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What to do if you suffer from Obsessive-Compulsive Trump Disorder | Commentary

OCTD manifests as uncontrollable, reoccurring thoughts and behaviors related to Donald Trump. Much like the clinical disorder, OCTD shows up at work, school, in personal relationships, and on 24-hour national and global news channels.

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Video-based media contribute to a flourishing 24-hour global Obsessive-Compulsive Trump Disorder with their continuing barrage of breaking news about what he just said and just did. Lee Jin-man / AP

The National Institutes of Health describe Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD) as a common, chronic and long-lasting disorder in which a person has uncontrollable, reoccurring thoughts (*obsessions*) and behaviors (*compulsions*) that the person feels the urge to repeat over and over.

The causes are not well-understood, but from a behavioral perspective OCD may be due to certain perceived threats or fears that produce anxiety and stress.

Across the U.S. and abroad, a new variant of the disorder has emerged: OCTD or Obsessive-Compulsive Trump Disorder.

Symptoms of Obsessive-Compulsive Trump Disorder

OCTD manifests as uncontrollable, reoccurring thoughts and behaviors related to Donald Trump. Much like the clinical disorder, OCTD shows up at work, school, in personal relationships, and on 24-hour national and global news channels.

People suffering from obsessive symptoms are preoccupied with Trump's opinions on sex, immigrants, globalism, weapons of mass destruction, and by his reports that our federal agencies are in tatters. Those with OCTD can't stop thinking and talking about his thinking and talking.

Compulsive Trump Disorder behaviors emerge in emails and in pseudo and real journalism that reiterate how his past, current and anticipated actions are threatening and excessive. OCTD patients count and recount his contradictions, violations, false statements, tweets, and the number of Diet Cokes he consumes. They send links urging us to sign and resign petitions to impeach.

Those with OCTD engage in confirmation bias, which is the tendency to search for, favor, and remember events and information that confirm one's already held and obsessive beliefs about Trump. As [one political writer](#) noted, Donald Trump's election and first year in office have been one huge confirmation bias with one portion of the country continuing to support him and wanting him to be successful and another thinking he is evil incarnate.

Both groups have OCTD and neither seems to feel any relief when sharing their thoughts and feelings with others. Alas, those who see him as a threat feel trapped, frustrated and angry with the situation and see no pathway to change. They ritually pursue the hope that one of these days he will be impeached because of his Russian collusion, obstruction of justice, and other transgressions.

Treatment for Obsessive-Compulsive Trump Disorder

Be mindful of your media diet

One approach may be to seek information that contradicts one-sided fear.

For Trump supporters, it is not difficult to find media that highlights a point of view different from their own. However, for those who oppose Trump, it can be quite tricky to find media that

highlights the views of those who think the president is doing a good job. To wit: Nicholas Goldberg, editorial page editor of the Los Angeles Times noted, "I certainly believe our op-ed editor ought to be aggressively seeking smart, articulate people who have positive things to say about Trump, who are sympathetic to his point of view, or who are able to explain, support and justify him to our readers." James Bennet, the New York Times' editorial-page editor said, "We owe it to our readers to help them hear the voices that were supportive...that could advocate for Donald Trump's ideas."

"The No Trump Zone" Technique (also known as Trump Disorder Inoculation Therapy)

At our family gatherings we have started to impose a No-Trump-Zone, to avoid this topic of conversation which otherwise produces a mix of frustration, anger and depression. More productive is the clinical approach called stress inoculation therapy which we are renaming Trump Disorder Inoculation Therapy (TDIT). This enables people to build resilience against the effects of OCTD by following a 3-step procedure.

- **Step 1:** Learn relaxation methods involving imagery. Focus clearly on one or two experiences and feelings that have been and remain positive and emotionally happy or satisfying in your life. Puppies and babies are okay, but search for relationships and experiences that build resilience.
- **Step 2:** Apply "self-talk" by calling out, "PLEASE STOP" whenever you personally feel the urge to email a link or overhear a colleague or listen to a news report about Trump that makes your blood boil.
- **Step 3:** Connect the self-talk with the positive image previously rehearsed. This derailing approach has proven successful for treatment of PTSD, phobia, and responding to a victim of sudden cardiac arrest.

Turn off the TV and take action

The video-based media contribute to a flourishing 24-hour global OCTD with their continuing barrage of breaking news about what he just said and what he just did. To those who are addicted to the 24-hour news: Please turn off the TV and spend more time in productive endeavors such as with family. Then with a cool head, write to your elected representatives, and advise them to find colleagues who better share your beliefs then vote them into office.

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