

Overview of I-CBT Treatment

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Adapted from O'Connor, K., & Aardema, F. (2011). Clinician's handbook for obsessive compulsive disorder: Inference-based therapy. John Wiley & Sons.

I-CBT

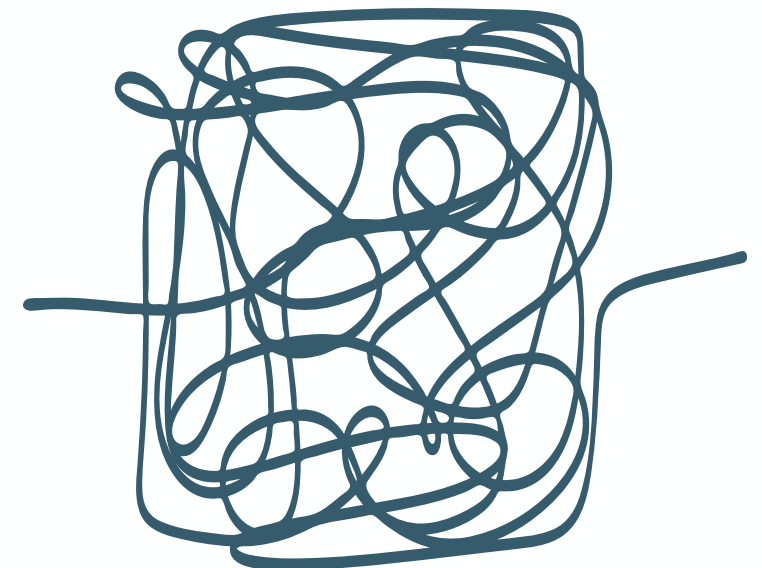
stands for Inference-Based Cognitive Behavior Therapy.

An **Inference** is a **Conclusion** we make
based on evidence and reasoning.

In OCD that reasoning process gets hijacked or mixed up,

leading to something we call

Inferential Confusion.



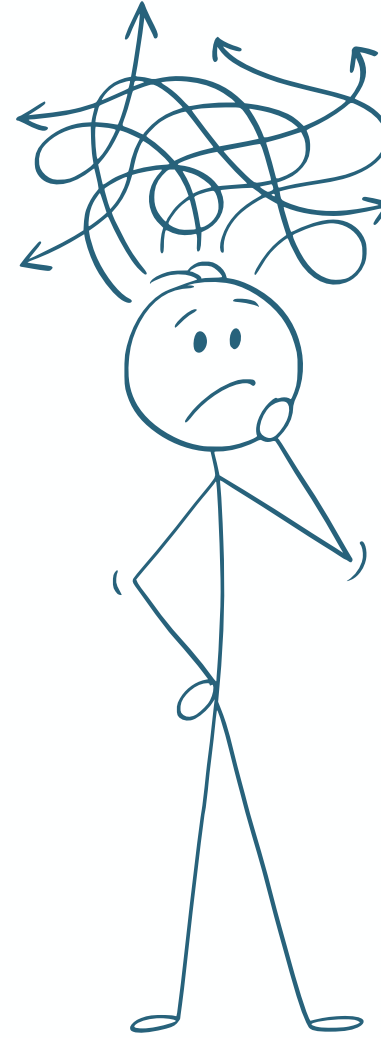
Inferential confusion

is the process of confusing
imagination with reality

on the basis of flawed
logic and reasoning

and

distrust of the senses and
of the self.



In OCD it results in
mistaking an

imagined possibility

for a

real probability.

In I-CBT we view the obsessional elements of OCD as
obsessional doubts.

Obsessional doubts are the result of

not trusting
the
information
you have

questioning
your senses

questioning
common
sense

questioning
yourself

Obsessional Doubts

show up in thoughts like

"what if...?"

"I could..."

"Maybe..."

"It's
possible..."

From the moment
a doubt occurs



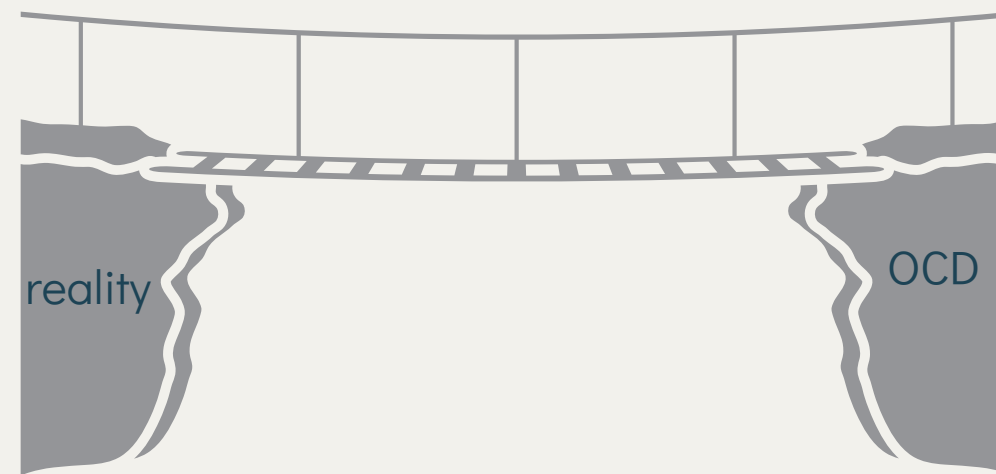
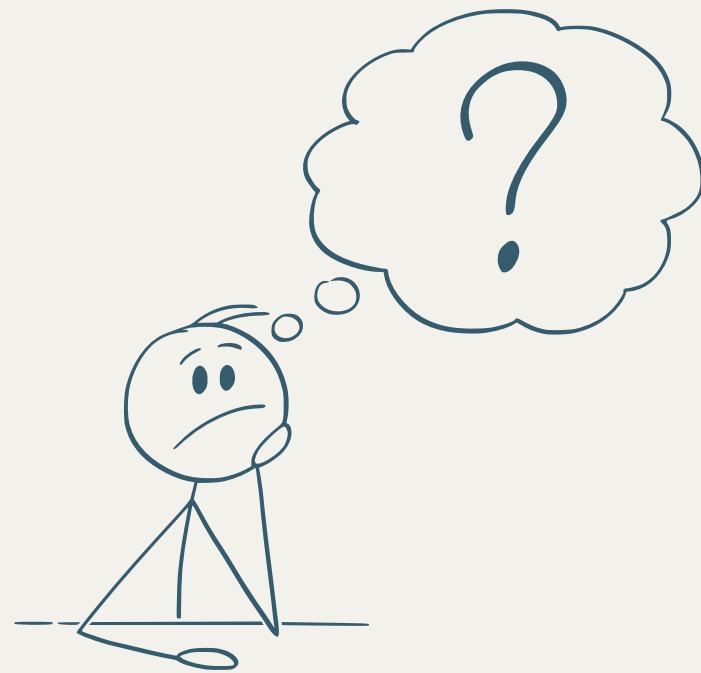
your mind
makes up an
imagined
possibility that
is scary or
repulsive to you



and you cross
over from the
world of the
here and now
(reality)



and get
absorbed into a
story about
what could be,
an imagined
possibility.



We call this imaginal absorption.

Just like with a good book or movie,

- it's a story that is put together in a way that makes sense to you,
- and is full of seemingly valid reasons and vivid details,
- woven into a story that is very real to you,
- so much so, you feel compelled to do something about it (compulsions and avoidance).



These doubts do not
just come out of
nowhere.



They are the result of
a particular kind of
reasoning process

and they come from
a very selective and
particular fear you
already have about
yourself or who you
could become if you
don't do your
compulsions.



In I-CBT

we take the time to slow down and understand these processes:



- the process of how obsessional doubts lead to compulsions,
- recognizing this crossover point, where you leave reality and become absorbed in your imagination,
- the reasoning process that makes them seem valid and plausible, and how you have been tricked by faulty reasoning,
- and the underlying fear about yourself that leads to generating these doubts in the first place.

Some more specific steps



We highlight the differences between reasonable doubts and obsessional doubts, and show you how you use reasoning differently in regular life versus when it comes to your OCD themes.

In regular life, you use the information your senses and common sense are giving you in reality (your perception) to resolve the doubt, make decisions, and move on.



In OCD, you tend to distrust your senses and common sense, and look to hypothetical possibilities in order to get a resolution that cannot be found, keeping you stuck and growing more and more doubt.

We ask questions about the selectivity of your OCD themes.

Why this fear and not that?

Why do you trust your senses in this situation but not that?

Why do you worry about X but not Y?

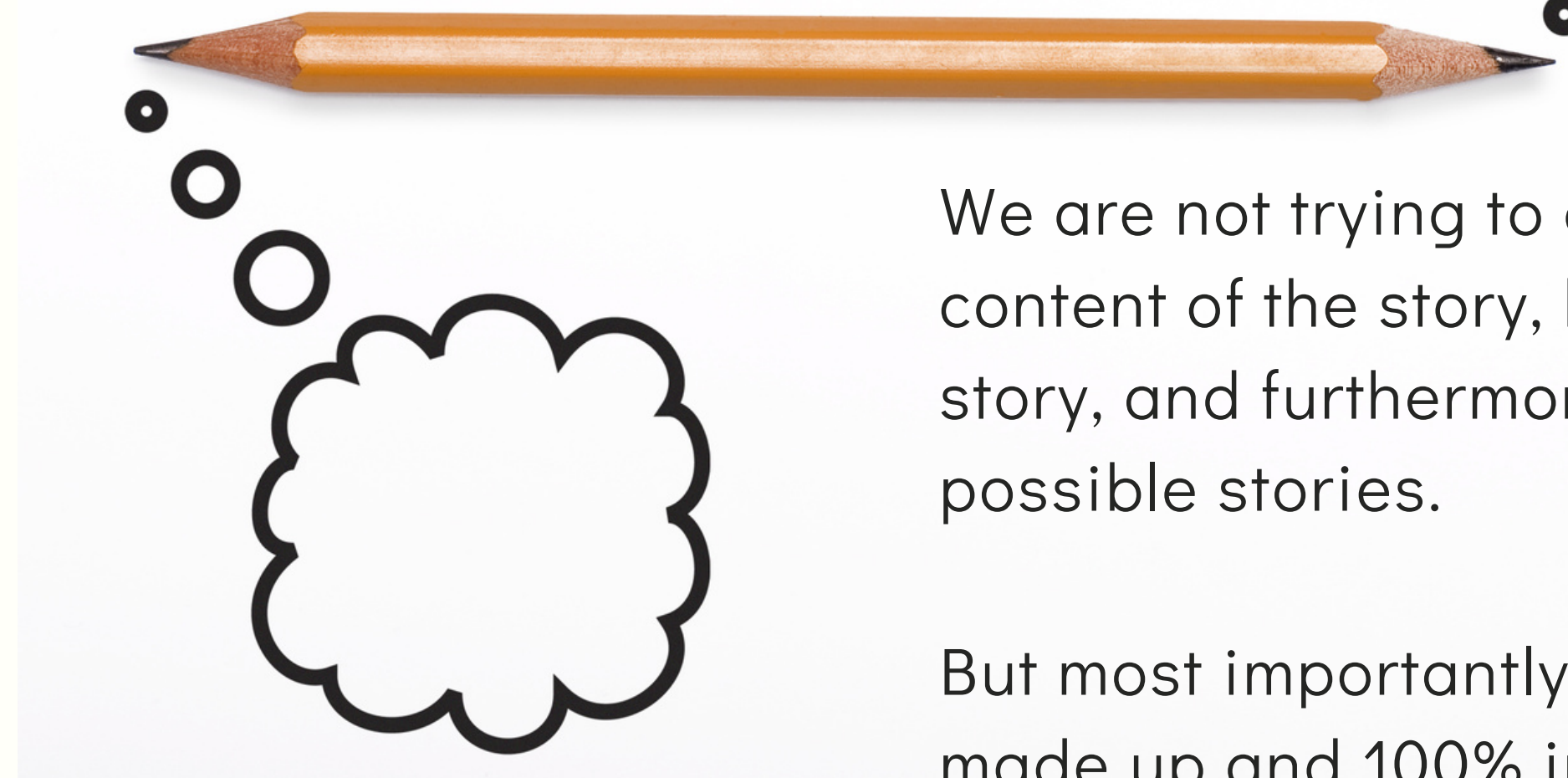
Understanding these specific, individualized elements, helps you understand that doubts are generated within your imagination, based on your feared self.

They all come from the same place. They are born from the same fear and are generated within your imagination, not from reality.



We delve into the nature of stories and look at how different stories we tell ourselves lead us to feel differently and to do different things.

This is how humans operate, on the basis of narratives.



We are not trying to argue with the content of the story, but to see it as a story, and furthermore only one of many possible stories.

But most importantly, a story that is 100% made up and 100% irrelevant to the here and now in your life.

Once we have a good understanding of all these processes, we can:

Learn to use and trust your senses in the ways you do in your life not related to your OCD fears



Learn to restore trust in yourself- show yourself that the person your OCD says you are or could become is actually the opposite of who you really are- the person that already shows up in your daily life, doing the things that you already do.



Recognize how OCD has tricked you, in order to not be tricked by it any longer.

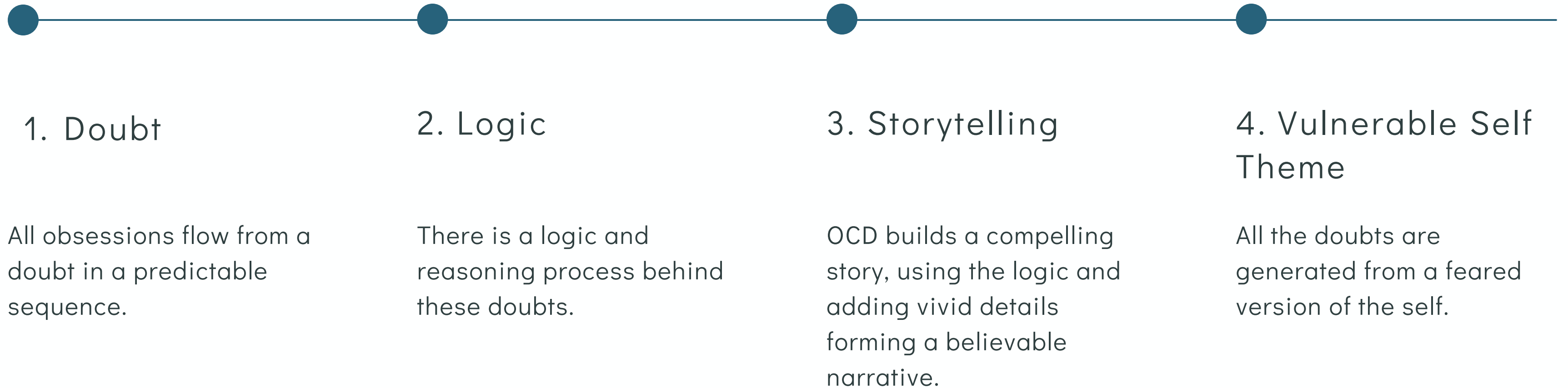


Resolve the doubts, so you no longer need to do compulsions.



Stay in reality, here and now, instead of getting sucked into the OCD bubble. You will learn how to recognize when you are crossing the bridge that leads to the bubble, and learn to stay in reality instead.

I-CBT Process Overview



I-CBT Process Overview



5. Imagination

OCD doubts live in the imagination, not in reality. They lack direct evidence in the here and now.

6. Irrelevance

All the reasons and conclusions based on the reasons are entirely irrelevant to the here and now.

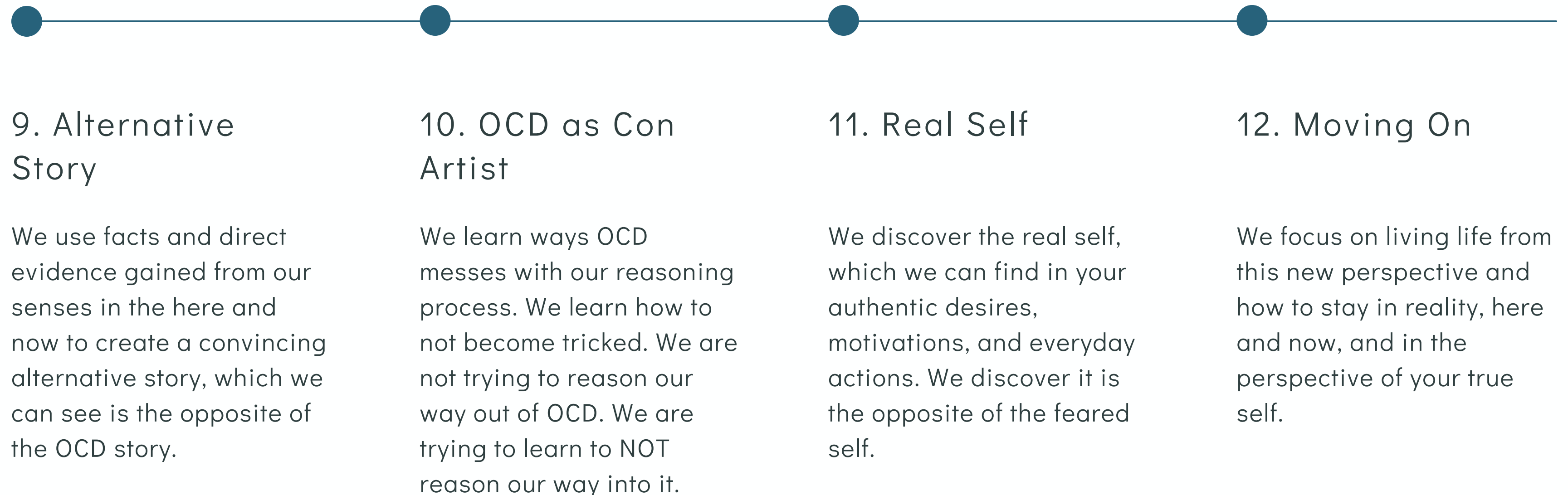
7. OCD Bubble

All obsessions persist within the bubble, which is in the imagination, dissociated from reality, dissociated from the senses and the self.

8. Reality Sensing

We return to using our senses and common sense to stay in reality and out of the bubble. We learn to use our perception as opposed to imagination.

I-CBT Process Overview



“Living with OCD is sort of like trusting our doubt and doubting our reality.
I-CBT helps us trust our reality and doubt our doubt.”
- Theresa Chiu, LICSW, Olympic OCD

“I-CBT holds out the possibility of restoring trust in one’s perception, one’s memory, and even one’s self. Discovering or rediscovering trust in oneself offers a much higher goal for recovery than learning to tolerate being uncertain about who we are.”
- Carl Robbins, LCPC, Anxiety and Stress Disorders Institute of Maryland

Questions? Or for additional info

I-CBT Online
<https://icbt.online/>

This intro was created by Mary Hosbrough, LCPC
<https://www.autonomyalliancecounseling.com/>

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