Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

Treating Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder

For sufferers of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD), an endless string of fears and elaborate, compulsive rituals can impede regular functioning. Sufferers often find their days governed by the constant repetition of rules and routines in an attempt to avoid disturbing their orderly lives. Common obsessions include cleanliness, food and symmetry. There is no cure for OCD, but several treatments exist that can help manage it effectively.

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy deals with core beliefs and thought patterns. Patients begin by listing their anxieties and then confront each in a controlled environment, gradually learning how to deal with obsessions in a constructive way.

Medications. A number of drugs have been found helpful in treating OCD sufferers when they are combined with behavioral therapy. These include drugs, such as Prozac and Zoloft, which help the brain use serotonin more effectively.

Natural remedies. St. John's Wort has become well known for its depression-fighting properties and has also shown some help for those with OCD.

Brain surgery. In cases where therapy and medication haven't worked, brain surgery is sometimes a last option. Though it leads to improvement in about one third of patients, there is a considerable risk of side effects.

Help for the destructive compulsions associated with Obsessive Compulsive Disorder is available. The best way to ensure the disorder doesn't spin out of control is to address it early. Seeking qualified professional support from a medical expert is the first step in stripping OCD of its debilitating power, and reclaiming a happy, healthy life.

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