining Room  
(If the building is locked, press the Security button next  
to the door, tell them you are there for a meeting, and  
they will buzz you in.)  
Call Terry at (586) 790-8867  
E-mail [tmbrusoe@att.net](mailto:tmbrusoe@att.net)

# OCD and Humor

By Janet Singer

Obsessive-compulsive disorder often is portrayed as a quirky, cutesy, bothersome at most, illness. This couldn't be further from the truth. OCD is a potentially devastating neurologically-based anxiety disorder with the ability to destroy lives. There is nothing funny about it.

But that doesn't mean we can't use humor when dealing with OCD. While there is nothing amusing about having it, the situations that often arise from dealing with the disorder can be downright funny. What OCD sufferer doesn't have a story or two to tell that would be sure to make us laugh?

Everyone I've met who has OCD has a great sense of humor. This may have to do with creative thinking, a quick wit, or just sheer necessity. But the ability to laugh at oneself, especially in the face of adversity, is a huge plus — not only for those who have obsessive-compulsive disorder, but for those who care about someone with OCD. A stressful situation looked at from a humorous perspective will surely reduce anxiety, or at least keep it from overtaking the sufferer. And laughter is good for us. It relaxes us, helps us recharge, and can even boost our immune systems.

My son Dan has always had a quick wit and a great sense of humor, and his ability to see the comical, often absurd, aspects of OCD has certainly helped in his recovery. But, understandably, the more severe his OCD was, the less often his sense of humor emerged. So I tried to help. For example, Dan had a hard time driving for a while as he was not only afraid of hitting someone, he was afraid of upsetting other drivers: Maybe he was making them late because he was driving too slowly, or maybe he hurt someone's feelings when he inadvertently cut them off.

I suggested we write down all the license plate numbers of all the cars he came in contact with, try to track these people down, and then send them all letters of apology when he got home. Conversations like this helped Dan get a little distance from his own thoughts, and often made him aware of how

ludicrous his reasoning had become.

Humor makes us all feel more comfortable, and the more relaxed we are around one another, the more natural the flow of conversation. Humor brings a certain lightness to a situation, thereby fostering open communication that can help reduce the stigma of OCD. It's easier to talk with someone about what OCD is and is not when nobody is worried about asking the wrong questions, or saying the wrong things.

I've seen Dan use his sense of humor in this way when dealing with his OCD in college. Acknowledging his obvious compulsions (such as tapping or touching), indeed even making fun of them, made his friends more comfortable and encouraged dialogue about OCD. Making fun of himself served another purpose. It demonstrated to his friends that he knew his behaviors weren't "normal," and he recognized they were illogical. This, I'm sure, added to their comfort level.

Therapists often recommend personifying OCD as a way to battle the disorder. I believe taking that one step further would also be beneficial: Personify OCD and then laugh at it. Making fun of something takes its power away. Laughter can take the insidious disorder that is OCD and reduce it to something non-threatening and comical. This change in perspective doesn't happen easily, but it's certainly worth aiming for.

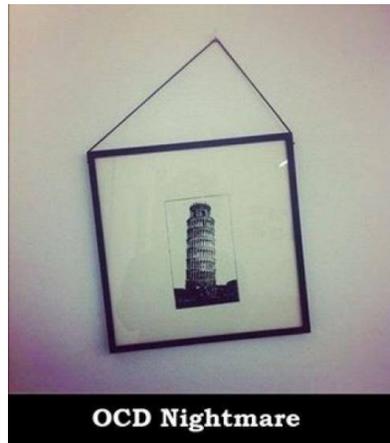
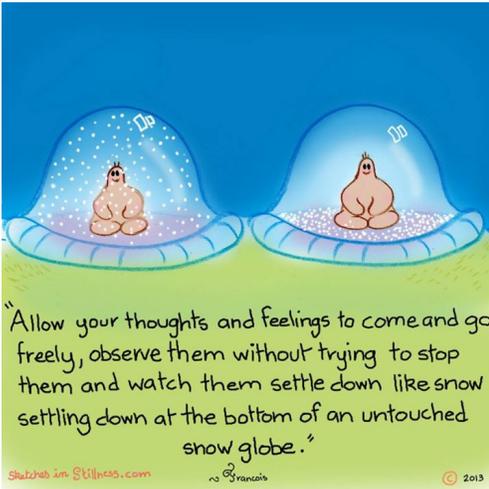
Fighting OCD is no easy task, and sufferers must strive to find the approach that works for them. I believe using humor certainly can't hurt, and this tactic likely will be a powerful tool for recovery. Because, when you think about it, isn't humor effective in dealing with just about anything?

*Janet Singer is an advocate for OCD awareness, with the goal of spreading the word that OCD, no matter how severe, is treatable. Janet writes regularly for Psychcentral.com as well as Mentalhelp.net, and has been published on many other web sites including Beyond OCD, Anxiety and Depression Association of America, and Mad in America. She has also been an invited speaker at OCD conferences. She has her own blog, [ocdtalk \(www.ocdtalk.wordpress.com\)](http://www.ocdtalk.wordpress.com).*

# OCD "MEMES" ON THE INTERNET

by Roberta Warren Slade

It took me a while to understand exactly what was meant by "meme," a term often used on the Internet. Wikipedia states that "a meme acts as a unit for carrying cultural ideas, symbols, or practices that can be transmitted from one mind to another through writing, speech, gestures, rituals, or other imitable phenomena with a mimicked theme." These are some of the common OCD memes you can find on the Internet:



"You have been assigned this mountain to show others it can be moved."



# OCD Humor: The Pros and Cons

## (Snippets from the Internet)

**(Editor's Note:** As expected, one will find a wide range of opinions expressed on the Internet (which, really, has come to represent all thought on all topics) relative to the political correctness of all things. The question of the use of humor to characterize mental illness has been addressed in many ways. Here are some representative quotes/excerpts.)

**Maru Gonzalez, EdD in her blog on The Huffington Post, 6/16/15**  
**Reposted on the International OCD Foundation (IOCDF) site on 6/26/15**  
[iocdf.org/blog/2015/06/26/attention-internet-ocd-is-not-a-joke/](http://iocdf.org/blog/2015/06/26/attention-internet-ocd-is-not-a-joke/)

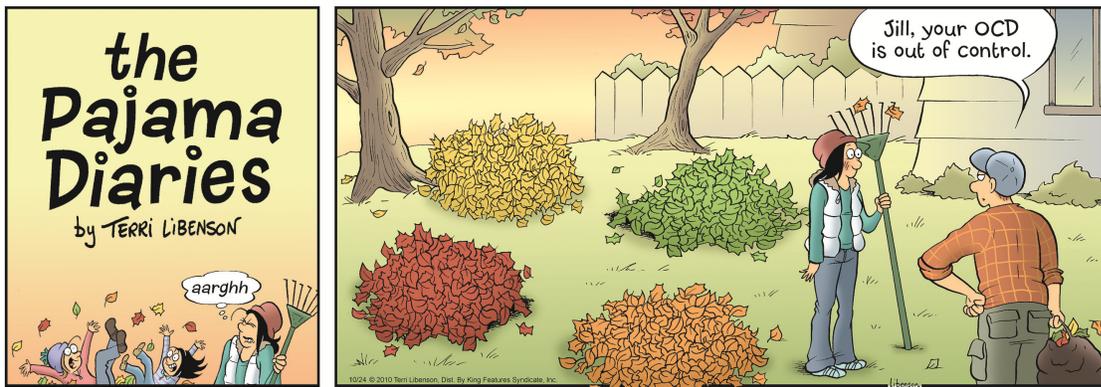
### Attention Internet: OCD Is Not a Joke

This morning I woke up to a “How OCD Are You?” quiz trending on my Facebook newsfeed. Three of my “friends” had taken the quiz and subsequently posted the results to their timelines. Of course this quiz (. . .) is not intended to measure and analyze the symptoms of those who are legitimately concerned about their mental health; rather it is meant to be fun and humorous.

As someone whose life was once consumed by OCD, I cringe every time I see such quizzes because they relegate my experience — and those of others with OCD — to nothing more than an idiosyncrasy, a quirk, something that warrants laughter and ridicule. Unfortunately, trivialization of OCD is not isolated to internet quizzes. Indeed, people with OCD are often a caricature for anal-retentiveness and perfectionism, the butt of the joke on Saturday Night Live and a frequent punchline for stand-up comedians and improv comics. And I don't think a week goes by when I don't hear the phrase “I'm so OCD” or “You're so OCD” used in casual conversation to describe behaviors that are mildly perfectionistic.

OCD is also a popular theme in hipster and variety stores. I have seen mugs, hand sanitizers, apparel, even OCD action figures that exploit, trivialize and make fun of OCD, all at the expense of people who actually have OCD. Indeed, there seems to be an emerging industry profiting from the

*(Continued on page 7)*



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exploitation and trivialization of people’s very real and deeply painful struggles. And while such products are meant to be humorous and light-hearted, the pain of their cumulative impact cuts deep.

**Bill Brenner in The OCD Diaries, 9/7/12**

[theocddiaries.com/ocd/is-humor-reinforcing-the-ocd-stigma](http://theocddiaries.com/ocd/is-humor-reinforcing-the-ocd-stigma)

“In the final analysis, I think most health issues need to be addressed with a combination of sober education and humor. People need to know the suffering real OCD brings about, just as people need to know the anguish a cancer patient experiences.

But we need to laugh at our conditions once in a while, too, because the laughter makes the disease appear smaller, even if it’s only for a few moments.”

**Cherry Pedrick, RN on Cherry’s Website**

[www.cherrypedrick.com/humor.html](http://www.cherrypedrick.com/humor.html)

“I don’t want to diminish the anxiety of living with OCD. But let’s admit it: OCD can also be very funny. Looking at the light side of life can help any problem or disease. And laughing is good for you. When OCD is really bad, there doesn’t seem to be much humor in it. But if you can step back and look at it objectively, I think there is much humor. I think that is one of the secrets to getting well – stepping back and seeing OCD as separate from yourself.”

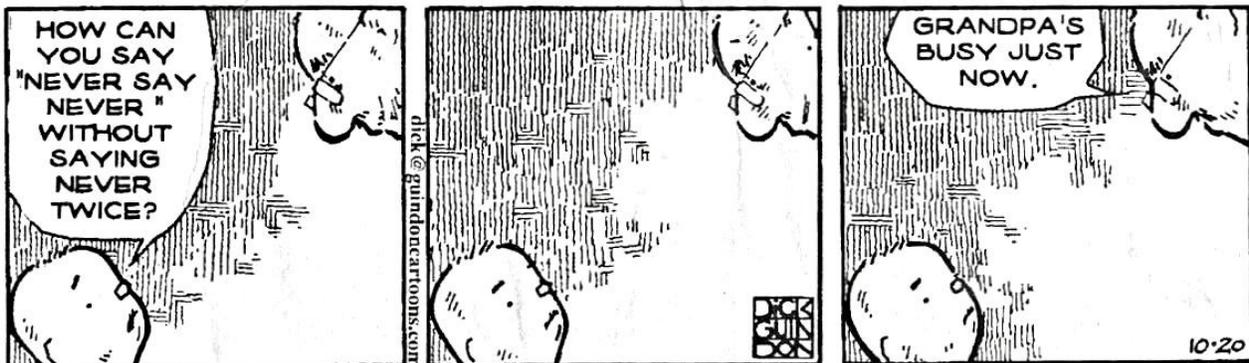
**Alex Measday’s introduction to the humor section of his OCD website, Again and Again**

[www.geonius.com/ocd/#humor](http://www.geonius.com/ocd/#humor)

“Psychological disorders are not to be taken lightly, but, like some, I am a strong believer in laughter being the best medicine (or at least up there with the SSRIs!). Different people have different senses of humor, however, so skip this section if the thought of OCD jokes bothers you.”

**GUINDON**

By Dick Guindon



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# FROM THE NEVER SAY NEVER ARCHIVES:

## *Pooh suffers 'psychological problems'*

From BBC News at [bbcnews.com](http://bbcnews.com)

Winnie the Pooh, Christopher Robin and their forest friends are "seriously troubled individuals" according to Canadian researchers.

Far from being the innocent world it appears to be on the surface, Hundred Acre Wood is, say the researchers, a place where psychosocial problems are not recognised or treated.

In a report published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, the specialists suggest AA Milne's characters would be better off with psycho-active drugs and more parental guidance.

Lead researcher Sarah Shea said the purpose of the tongue-in-cheek study was to remind people that anyone can have disorders.

### **Shaken bear syndrome**

Pooh, a bear of very little brain, is said to suffer from the condition known as attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD).

His fixation with honey and his repetitive counting behaviours suggest he may also present obsessive compulsive disorder, according to the report.

Pooh's learning problems could also arise from him being dragged downstairs by Christopher Robin, bumping his head on each step - a possible case of "shaken bear syndrome", asks the study.

"We cannot but wonder how much richer Pooh's life might be were he to have a trial of low-dose stimulant medication," say the researchers.

Piglet obviously suffers from generalised anxiety disorder according to the study.

Anti-panic agent, it says, would have saved him from the emotional trauma experienced while attempting to trap heffalumps.

While the chronically depressed Eeyore and risk-taking Tigger are also prescribed different kinds of medication, some of their friends need support and better role-models.

### **Role models**

Had his condition been identified early, Owl's dyslexia could be overcome through intensive support.

The researchers predict that Roo is likely to become a delinquent for lack of a good role model, while Kanga will probably miss the opportunity to get an MBA due to a social context that does not "appear to value education and provides no strong leadership".

Which brings us to Christopher Robin.

Not finding any diagnosable condition, the specialists express concern over several issues. Namely, the boy's lack of parental supervision and the fact that he spends his time talking to animals.

"Sadly the forest is not, in fact, a place of enchantment, but rather one of disenchantment, where neuro-developmental and psychosocial problems go unrecognised and untreated," conclude the authors.

Whether the readers of Pooh would benefit from the bear's visit to a child development clinic, as suggested in the study, is another matter.

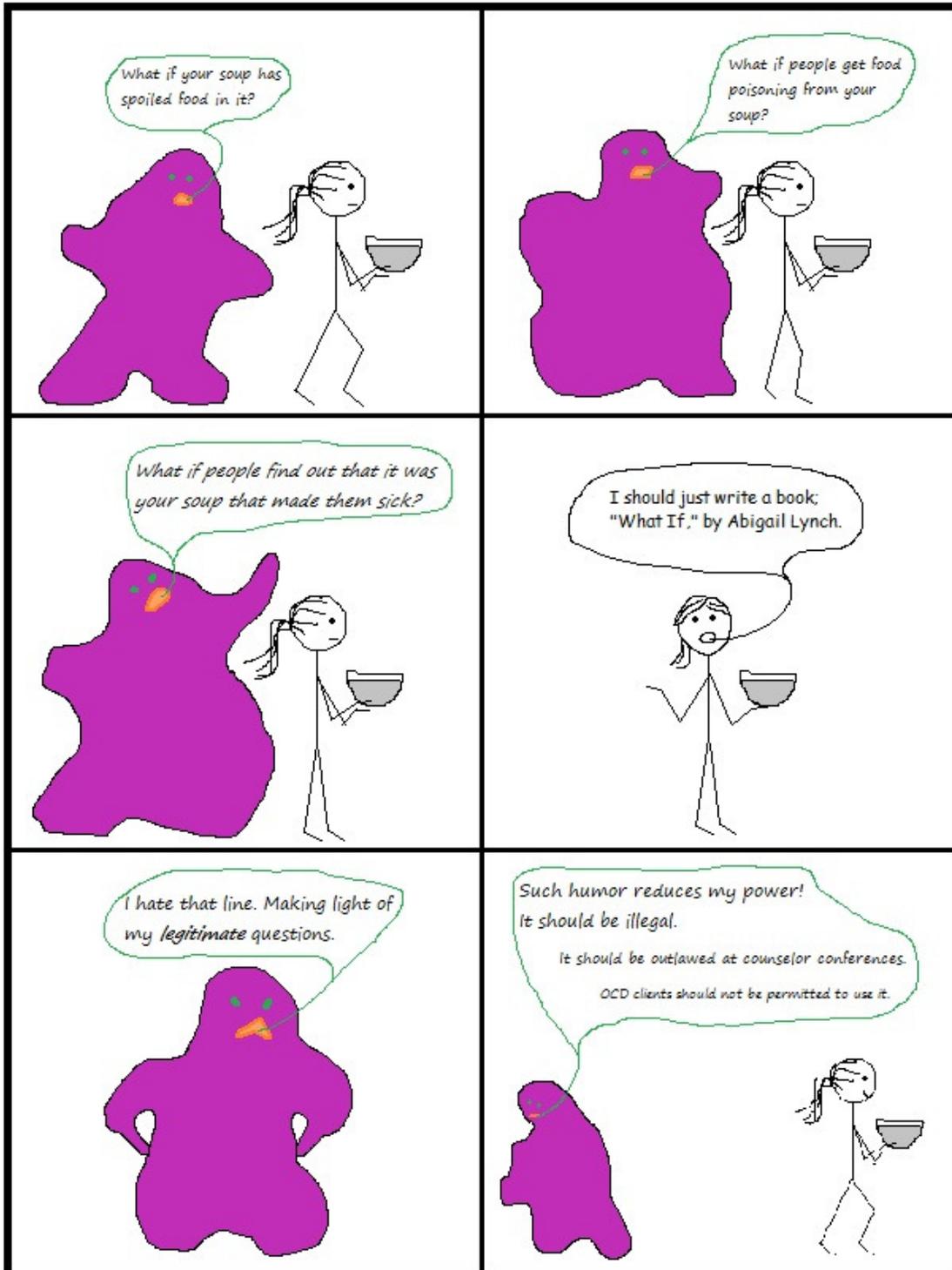
This article, dated 13 December, 2000, can be found at [news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1068391.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/americas/1068391.stm)

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# One Final Word on Humor

(Editor's Note: I found this gem by Abigail Lynch on her blog at [unreasonablyrational.blogspot.com/2013/05/the-ocd-monster-doesnt-take-humor-very.html](http://unreasonablyrational.blogspot.com/2013/05/the-ocd-monster-doesnt-take-humor-very.html). I think it represents the definitive answer to the question we have been asking here: "What is the value of humor when dealing with OCD?")

## OCD Loses Power



By Abigail Lynch, 5-26-2013

# ARC Celebrates 10 Years in Grand Rapids

The Anxiety Resource Center opened in Grand Rapids in 2005. Housed in a beautifully converted 1870's firehouse, it is filled with comfortable sitting areas, meeting rooms, artwork, and reading nooks. For ten years it has offered a warm, welcoming environment of support, hope, and inspiration to those recovering from anxiety and Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. We



salute the ARC staff and Board - Suzette, Sue, Mike, and Lauren - for the extraordinary job they have done in creating this precious jewel for the OCD Community in Grand Rapids.

Join the ARC in their celebration on Wed, November 4th from 4-9 pm for a fun evening of food, prizes, and special presentations. Watch for details at their website: [anxietyresourcecenter.org](http://anxietyresourcecenter.org)

## Words of Wisdom

*"If you wait for the perfect moment when all is safe and assured, it may never arrive. Mountains will not be climbed, races won, or lasting happiness achieved."*

*- Maurice Chevalier*

*"Courage is resistance to fear, mastery of fear - not absence of fear."*

*- Mark Twain*

*"You gain strength, courage, and confidence by every experience in which you really stop to look fear in the face. You must do the thing which you think you cannot do."*

*- Eleanor Roosevelt*

*"Life is either a daring adventure or nothing. Avoiding danger is no safer in the long run than exposure."*

*- Helen Keller*

# Do you have Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder?

The University of Michigan Department of Psychiatry is conducting a research study using Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) as a treatment for those diagnosed with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). If you are someone who struggles with OCD, you may be eligible. Volunteers for this study will receive a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation, 12 outpatient therapy sessions and 2 MRI scans. All study procedures are provided by our expert clinicians at no charge.

Participants will be compensated for their time.

## Eligible participants are:

- Male or female
- 25-45 years old
- Diagnosed with OCD
- Able to tolerate small, enclosed spaces
- No alcohol or substance abuse or dependence
- Other eligibility criteria may apply.



If interested, please call 734-936-1323  
or email at [Psych-OCD-Study@med.umich.edu](mailto:Psych-OCD-Study@med.umich.edu)

HUM#00091368

# Does your teenager have Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder?

The University of Michigan Department of Psychiatry is conducting a research study using Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) as a treatment for teenagers with obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). If you have a teenager son or daughter who struggles with OCD, they may be eligible to participate. Your teen will undergo a comprehensive diagnostic evaluation and 2 MRI scans. They will also receive 12 outpatient therapy sessions provided at no charge to you.

## Eligible teens are:

- Male or female
- 13-17 years old
- Diagnosed with OCD
- Able to tolerate small, enclosed spaces
- No alcohol or substance abuse or dependence
- Other eligibility criteria may apply.



DEPARTMENT OF  
PSYCHIATRY  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN  
HEALTH SYSTEM

HUM#00091368

Participants will be compensated for their time.

If interested, please call 734-936-1323  
or email at [Psych-OCD-Study@med.umich.edu](mailto:Psych-OCD-Study@med.umich.edu)

# PARTIAL HOSPITALIZATION PROGRAMS

There is a treatment option available for adolescents and adults in many areas that is often not known or considered by individuals who are struggling with OCD, anxiety, or depression. Partial Hospitalization Programs (PHP) are intensive programs offered by hospitals and clinics, and can benefit those who need more help than traditional outpatient settings can provide. They typically run five days a week, from 8 or 9 am to 3 or 4 pm, and can include group therapy, private time with a psychiatrist, art or music therapy or other activity time, and education programs. They usually include lunch, and some include transportation. Here, we list some of these programs for your information.

## **St. Joseph Mercy Hospital, Ann Arbor, MI**

Adult Partial Hospitalization Program, 734-712-5850

[www.stjoesann Arbor.org/AdultPartialHospitalizationProgram](http://www.stjoesann Arbor.org/AdultPartialHospitalizationProgram)

Adolescent Partial Hospitalization Program, 734-712-5750

[www.stjoesann Arbor.org/AdolescentPartialHospitalizationProgram](http://www.stjoesann Arbor.org/AdolescentPartialHospitalizationProgram)

## **Beaumont Hospital, Royal Oak, MI, 248-898-2222**

[www.beaumont.edu/centers-services/psychiatry/partial-hospitalization-program](http://www.beaumont.edu/centers-services/psychiatry/partial-hospitalization-program)

## **St. John Providence Hospital, Southfield, MI, 800-875-5566**

[www.stjohnprovidence.org/behavmed/referral/](http://www.stjohnprovidence.org/behavmed/referral/)

## **Oakwood Heritage Hospital, Taylor, MI, 313-295-5903**

[www.oakwood.org/mental-health](http://www.oakwood.org/mental-health)

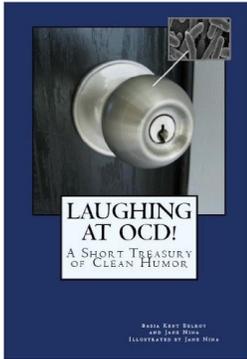
## **Allegiance Health, Jackson, MI, 517-788-4859 or 517-789-5971**

[www.allegiancehealth.org/services/behavioral-health/services/partial-hospitalization-program](http://www.allegiancehealth.org/services/behavioral-health/services/partial-hospitalization-program)

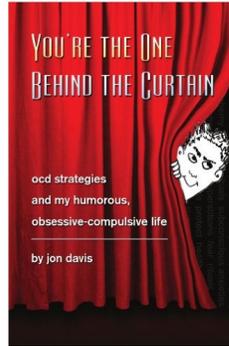
## **New Oakland Child-Adolescent & Family Center, 5 locations in tri-county area, 800-395-3223**

[www.newoakland.org/mental-health-services/face-to-face-day-program.html](http://www.newoakland.org/mental-health-services/face-to-face-day-program.html)

## SUGGESTED READING

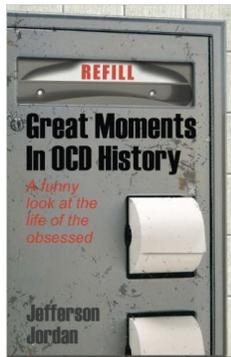


Basia Kent Belroy, Jane Nina  
*Laughing at OCD: A Short Treasury of Clean Humor*  
 Kindle Edition  
 Amazon Digital Services,  
 2013

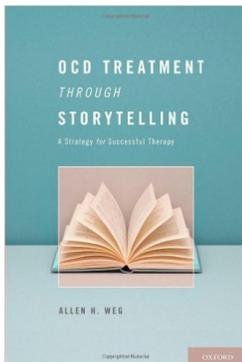
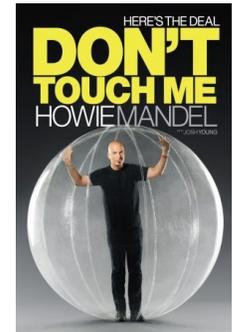


Jonathan Davis  
*You're the One Behind the Curtain: OCD Strategies and My Humorous, Obsessive Compulsive Life*  
 Xlibris 2009  
 ISBN 978-1436393010

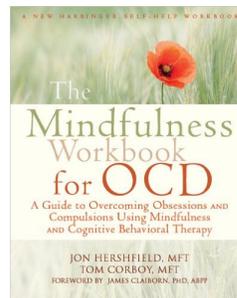
Jefferson Jordan  
*Great Moments in OCD History: A Funny Look at the Life of the Obsessed*  
 CreateSpace, 2013  
 ISBN 978-1482530223



Howie Mandel, Josh Young  
*Here's the Deal: Don't Touch Me*  
 Bantam, 2009  
 ISBN 978-0553386653



Allen H. Weg  
*OCD Treatment Through Storytelling: A Strategy for Successful Therapy*  
 Oxford University Press, 2011  
 ISBN 978-0195383560



Jon Hershfield, MFT,  
 Tom Corboy, MFT  
*The Mindfulness Workbook for OCD: A Guide to Overcoming Obsessions and Compulsions Using Mindfulness and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*  
 New Harbinger Publications,  
 2013  
 ISBN 978-1608828784

## Follow The OCD Foundation of Michigan on FACEBOOK



Always get the latest news and events. Go to our Facebook page,  
[www.facebook.com/pages/The-OCD-Foundation-of-Michigan/192365410824044](http://www.facebook.com/pages/The-OCD-Foundation-of-Michigan/192365410824044)  
 and click "Like".

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## PLEASE HELP

The OCD Foundation of Michigan is funded solely by your annual membership fees and additional donations. We have no paid staff. All work is lovingly performed by a dedicated group of volunteers. **WHY NOT VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME?** Call 734-466-3105 or e-mail [OCDmich@aol.com](mailto:OCDmich@aol.com).

### *The OCD Foundation of Michigan Membership Application*

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May we send you newsletters, notices and announcements via e-mail? \_\_\_\_\_

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9/2015

## Please Don't Throw Me Away

You've finished reading me and don't need to keep me anymore. Or worse (boo-hoo), you don't need me and don't even want me. In either case, please take me somewhere where I can help someone else. Take me to your library. Take me to your doctor, therapist, or local mental health clinic. Take me to your leader. But please, please, don't throw me away.



## The OCD Foundation of Michigan Mission Statement

- ◆ To recognize that Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) is an anxiety-driven, neurobiobehavioral disorder that can be successfully treated.
- ◆ To offer a network of information, support, and education for people living with OCD, their families and friends, and the community.

**IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO BE ADDED TO OR DELETED FROM THE MAILING LIST  
PLEASE CONTACT US**

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