

## UNDERSTANDING EXPOSURE/RESPONSE PREVENTION THERAPY

A main component in confronting obsessional thoughts is by utilizing Exposure/Response Prevention therapy. The individual deliberately exposing themselves to particular feared thoughts or images earmarks exposure therapy. Therapy is conducted by means of physical contact with feared obsession and/or through confrontation of obsessions by means of mental imagination. The cognitive approach of therapy is to address the maladaptive thinking of the individual and behaviorally for the individual to embrace the unwanted thoughts, images, or urges. Compulsions are a common coping mechanism to deal with their OCD. Compulsions can either be mental or physical in nature. Mental compulsions usually consist of asking for reassurance in order to cancel out the unwanted thoughts. Mental checking is a very common type of compulsion. For example, if a person thinks that they have harmed someone, they might mull over and over in their thoughts different scenarios that may have occurred and try to come to a point that they can somehow figure out the "truth". Dr. Lancer has pioneered the discipline of mental exposure therapy. Thus, he provides the individual with creative and instrumental techniques that can be used to reach out and grasp one's mental obsessions. It is done through a technique, which is a variation of imaging. The person learns how to focus oneself into a "meditation" state that puts them square in line with their mental obsessions. Most basically stated exposure response therapy aims at preventing the individual from chasing the unwanted thought in the first place. The more and more the person prevents them from thinking through the thought and begins to deal with the occurring anxiety, they come to understand that the thought is like a bubble and that it is full of nothing.