

CASE STUDY FOR RELATIONSHIP OCD (R-OCD) – PRODUCED BY OCD-EMDR.COM – ONLY TO BE SHARED WITH PERMISSION

Positive resources/ values/ experiences: Examples include: Positive role modelling of healthy relationships; experience of secure relationships/ healthy interdependence with others; helpful learnings about secure relationships, boundary setting, expression of feelings, conflict resolution; previous positive therapy experience/s; meaningful resource figures as part of Phase 2

AIP →

Failure in AIP ↓

Formative experiences

Influential factors on belief formation /Past

Possible factors include (not exhaustive list):

- Early attachment wounding.
- Parentification/ enmeshment with parent/s
- Frequent conflict between parents/ separation & divorce. Codependency within parent's relationship. Anxious attachment style of parents. Mental health struggles/ addictions of parents.
- Low self-worth/ self-compassion. Defining self-worth by whether they are in a relationship (relationship contingent self-worth)
- Separation anxiety at a young age
- Early loss or death of parent/s
- Authentic feelings not allowed to be expressed growing up/ suppression
- Feeling alone as a child.
- Mistakes seen as failures and negative emotional reactions to failure

Triggers

- Obsessive doubts/ 'What if?'s : versions of re 'how can I be sure I love my partner?'
- Lovemaking/ intimacy with partner
- Noticing attractive people/ being around triggering people eg. 'happy' couples
- Experiencing negative feelings (e.g., boredom, guilt, regret, distress, anger) in presence of partner/ focus on their perceived 'flaws'
- Arguments/ conflict with partner. Resentment
- Romantic material about 'true love'
- Perfectionistic concern over mistakes

Intrusions / Beliefs / Appraisal of intrusions: All-or-nothing: 'I must always feel 100% in love with my partner or else we're wrong for each other'; **Catastrophizing:** 'If I don't know for certain that I'm with the right person, our lives will be ruined **Hyperresponsibility:** believing that you must ensure yr partner makes the right choices in life; **Perfectionism; IOU.** Seeing partner as reflection of self

Negative Cognitions (NCs) R-OCD

Safety: I'm not safe (in relationship); I'm alone; I'm trapped

Self-defectiveness: There's something wrong with me. I'm bad. I'm not enough/ not important. I don't matter. I'm unlovable/ not deserving (of love) **Responsibility:** It's my fault (if the relationship ends & I cause my partner pain); I'm responsible for how others feel

Compulsions / Rituals / Neutralising / Avoidance / Safety seeking:

This can be anything – an attempt by the 'OCD Part' to avoid feeling out of control – to try to regulate through action and avoid feelings

Outward behaviours: Internal/ mental compulsions: mental review of relationships (R) matters; compulsive confessing of R doubts; seeking reassurance; mental checking of R emotions; theorizing/ fantasizing about alternatives to the R you are in; avoidance of situations that trigger R obsessions; checking yr arousal/ passion; being critical of partner; research into R matters; attempts to perfectly feel an emotion (eg love); neutralizing (e.g., visualizing being happy together); thought suppression

Future / PCs

Allow thoughts, feelings, sensations, urges to go unchecked & unreviewed as they pass by & return to the present

Improve emotional regulation skills to allow self to feel and soothe.

Develop healthy self-actualization

Have intrusive thoughts, doubts & urges without distress.

Accepting uncertainty that you can't guarantee you will want to stay in the relationship forever

Act toward values. Self-compassion

Setting relationship boundaries & actively working through conflict

Work on living & enjoying the present instead of comparing your life to the one in which you are 100% certain

Learn to focus on what you enjoy about the relationship you have

Positive Cognitions (PCs) I am safe (in relationship/s); I can trust myself (enough); I'm okay as I am; I can recognize appropriate responsibility; I can feel & express my feelings. I can connect. I am enough. I have choices