



Module 6:

OCD Doubt is 100% Irrelevant

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Source: O'Connor, K., & Aardema, F. (2012). Clinician's handbook for obsessive compulsive disorder: Inference-based therapy. Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell.

Normal Doubt vs. Obsessional Doubt

Normal Doubt

- Has direct evidence from our senses and common sense in the here and now.
- Occurs within context
- Doubts are quickly resolved (*without compulsions*)

Obsessional Doubt

- Built in our imagination
- The story comes from within you (notice how your client hears this message - empowering, confused, shame, etc...)
- Occurs without direct evidence in the here and now. Not supported by the senses.

Amanda Petrik-Gardner, LCPC, LPC, LIMHP
presentation on 6/17/22, Module 5: OCD is 100% Imaginary.

Normal Doubt to Obsessional within a week

Normal doubt



Week later



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Irrelevancy of OCD Doubts

- “the doubt is impossible precisely because it goes against the senses.”
- “it is 100% irrelevant to reality.”
- “with the realization that the obsessional doubt is 100% irrelevant, the OCD and its cognitive behavioral sequences are resolved.”

Pg. 165 of Clinician’s Handbook



Goal of Module 6

- When the client finds the process that obsessional doubt is not attached to sensory data in the here and now, **the doubt will lose a lot of credibility.**
- When doubt is seen as irrelevant, the cognitive and behavioral sequences are resolved.

Anatomy of Obsessional Doubt

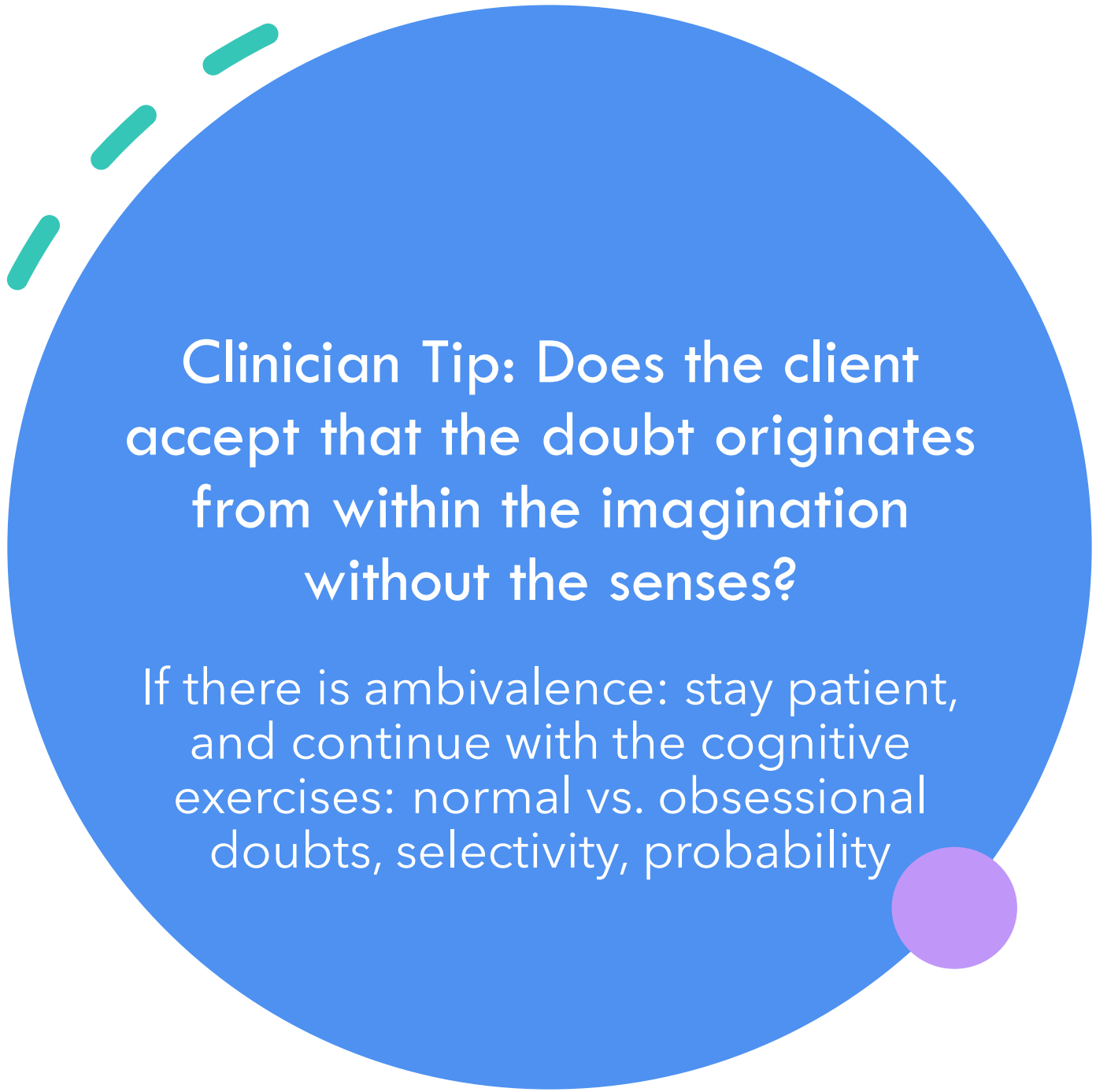
- Generated subjectively and removed from data from the here and now.
 - Examples of meteors, ceiling falling
- It cannot be resolved like normal doubt.
- It goes further into the doubt, under the impression that this will solve the doubt (but it leaves more absorption in the imagination and reasoning errors).
- Example: cannot chose a flight because I could be responsible for all those on the plane being harmed.

Process of
making
obsessional
doubts
irrelevant

Possible vs. probable

Selectivity of Doubt

Realizing Irrelevance



Clinician Tip: Does the client
accept that the doubt originates
from within the imagination
without the senses?

If there is ambivalence: stay patient,
and continue with the cognitive
exercises: normal vs. obsessional
doubts, selectivity, probability

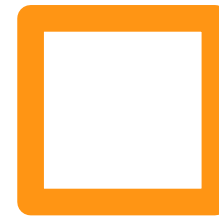
Possible vs. Probable

Is the fact that something is possible justify the obsessional doubt or make it relevant?

Does this doubt warrant checking, washing, worrying.....?

Without evidence in the here and now, the doubt becomes irrelevant, AND it can still be possible.

What is wrong with the obsessional doubt story?



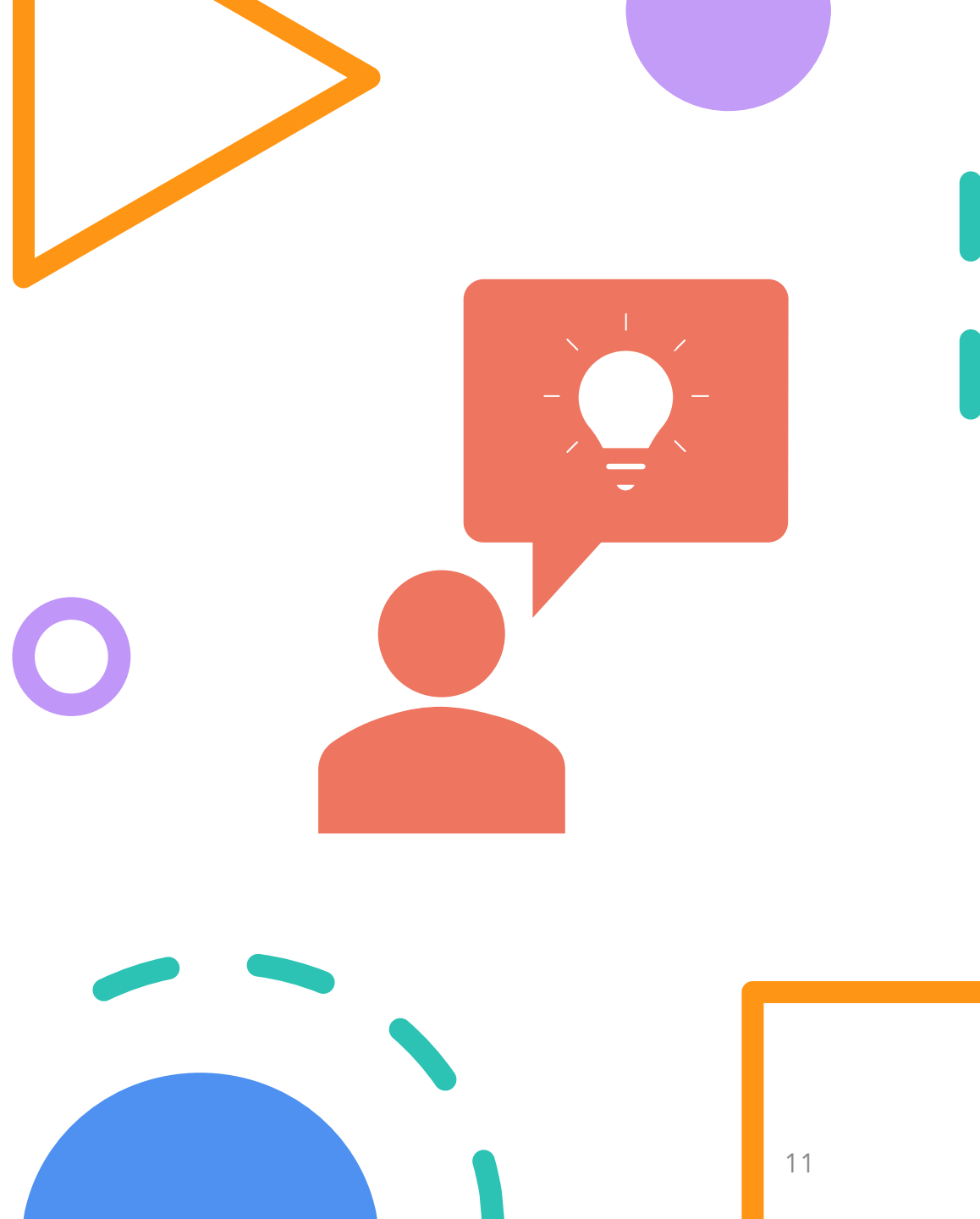
But there is evidence for my doubt


We are looking with the clients at how the obsessional doubt is constructed and supported.



Clinician Tip: Highlight for the client
the imagination and lack of sensory
data in the here and now

You don't have to prove that their
doubt is irrelevant.





Consider starting with your client's non-OCD content to build this awareness.

Help your client to notice if they are relying on possibility to support their doubt.



Selectivity of the Doubt

What would you need to happen in reality for such a doubt to be relevant?

Can you think of some other places where you feel confident or where you don't doubt your senses?

Compare the non-OCD vs. OCD situations and understand the reasons that the client acts differently

- In non-OCD context - you have trust with what you perceive through your senses.
- **AH-HA moments - reasoning is selective.**

Clinical Example

Bathroom faucet

- In my bathroom at home, I have to touch the handle either 3, 8, or 26 times so it will turn off.
- I have to make sure it's turned off.
- How do you know a faucet is off?
- Not every faucet is treated the same... notice the SELECTIVITY

Other faucets

- How do you turn off other faucets?
- At school, it automatically shuts off so I wash my hands and just leave.
- At airports, they are the best, you don't have to turn them off. I don't give it a second thought.
- At my aunt's house, I turn it off once. Of course, I know it's off the water is not running anymore.

Let's see the doubt

- Cut up twister into individual circles
- Each color has a meaning, and the number of dots also help with the sequencing
 - Green is the real event that has triggered the client.
 - Yellow is cross-over point.
 - Red is the imaginal absorption.
 - Blue is the overlay of doubt.
- You can move these dots and help your client to see the aspects of obsessional doubt vs. normal doubt.
- Normal doubt is a very short sequence of dots - remember it's resolved quickly.



Neutral Practice

- Take a cookie and offer it to a client.
- They open the container and have the cookie in their hand and now add the what if possibilities while looking at the cookie.
 - What if someone spit in the batter?
 - What if there are broken eggshells in the cookie?
 - What if someone stepped on it before putting it in the box?
- Ask your client what makes these What if stories irrelevant?
- Do you rely on possibility without direct evidence from the here and now?



Client Quiz 6

1. Possibilities that **justify a particular obsessional doubt** are Not relevant (B)
2. Obsessional doubt is completely irrelevant All of these (D)
 - Because there is **0% justification in the here and now** for the doubt.
 - Because the **doubt originates 100% from the imagination.**
 - Because the **doubt comes entirely from you rather than reality.**
3. When reasoning about a practical state of affairs in reality, possibilities should be considered only when ... **there is at least some basis in the here and now to justify the possibility** (B)
4. Your reasoning about situations unrelated to the OCD All of these (D)
 - Shows that you **reason differently from the OCD situation.**
 - Involves possibilities** as well.
 - Includes **possibilities that have some justification in the here and now.**
5. Which of the following is true? None of them (D)
 - All is possible, so I should consider all possibilities (Nope)
 - Inventing possibilities keeps me safe. (Not in this context)
 - The possible and the real are the same (Nope)
6. Obsessional behavior can be completely resolved if **I realize that the doubt is irrelevant and dismiss it** (D)



Thank you

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6/24/2022

OCD doubt is 100% irrelevant

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