

INTERRUPTING YOUR OBSESSIONS/COMPULSIONS

The purpose of this intervention is to reduce the frequency and intensity of your obsessive thoughts or compulsive behaviors by having you perform an unpleasant job or task. We realize that this approach seems unusual, as most people are not eager or highly motivated to perform an unpleasant task. Yet, it is hoped that by committing to perform various unpleasant tasks on a regular basis, you will be rewarded by experiencing a decrease in the frequency of your obsessive thoughts or compulsive behaviors (which over time can be more unpleasant or anxiety-producing).

This assignment actually contains three different parts. The first part asks you to create a list of unpleasant tasks that you can perform at home, work, or in the school setting (if you are a college student). The second part involves evaluating the success of the intervention, while the third part seeks to identify any modifications that need to be made to the intervention.

I. Identification of Unpleasant Jobs or Tasks

Please take some time to think about some possible unpleasant jobs or tasks that you can perform when the obsessions/compulsions emerge. Feel free to talk with your therapist, spouse, family members, friends, or colleagues at work about various tasks that you can perform. The task need not be time consuming, but hopefully will be unpleasant in nature so that it interrupts your obsessions/compulsions. Examples of unpleasant tasks include, but certainly are not restricted to: sweeping the garage, weeding, scrubbing the toilet or cleaning different parts of the bathroom, stripping wallpaper in a room (this can be performed over time), performing an act of kindness to an annoying colleague at work or student in one of your college courses, and engaging in small talk for a brief period of time with an annoying person.

You are asked to create a list of three to five unpleasant tasks because you will not always be able to perform the same task in different settings. For example, it would be difficult to clean the bathroom at work. Not all jobs or tasks will work in every setting or situation. Keep in mind that some days will be better than others. Try not to be discouraged if you regress and experience an increase in the frequency of your obsessions/compulsions on a particular day.

1. What are three to five unpleasant tasks that you can perform to interrupt your obsessions/compulsions? (Please feel free to add more jobs or tasks on the back of this page if you choose.)

A. _____
B. _____
C. _____
D. _____
E. _____

2. After reviewing the list, what job(s) or task(s) do you feel would be most effective at home?

At school or work? _____

In a public setting? _____

II. Evaluation of the Effectiveness of the Intervention

Please answer the following questions approximately 1 to 2 weeks after you have performed the unpleasant job(s) or task(s).

1. What percentage of the time did you perform the unpleasant jobs or tasks when you began to experience the obsessions/compulsions?

___ 0-20% ___ 20-40% ___ 40-60% ___ 60-80% ___ 80-100%

2. If you were not able to perform the unpleasant job(s) or task(s) on a consistent basis (less than 60%), what stressors or factors interfered with your ability to perform the unpleasant jobs or tasks? _____

3. Overall, how successful were the unpleasant jobs or tasks in interrupting or managing your obsessions/compulsions?

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Totally			No Change			Highly
Unsuccessful						Successful

4. Which of the unpleasant jobs or tasks were helpful in interrupting your obsessions/compulsions?

5. What unpleasant jobs or tasks were not effective in interrupting your obsessions/compulsions? _____

6. What stressful events interfered with the effectiveness of this intervention and caused you to experience an increase in the frequency of your symptoms (optional)? _____

III. Modifications of the Intervention

1. After evaluating your progress, what changes or modifications would you make to this intervention?

A. _____

B. _____

C. _____

D. _____

E. _____



2. What other unpleasant jobs or tasks can you perform to reduce the frequency of your obsessions/compulsions? List three to five other tasks (again, feel free to consult with your therapist, family members, or friends).

- A. _____
- B. _____
- C. _____
- D. _____
- E. _____