

# I-CBT Workbook

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**This workbook was compiled using the following (incredible) resources:**

Facebook group: *Inference-Based Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy for OCD and Related Disorders*.

O'Connor, Kieron, and Aardema, Frederick. 2012. *Clinician's Handbook for Obsessive Compulsive Disorder*. West Sussex, UK: John Wiley & Sons Ltd.

Petrik-Gardner, Amanda. 2022. "Module 10: Tricks and Cheats of OCD." Posted at (<https://icbt.online/instructional-videos/>). Retrieved September 12, 2022.

Petrik-Gardner, Amanda. 2022. "Module 5: OCD is 100% Imaginary." Posted at (<https://icbt.online/instructional-videos/>). Retrieved September 12, 2022.

Shroyer, Bronwyn. 2022. "ICBT For Kids Modules 1-8." Posted at (<https://icbt.online/instructional-videos/>). Retrieved September 12, 2022.

# Comparing Evidence Based Treatments for OCD

## Exposure and Response Prevention

A behavioral intervention that focuses on *doing* the change. You complete exposures and resist engaging in compulsion

## Obsessive Compulsive Disorder

## Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Helps you acknowledge and allow unpleasant thoughts to be there while you commit back to your values (the things that are most important to you)

## Inference-Based CBT

A cognitive intervention that focuses on *knowing* to make the changes. We discover the here-and-now and adjust the story to eliminate the distressing doubt

# How Each Treatment Looks at the Obsessions and Compulsions

## ERP

Do exposures around driving that feel challenging but doable (maybe sitting in the car before driving out of the driveway). At the same time stopping compulsions (like avoiding driving or constant checking)

**I may hit someone when driving**

## ACT

Driving is important to me because I need to go to work and go to visit my family. I can have unpleasant thoughts and urges while still driving. It helps to make space between me and the thoughts

## I-CBT

Taking a moment to realize there is nothing that has happened in the here-and-now that tells me I have hit someone. Leave the obsessive doubt and story behind because they don't matter

No obsessions  
=  
No need for compulsions

**Stuff to Know  
Before Getting  
Started**

## **The Ultimate Goals of I-CBT**

You give zero credibility to the doubt

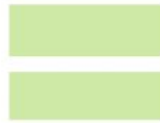
You have no reactions (emotional or behavioral) to the doubt

None of your behavior, thinking or anticipating is driven by the doubt

You now react and use your sense in your old OCD situations as you do in any other situation

You plan ahead on the basis of the person you know you are, your Real Self

# Inferential Confusion



**A Distrust of:**  
**Your Senses**  
**Common Sense**  
**Reality Based**  
**Information**

**An Investment in:**  
**Remote**  
**Possibilities**  
**Hypothetical or**  
**Imagined**  
**Possibilities**

You will learn to see that your doubt  
has been created with reasoning  
errors and your imagination. This  
will change your doubts!

# I-CBT Part 1: Foundations

OCD doubts follow a sequence:

Trigger  
Doubt  
Bad Thing  
Unpleasant Feeling  
↓  
Compulsion

There are things that make your doubt seem real

Facts and ideas  
General rules  
Hearsay  
Personal experiences  
It's possible

OCD uses your imagination to create stories

We can change the way we feel about things by changing the story we tell ourselves about it

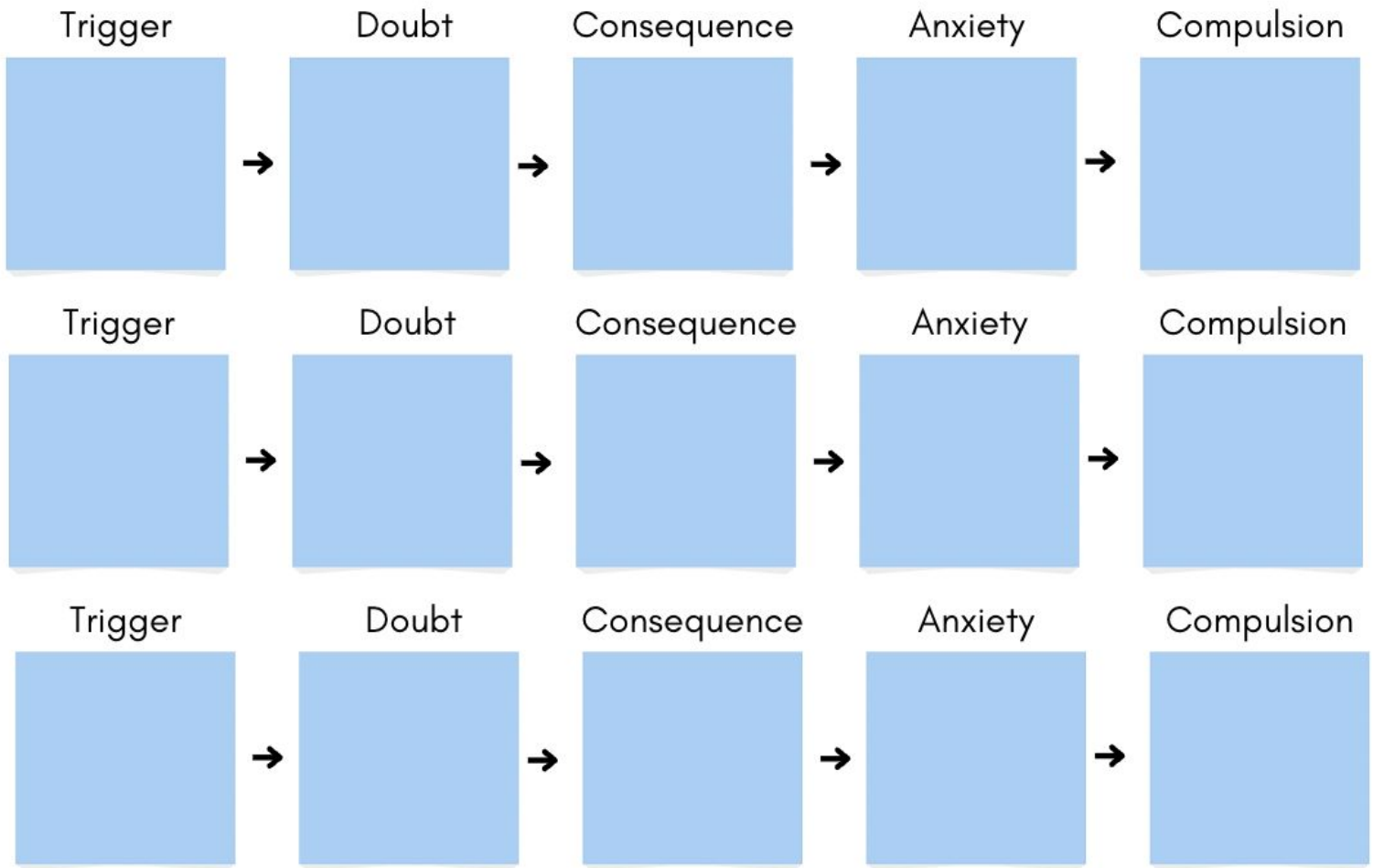
Feared/OCD Self

=

The self you fear you will become

But, the feared self is the opposite of who we really are

# My Doubt Sequence



Spend a week recording your doubt sequences

## My Core Doubt

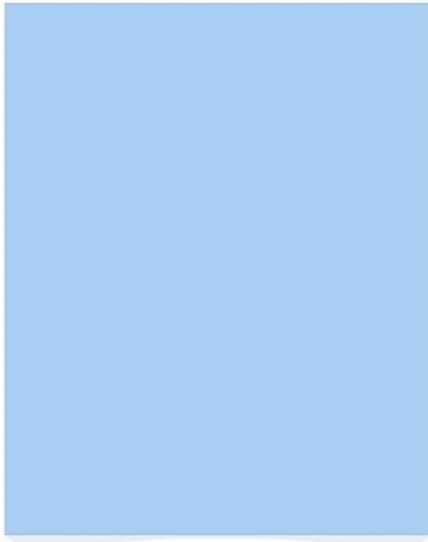
Doubt is responsible for your OCD symptoms. You need to know what the doubt is because when you stop doubt you can stop your OCD symptoms!

# Reasons Behind My Doubt

**My Doubt:**



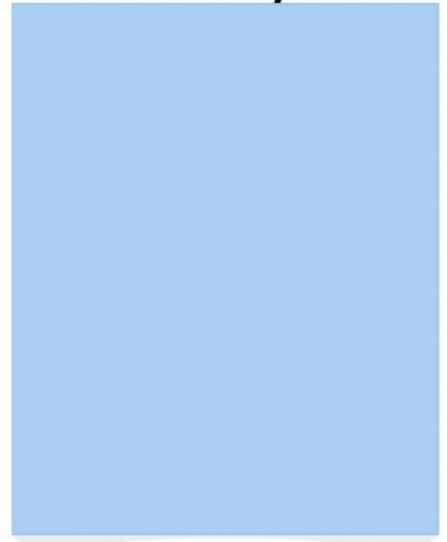
**Abstract Facts**



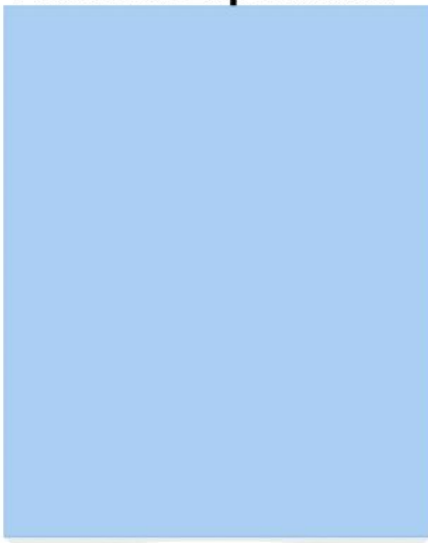
**Rules**



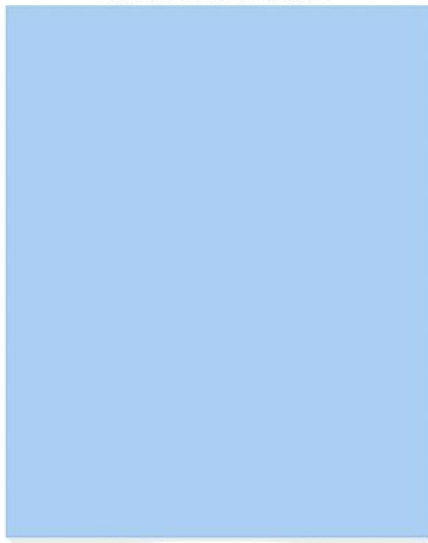
**Hearsay**



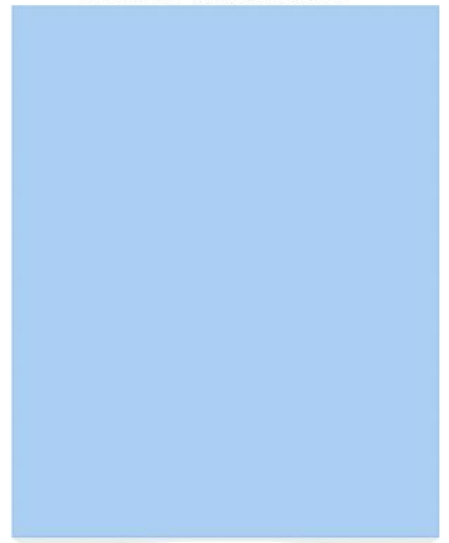
**Personal Experience**



**It's Possible**



**Other Reasons**

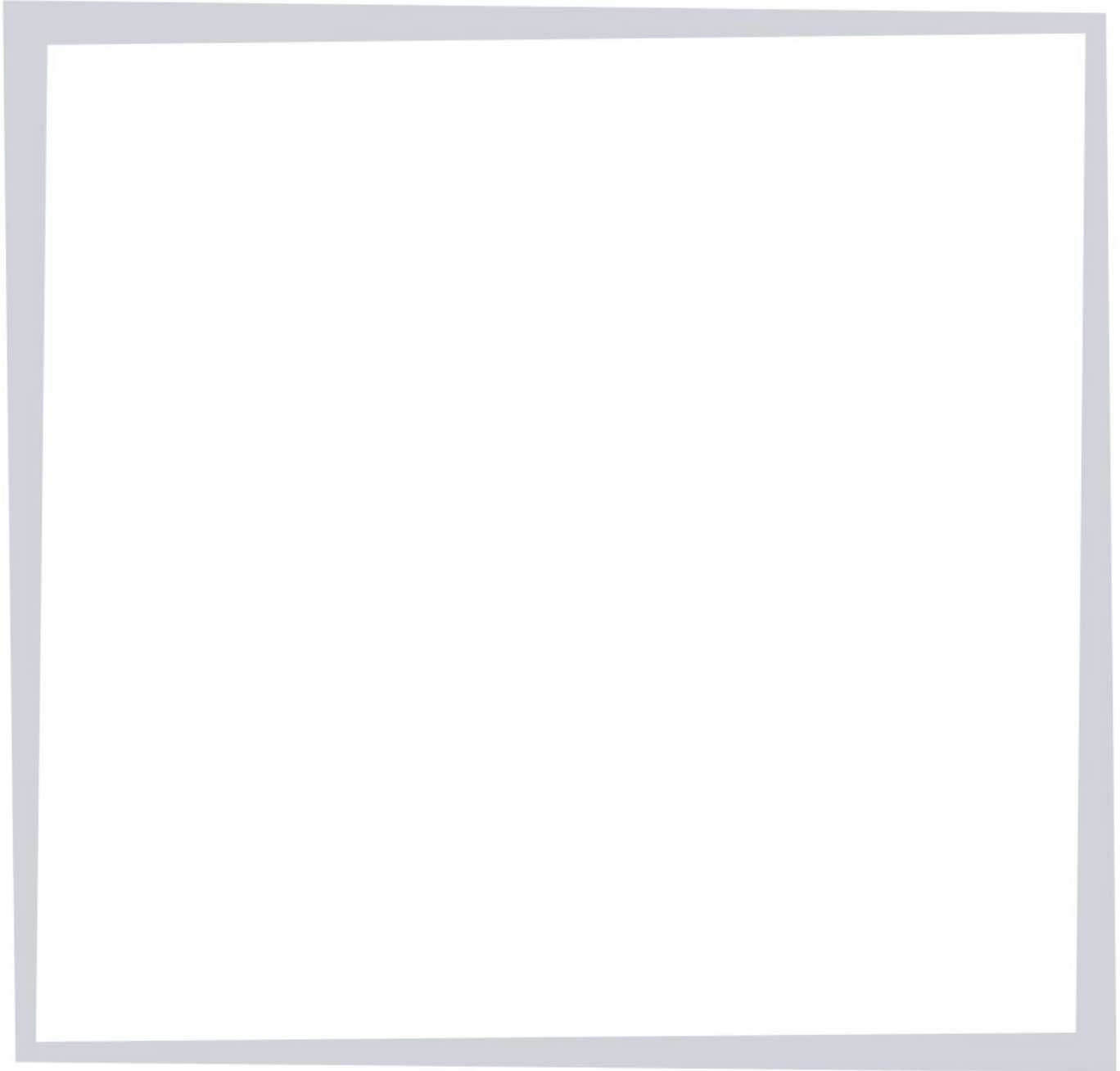


Doubts don't happen out of the blue. Slow down and figure out the reasons for your doubts. Knowledge is power!



# My OCD Story

Write out your OCD story. Be sure it include the reasoning you already identified.



Your doubt feels so real because there is a credible story behind it. When you change the story you change the doubt.

# The Feared (OCD) Self

What if . . .

I am the kind of person who . . . ?

What do these doubts have in common?

What does this say about the kind of person you consider yourself to be or at risk to become?

What is the evidence of this Feared Self? Why are you so convinced that you need to invest so much time and effort to make sure you do not? How do you justify your confidence in the Feared Self?

Do you see the OCD reasoning here? Compare the reasoning you just used to the reasoning your OCD story is using.

Your OCD/Feared Self is who you are afraid you will become if you don't perform compulsions. Your Feared Self is just another obsessional doubt (and you are learning what to do about that). It is important to note that your Feared Self is the opposite of who you really are.

# I-CBT Part 2: Interventions

## OCD is Imaginary

Doubt keeps going because of your imagination, not because of reality.

Ask yourself:

1. Was there any information in the here and now to justify the doubt?
2. Did the doubt go beyond objective (inner) sense information?

## OCD is Irrelevant

Possible  $\neq$  Probable  $\neq$   
Relevant

Just because something *can* happen doesn't mean there is evidence in the here and now showing it *will* happen

## Stay out of the OCD Bubble

Slow down!!

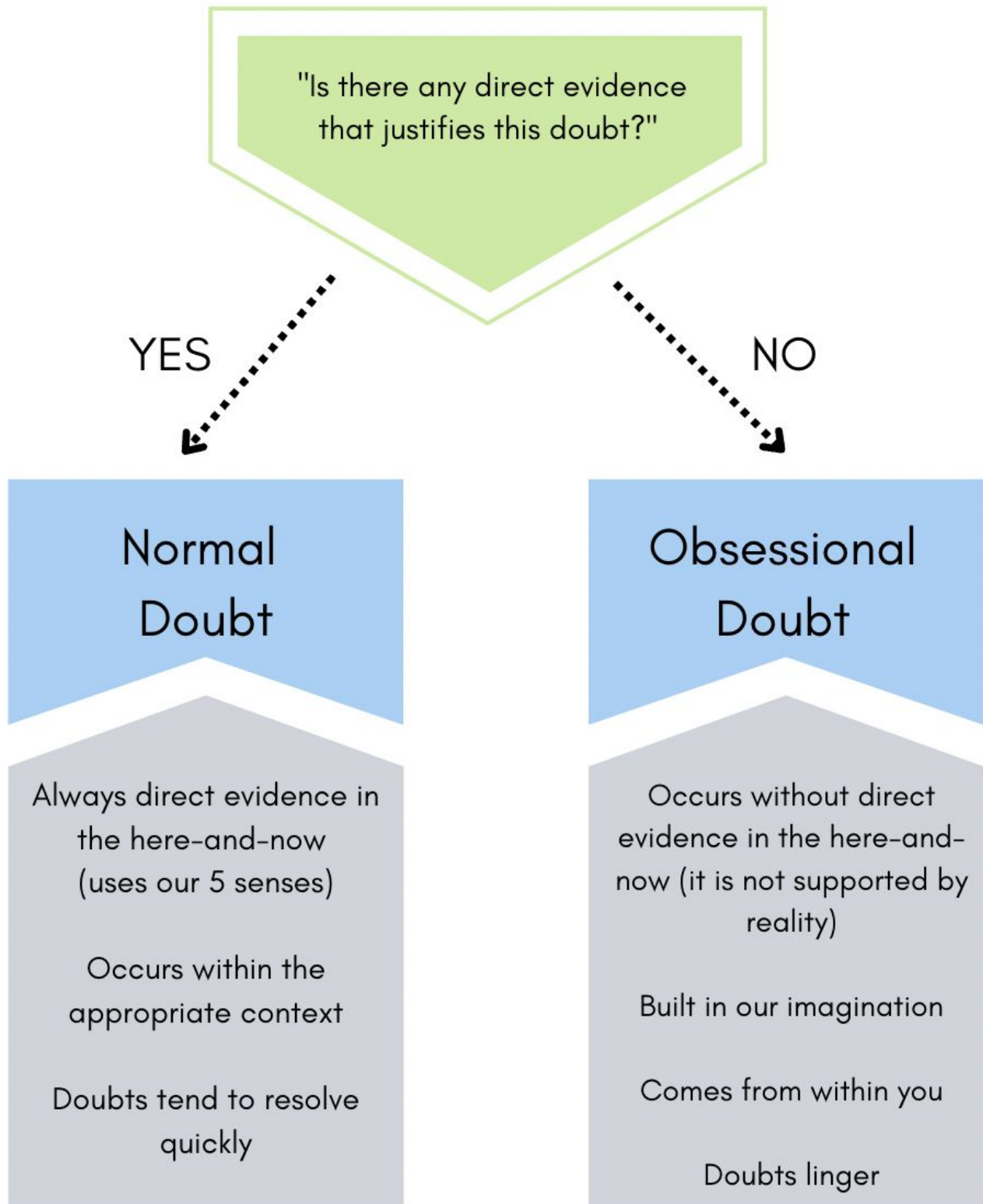
1. What was the first thought that took me beyond my senses? How does it make my senses irrelevant?
2. Pause, picture the bridge, hold off on any rituals
3. Choose what to do

## Reality Sensing

Practice, Practice Practice

1. Staying with the information in the here-and now
2. Trusting your sense
3. Do not go beyond your senses because that brings you to OCD Land

# OCD Lives in Your Imagination



The OCD Story is 100% in your imagination, and not at all in the here-and-now!

# OCD Doubt 100% Irrelevant to Reality

Possible



Probable

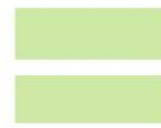


Relevant

Lack of  
here-and-  
now



Imaginary



Irrelevant

## How to Practice This

Think of an example in your every day life that you would never consider a possibility because it is irrelevant to the here and now.

Compare this to your OCD Doubt

When you realize the obsession is irrelevant it no longer holds any credibility, so you will won't feel a need to act on it

Just because something is possible doesn't mean its relevant to the here-and-now

Each time an Obsessional Doubt pops up, see how you can make it irrelevant (instead on debating with it)

When a doubt comes from within you it is 100% irrelevant to the here and now!

# The OCD Bubble

When you are in the OCD Bubble you feel:

**Less secure**

**Higher stress and anxiety**

**You lost the here-and-now**

**More doubt**

**Dissociated**

## How to Get Out

Identify the first thought that carries you from reality to imagination

Slow down. Stay here for at least one minute

Here-and-now

Imagination and OCD

You get to make a choice. Stay in the here-and-now or cross over into your imagination (OCD)

Reflect on how you resolved the Obsessional Doubt

OCD takes you beyond the here-and-now and into more doubt (which is the OCD Bubble). This skill helps you learn where you cross over from here-and-now into your imagination and OCD

# Reality Sensing

**Focusing on  
your here-  
and-now**

**Using your  
common  
sense**

**Being your  
real self**

Reality Sensing brings our attention to the here-and-now to gather information



## Important Notes

Reality Sensing is all about trusting your senses. This will help you dismiss the obsessional doubt.

Dismiss anything that isn't in the here-and-now because it's a story and not reality.

Sensations (like an eye twitching or nausea) are real, but that doesn't mean an obsessional story is attached.

It can feel uncomfortable or like you aren't doing enough when you chose not to do the compulsion, but it is a feeling and not in the here-and-now.

There is certainty in the world of senses.

Act on the knowledge from your senses and the here-and-now. Dismiss anything else (which is your OCD and imagination). Trust your senses and common sense!!



# I-CBT Part 3: Bringing it all Together

## **The Alternative Story**

Changing our stories changes how we live in our world

## **OCD is a Con Artist**

OCD is sneaky and wants you to think it is reality, but you now know that OCD comes from your imagination, and not from the here-and-now

## **Your Real Self**

Your Real self is the opposite of your Feared Self. Take time to re-discover your true goals, values, actions, self, etc.

## **Moving On and Relapse Prevention**

Live your best life in the here-and-now!!

Make notes about what has gone well, and be sure you consider when slip-ups happen to try to stop them before they even start.

# The Alternative Story

The purpose of creating an Alternative Story is NOT to disprove the OCD story

The purpose IS to create doubt about the legitimacy of the OCD story and remove it from its pedestal as THE story

The basic requirement of the Alternative Story is that it not conflict with the senses

The Alternative Story should start at the Obsessional Doubt

The more detail in the Alternative Story the better

Remember This?



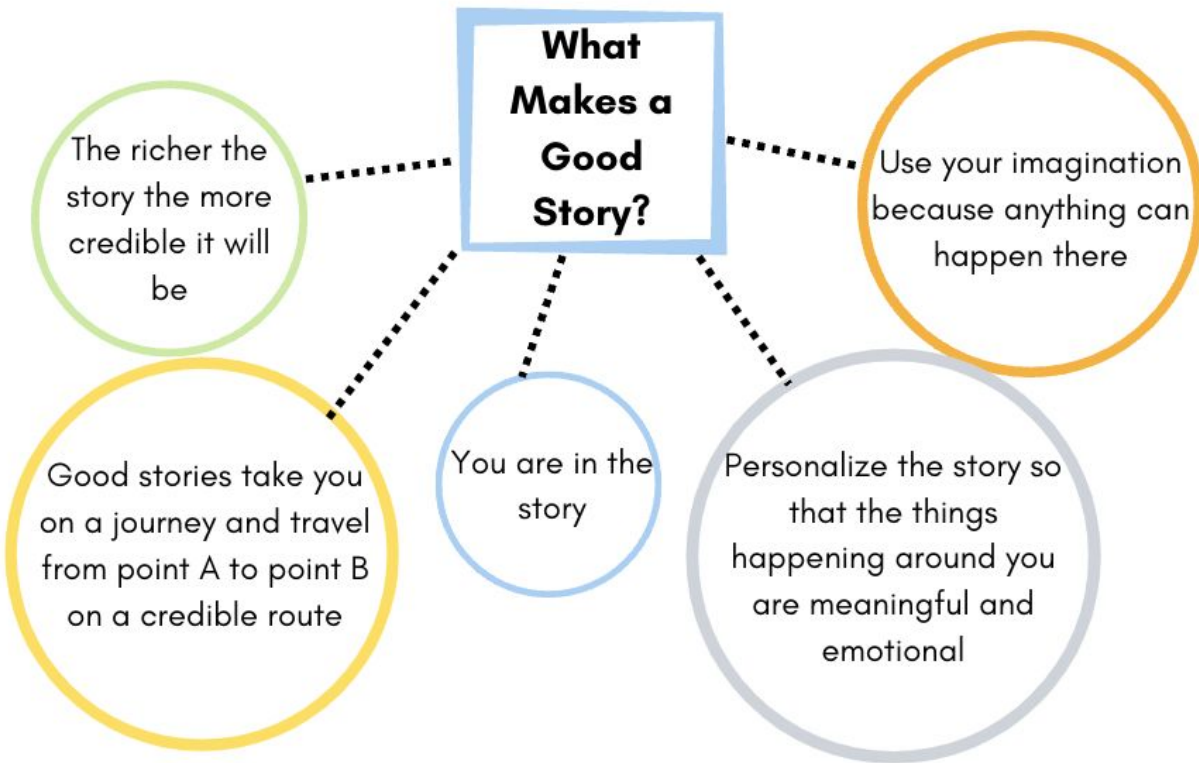
Practice making Alternative Stories about topics that are neutral to you.

A castle

Castles are scary and I will find death and murder if I go in there

A castle

Princesses and unicorns live in castles because they are magical



Write out your new Alternative Story. Keep the points above in mind!

Stories define who we are and where we are going. By changing our story we can change how we live in our world

# The Tricks and Cheats of the OCD Con Artist

- 1) Identify the tricks
- 2) Notice that they pull you further from reality
- 3) Notice they make the OCD Story false and irrelevant
- 4) Pause
- 5) Use Reality Sensing and review your Alternative Story
- 5) Move away from the OCD Story and act on your knowledge and senses

## Going Deep

OCD attempts to go deeper beyond reality and takes you away from reality

## Living the Fear

OCD can be so convincing that you have physical feelings as if they are real

## Out of Context Facts

Facts can be true but the way you apply it to your situation is false

## Testing It Out

OCD convinces you to test it out and when you try it the OCD proved its doubt

## Reverse Reasoning

When it starts as a fact then OCD jumps to a conclusion

## But Maybe This Time . . .

OCD's ongoing argument that the thing could happen this one time

## Distrust Self or Senses

OCD makes you feel like you can't trust yourself

## Let's Discuss It

OCD gets you to discuss, consider, and question until you doubt yourself

## But Maybe Later . . .

OCD threatens the consequences will show up later

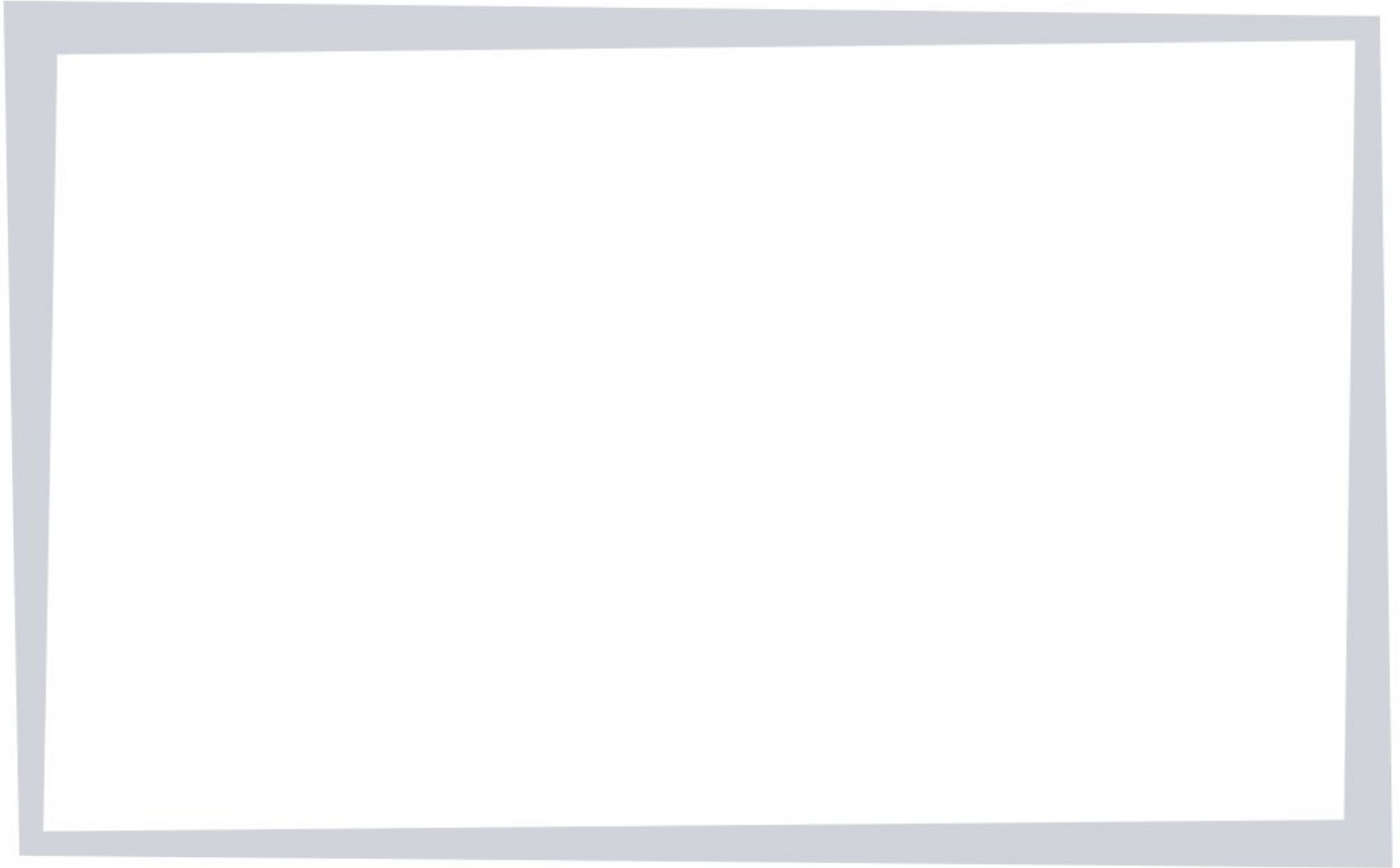
## Mismatching

Your actual circumstances and what don't match your OCD Doubt

OCD uses these tricks to make you believe your doubt is based in reality

Now, write down your OCD story again, but just one sentence at a time. As you read each sentence take time to identify the Trick and Cheat that OCD is using.

How quickly were you able to dismiss the different elements in your OCD Story? Were you able to see the Tricks and Cheats?



These tricks and cheats make your Obsessional Story false and irrelevant

By being aware of these Tricks and Cheats, you can keep from getting absorbed in the OCD Bubble

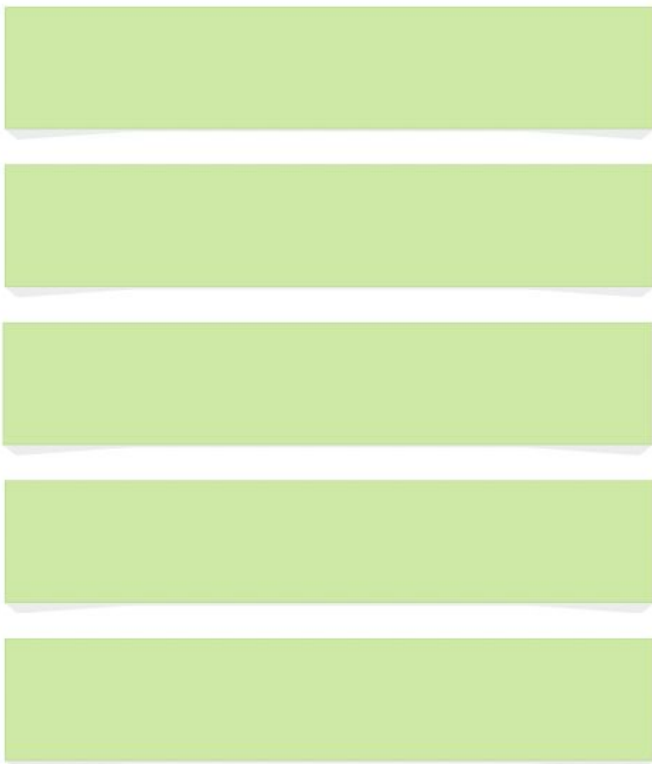
OCD lies and cheats to try and convince you it has something to do with reality. These will help you undo the elements of the OCD Story

# The Real Self

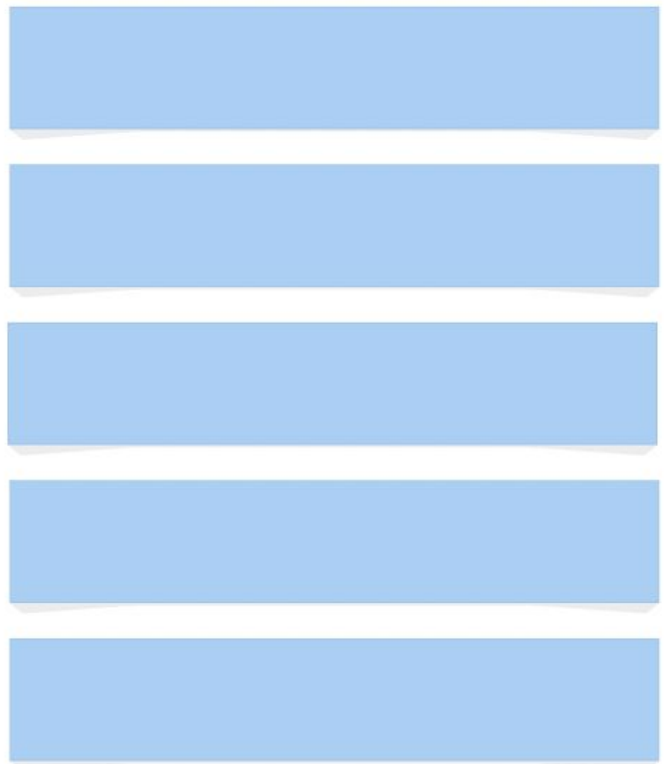
Your Real Self is the exact opposite of your OCD Self. In fact, all of your compulsions are completed in order to make sure you don't become your Feared (OCD) Self, and it probably took over your sense of self.

Now that you have been able to disconnect from the Feared Self it is time to bring your Real Self back to center stage! You will need to take time to re-discover your Real Self.

Actions I took today



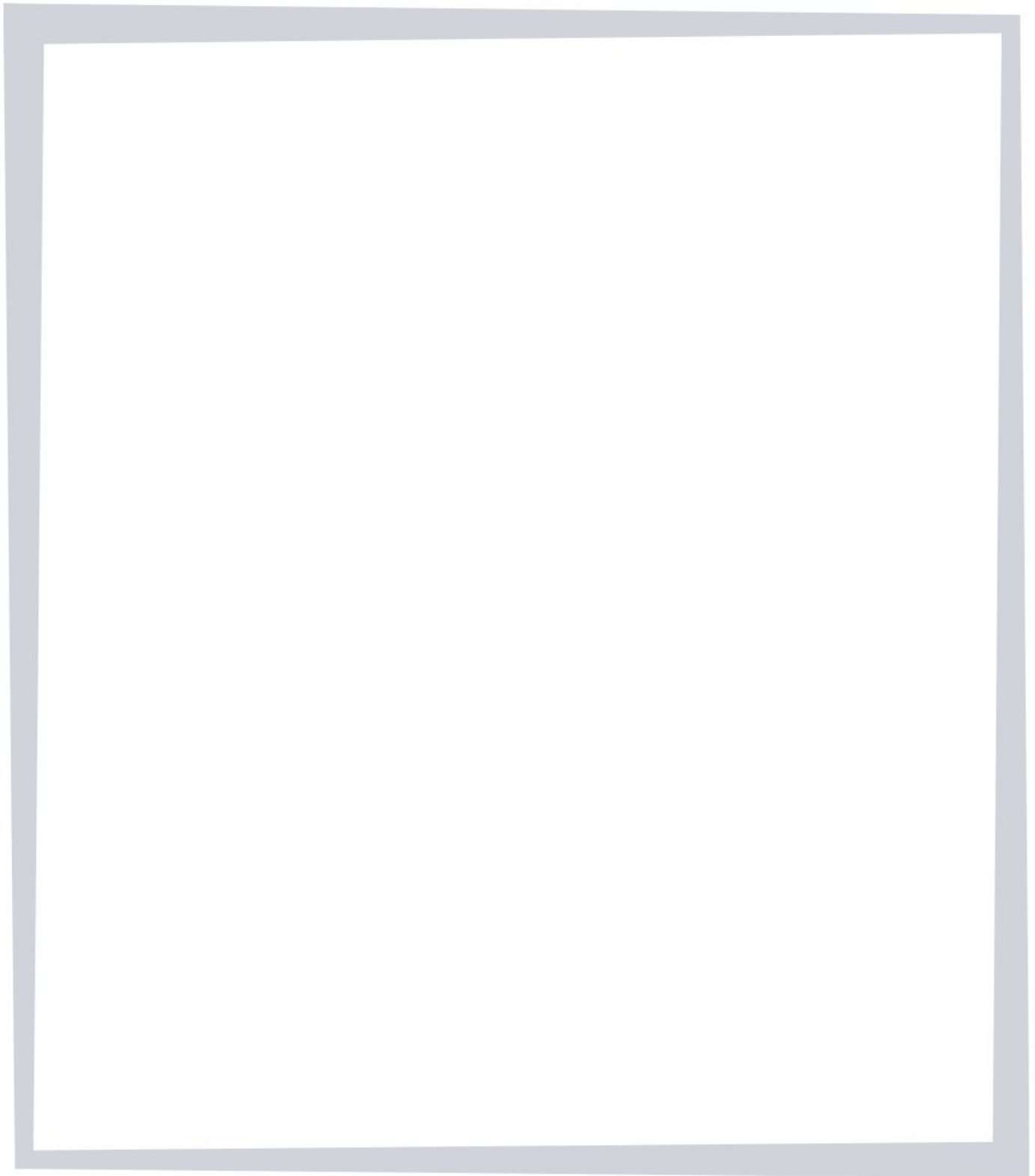
Qualities of people who do those things



Putting all of these attributes together starts to show who you really are



Now, write an autobiography highlighting your accomplishments and positive achievements in life

A large, empty rectangular box with a thick gray border, intended for writing an autobiography. The box is centered on the page and occupies most of the lower half of the document.



After writing and reading the autobiography, what do you think you would need to have done to become your Feared Self? Is there any chance you could even become your Feared Self?

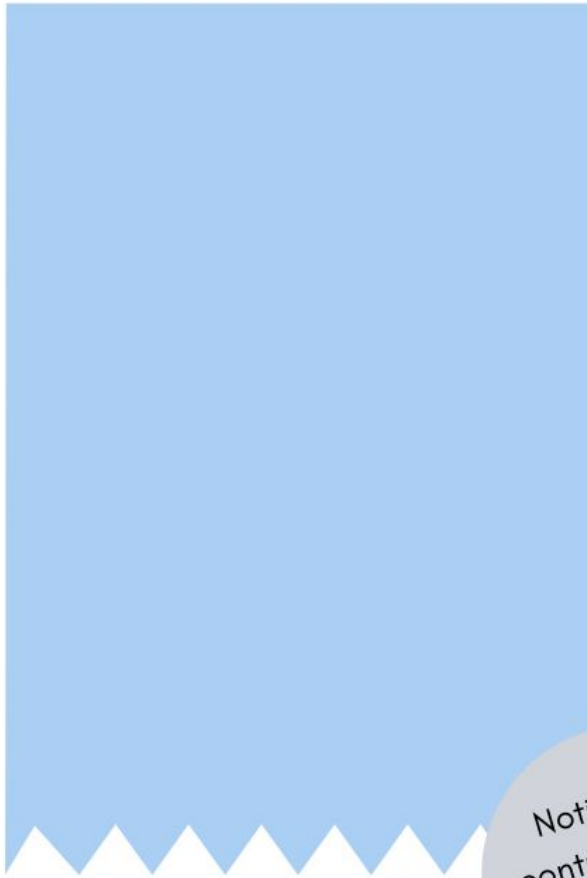


Consider all the parts of who you are.

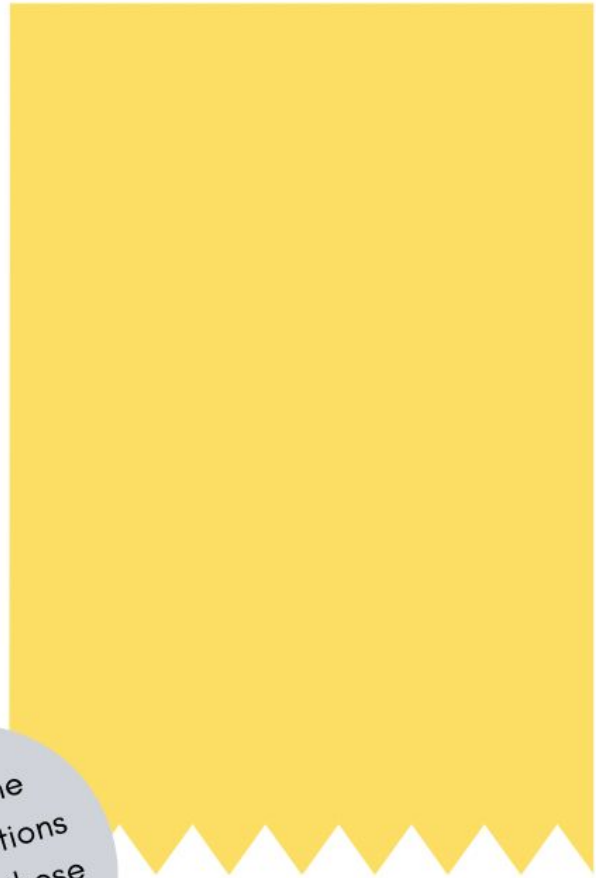
What are your goals? What do others say about me? What roles do I play? What am I good at? What do others appreciate about me? What challenges have I overcome? What makes me proud of myself?



## My Feared Self



## My Real Self



Notice the contradictions between these two?!

Keep it up by asking:

**"What does this action say about me and my authentic, Real Self?"**

### **IMPORTANT:**

Now that you have eliminated your OCD it may feel like a void has been left behind. Fill it up with your Real Self!

Your Feared Self is the opposite of your Real Self. Focus on your real resources and self to leave the Feared (OCD) Self behind.

# Moving On and Prevention Relapse

Identify specific things you have learned that have been especially helpful



Take some time and reflect on all of the progress you have made during your I-CBT journey.



## **The Ultimate Goals of I-CBT**

You give zero credibility to the doubt

You have no reactions (emotional or behavioral) to the doubt

None of your behavior, thinking or anticipating is driven by the doubt

You now react and use your sense in your old OCD situations as you do in any other situation

You plan ahead on the basis of the person you know you are, your Real Self

### **Main Causes of Slip Ups**

Lack of focus or attention

Be sure you are applying I-CBT with all of it's details

Your Current State

Maybe you feel tired, stressed, etc.

Unexpected Situations

These are usually stressful situations that create insecurity

### **Slipping Up "By Default"**

You must eliminate all safety behaviors! Some can slip thorough. Here are a few examples:

- Checking to see if OCD is there
- Avoiding certain info, topics, thoughts
- Seeking reassurance "to be sure"
- Repeating rituals
- Subtle "testing"

## Preventing Relapse

Identify future high risk situations, activities and events

Run through the doubt sequence that could occur

Rehearse stopping before you cross to bridge to your imagination

Be aware of situational characteristics that are likely to trigger your doubts (based on your Feared Self)

Key questions to help identify OCD Doubt:

1. Does this touch on my theme?
2. Is this doubt?
3. Do I experience that old OCD feeling?

(if the answers are yes, it is a doubt to be dismissed)

## If You Do Slip Up

Don't panic! This is part of the deal and it is a chance to learn

Retrace your steps. Where did the OCD take you and when did you cross into your imagination?

Was there anything particular going on? Maybe you were tired, stressed, preoccupied, etc.?

Exactly what made OCD able to grab you? Record for future reference.

Prevent OCD from grabbing you again by:

1. Being aware of the trigger
2. Rehearse resisting OCD
3. See yourself moving past the trigger in the here-and-now

(Keep doing this until you feel at least 80% confident in the here-and-now)

If you have managed to make it this far, you can do this and keep it up for good!

## **Living an I-CBT Life**

**Anticipate stressors that may affect your insecurities**

**Plan ahead for life events or situations that are likely to touch on your sensitive themes**

**Keep choosing to stay in the here-and-now. This will be an ongoing process!**

**Be sure to do non-OCD activities to check in with your Real Self**

**Consider yourself as someone without OCD and build your life and activities around your Real Self**