

18 Common Mental Compulsions

- **Mental Chanting**
 - Saying specific words, numbers, or phrases in your mind
- **Counting**
 - Counting words, letters, numbers, objects, etc. in your mind
- **Neutralizing**
 - Replacing an unwanted thought with a different image, word, phrase, etc.
- **Praying**
 - Repeatedly and compulsively praying, typically in a specific way (*note that this is not the same as prayer as part of a spiritual practice*)
- **Mentally Checking**
 - Examining thoughts, emotions, reactions, behaviors, etc. in the moment
- **Body Scanning**
 - Mentally checking for certain sensations, pains, feelings, etc. in the body
- **Mentally Reviewing**
 - Examining situations from the past to check that something unwanted didn't happen, to check for accuracy of memory, or to determine meaning
- **Mentally Rehearsing**
 - Preparing compulsively for possible future scenarios (expected or otherwise)
- **“Figuring Out”**
 - Trying to figure out the meaning of specific thoughts, images, sensations, emotions, etc.
 - Trying to figure out life problems or existential concerns that are unresolvable
- **Theorizing**
 - Hypothesizing about theoretical events and potential “What if...?” scenarios
- **Rationalizing**
 - Repeatedly reviewing rational ways of looking at an obsession to try to justify letting it go
- **Self-Reassurance**
 - Repeating reassuring statements (such as, “It’s all going to be okay.”) or positive affirmations in a ritualized way
- **Fantasizing**
 - Repeatedly imagining that all of your symptoms and problems magically disappear
- **Compulsive Flooding or Mental Testing**
 - Reassuring yourself that your obsessions are actually OCD by intentionally flooding yourself with the unwanted thoughts and testing for anxiety or another painful reaction
- **Self-Punishment**
 - Criticizing yourself in response to intrusive thoughts in order to prove that they are unwanted and that you feel “appropriately” guilty
- **Memory Hoarding**
 - Carefully saving memories or information in case you need to remember them later
- **Ruminating**
 - Rehashing a resolved concept to re-process and confirm it is actually resolved
- **List Making**
 - Mentally repeating or making lists of items or categories