

H39 New OCD Treatment

August 2007

Intro: Obsessive compulsive disorder is often portrayed as being funny. But if you ask anyone who suffers from OCD, they'll tell you there's nothing humorous about it. Children with OCD constantly fight anxiety caused by being afraid of their own thoughts. Cognitive behavioral therapy reduces symptoms, but many children do not have access to it. Doctors at Mayo Clinic are trying to change that. They started a new, intensive treatment program that's available to kids who can't find treatment close to home.

Video

**Frank Smyly
Has OCD**

**Standup
Vivien Williams**

Audio

15-YEAR-OLD FRANK SMYLY LIVES IN CONSTANT FEAR THAT HE MAY CAUSE SOMETHING VERY BAD TO HAPPEN. FRANK'S ONLY RELIEF IS WHEN HE'S OUTDOORS.

"MY OCD DOES SEEM TO ALMOST GO AWAY WHEN I GET IN THE WOODS."

BUT WHEN FRANK IS OUT OF THE WOODS, HIS SYMPTOMS GET WORSE. OCD COMPELS FRANK TO PERFORM COMPULSIVE RITUALS IN ORDER TO MAKE TOUCHING CERTAIN OBJECTS SAFE. SOME PEOPLE WITH OCD WASH THEIR

Reporting

HANDS UNTIL THEY BLEED, CHECK THINGS OVER AND OVER, OR RECITE CERTAIN PHRASES.

**Stephen Whiteside, Ph.D.
Mayo Clinic Psychologist**

“WHAT DOES OCD SAY WILL HAPPEN IF YOU PUT YOUR SHOES ON WITHOUT RITUALS?”

Frank Smyly

“IT’S MOSTLY THE GENERAL FEELING THAT SOMETHING BAD WILL HAPPEN.”

FRANK KNOWS THE THOUGHTS ARE IRRATIONAL.

Frank Smyly

“BUT IF I DON’T DO THE COMPULSION THEN THE OCD JUST KEEPS THAT THOUGHT IN MY HEAD AND IT MAKES ME WORRY SO MUCH THAT I CAN’T THINK ABOUT ANYTHING ELSE. IT’S A KIND OF MENTAL TORTURE. YOU CAN’T GET AWAY FROM IT. THE ONLY WAY TO GET AWAY FROM IT IS TO FACE IT. WHICH IS EXTREMELY HARD.”

FACING YOUR FEARS IS THE

THEORY BEHIND MAYO CLINIC'S
INTENSIVE OCD TREATMENT
PROGRAM.

Stephen Whiteside, Ph.D.
Mayo Clinic Psychologist

“OUR TREATMENT IS MEANT TO
HELP KIDS LEARN TO BETTER
MANAGE THEIR ANXIETY,”
DR. STEPHEN WHITESIDE USES
WHAT'S CALLED EXPOSURE
THERAPY. TWICE A DAY FOR FIVE
DAYS HE EXPOSES FRANK TO HIS
FEARS OF TOUCHING CERTAIN
OBJECTS. THEN HE HELPS FRANK
WORK THROUGH THE ANXIETY
WITHOUT RITUALS. FRANK AND HIS
MOM LEARN THESE TECHNIQUES
SO THEY CAN PRACTICE AT HOME
TO KEEP THE OCD UNDER
CONTROL. THE GOAL IS TO ALLOW
FRANK TO CONCENTRATE ON LIFE
INSTEAD OF ON OCD.

To Frank in woods

Frank Smyly

“I THINK I CAN PUSH THROUGH IT
NOW.”
FOR MEDICAL EDGE, I'M VIVIEN

WILLIAMS.

Anchor tag:

Frank is doing very well. He's very bright and a good student, two traits shared by many kids with OCD.

Dr. Whiteside says in addition to giving Frank skills to practice at home, the program also includes close follow up via phone calls. This allows kids without access to therapists at home to get the treatment they need -- without having to stay away from home for long periods of time.

The program may not be right for everyone, and kids who go through should not expect to be cured. But they can realistically expect to have the skills they need to stop OCD from controlling their lives.

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