

Is Obsessive Compulsive Disorder a Mental Illness, and if so, how Does it Affect People with Bipolar Illness?

I am a person with Bipolar Illness, OCD, (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) and ADHD (Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder). OCD and Bipolar Illness co-exist in many instances, contrary to some who disagree. Obsessive Compulsive Disorder are recurring thoughts that occur over and over again in the same form. Have you ever had a melody of a song stuck in your mind? Now imagine that same melody being there for most of your waking hours for weeks on end and literally interfering with your ability to concentrate or to work. The range of obsessive thoughts that can be present with OCD is very broad, so much so that it's difficult to easily characterize them through brief description. Obsessive thoughts often have control of one's mind. Compulsions are behaviors that people must do repeatedly. I hate to admit that I do things that clearly identifies me as one with OCD when I have to check 2 or more times whether or not I have locked my car, or check the gas jets more than once after cooking to make sure I didn't forget to shut the jets off. How about checking before I go to bed that I have secured my keys, phone, glasses and wallet. I have gone as far as checking and counting my credit cards more than once to make sure that I didn't leave them at the grocery store that day. My title for this article is, "Is Obsessive Compulsive Disorder a Mental Illness?" and the answer is no. But an obsessive or compulsive element is simply a part of one's personality. I need to have everything in place, my clothes, my briefcase, my headsets etc. Many people may say that's normal. On the surface it may look ok, but it *isn't*. *Why? Because I have to look numerous times before I am satisfied that everything is in order by checking and rechecking.*

It's been told by many that 35% of people with Bipolar also have OCD. To the best of my knowledge, after researching the topic, I have yet to see proof substantiating these statistics. It has also been reported that OCD symptoms occurred prior to the onset of Bipolar Illness. When Bipolar disorder and OCD raise their ugly heads, treating Bipolar Disorder tends to be much worse and more difficult to manage. People with both disorders tend to exhibit abuse with alcohol and substance abuse. OCD in the presence of Bipolar Disorder may require the use of different treatment strategies, as many of the antidepressants that are used to treat OCD can sometimes exacerbate or even cause symptoms of mania or hypomania. When both of these disorders occur together, professionals suggest that the Bipolar Illness treatment take priority, but more research must be done. At this time, I have yet to see many double-blind studies published to substantiate these claims. That being said, researchers suggest that clinical trials need to be stepped up to investigate impulsive behavior in patients with OCD and BD. I hope, in the future, I will be able to report to my readers the most up to date studies on the subject.

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