

OCF

Newsletter

OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE FOUNDATION

Every Meeting is a Learning Experience

RITA NEWMAN, MD, SPEAKS AT NJOCF MARCH MEETING ON MEDICATION

A special disclaimer. NJ OCF does not specifically endorse any of the statements made in this article. Reading this article should not lead to any layperson making decisions about the type or dosage of his/her medication(s). Nothing takes the place of the active involvement of your psychiatrist in the usage of your OCD medication(s). If you have any questions regarding this article, or would like to investigate making medication changes, please first contact your psychiatrist to discuss this- do NOT make any changes without his/her recommendation and supervision- Editor

On Monday night, March 11, Dr. Rita Newman, a psychiatrist from the Short Hills, New Jersey area, spoke at the New Jersey Affiliate of the Obsessive Compulsive Foundation's quarterly meeting. As always, the meeting took place at UMDNJ on Busch Campus at Rutgers University in Piscataway (New Brunswick area). Dr. Newman gave a wonderful and quite exhaustive review of the state of the art of medications for the treatment of OCD. A few of the attendees approached us separately and mentioned that they felt this was one of the most informative quarterly meetings they had been to.

Dr. Newman explained that while a large percentage of patients respond to medication for OCD, many are still "non-responders," a term which can be divided into two categories: "treatment resistant" patients have failed to respond after a trial of a single medication, while "treatment refractory" patients fail to respond to two or more trials of meds. She then went through the specific medications most used for OCD treatment in great detail, including their trade and generic (chemical names), how they effect the nerve cells in the brain, their side effects, and their therapeutic dosages.

These medications included the stan-

dard Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors (SSRIs), known to most laypeople as Prozac, Paxil, Luvox, Zoloft, and Celexa*, as well as those medications that are only partially SSRIs, including Anafranil and Effexor. Dr. Newman explained that while the SSRI medications are classified as anti-depressants and are prescribed for Major Depression as well as OCD, the therapeutic dosages for OCD are typically twice as high. Dr. Newman went out of her way to emphasize several points. One was, **DO NOT STOP TAKING MEDICATION ALL AT ONCE.** She reports that this can result in what she refers to as "discontinuation syndrome." It is important to wean slowly off of your medication under the direct supervision of your psychiatrist. Another point that she emphasized was, **GIVE THE MEDICATION TIME TO WORK.** For some of these medications, and for some patients, you might need to wait several MONTHS before getting the full therapeutic effect. Thirdly, Dr. Newman suggested that, when going to a new psychiatrist, or any physician for that matter, **MAKE YOURSELF A MEDICAL RESUME,** and bring it with you to the first meeting, or send it to the doctor's office in advance of your first scheduled appointment. These medical resumes should include: all illnesses you have had; the names, addresses, and telephone numbers of the doctors you have seen; the places and dates of any hospitalizations you have had; and the names, dosages, and time periods for any medications you have been prescribed. Dr. Newman explained that the pharmacies that have used should have records of most of this information.

In addition to the medications listed

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WILLIAM GORDON, PHD, TO PRESENT AT NEXT QUARTERLY MEETING

We are pleased to announce that our next quarterly meeting, which will be held on the Rutgers University Busch Campus in Piscataway will feature William Gordon, Ph.D. as our guest speaker. Dr Gordon is a licensed psychologist who has a private practice in Montclair, NJ. He specializes in the cognitive behavioral treatment of OCD and other anxiety disorders. Dr. Gordon also is a Clinical Instructor of Psychiatry at UMDNJ, and serves as an expert witness in disability determination hearings of the Social Security Administration. He has made several presentations to different professional and lay groups about OCD, and has contributed OCF newsletter. Dr. Gordon will be present on certain aspects of OCD. His learning objectives are outlined as the following: 1.) Learning how to recognize OCD in its obvious and disguised forms. 2.) Learning how to avoid fruitless arguments with OCD. 3.) Recognizing common mistakes in applying Exposure-Response Prevention (ERP). 4.) Discussion of the family's role in treatment- do's and don'ts.

Please join us in what promises to be a wonderful and educational program!

LOCATION REMINDER FOR JUNE 10, 2002, MEETING!

The second quarterly meeting of 2002, will be held on *Monday evening, June 10, at 7:00 p.m., in our new location.* The location is: **University Behavioral Healthcare Center (UBHC), Room D205 on the Rutgers University Busch Campus in Piscataway, New Jersey.** The actual address is **671 Hoes Lane.** Directions are inside!!!

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Once again the National OC Foundation is holding its Annual Conference. I sincerely urge anyone interested in gleaning a wealth of information in one weekend to make every effort to attend.

Anyone interested in family suite accommodations in the area of the hotel, please call me at 732-828-0099.

Looking forward to seeing you in Philadelphia!

CONTACTS

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YOU CAN HELP..

With production cost and postage rates climbing and our mailing list growing rapidly, we would like to mention that any voluntary contribution would aid us to keep this Central NJ Affiliate newsletter going.

- Board of Directors

\$

Any Comments?????

The staff of the Newsletter encourages all comments on our published articles. Also, any letters and articles, which you wish to submit for our publications, are welcome.

Disclaimer

The information in this newsletter should not be taken in lieu of proper medical and/or mental health professional services. The Board of Directors of the New Jersey Affiliate of the Obsessive Compulsion Foundation, as well as all other volunteers involved in the development and distribution of this newsletter, do not endorse any particular viewpoint or information presented here. Again, nothing takes the place of proper medical/mental health professional services.

NJAOCF MISSION

The Affiliate is a community of those who have an interest in Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and whose goals are:

- 1) To educate the public and professional communities about the disorder.
- 2) To support individuals afflicted and their significant others.
- 3) To support research into the causes and treatments of this disorder.

NJAOCF OFFICERS

Ina Spero - President
Dr. Allen Weg - Vice President, Newsletter Editor
Jeanne Yarrow - Secretary
Julian Spero - Treasurer
Nicole Torella - Newsletter Editor

SPECIAL THANKS

We would like to take a moment to thank COSTCO - Bridgewater for their donation.

Thank you to all of the individuals who have given generously to the Affiliate.

NJAOCF 3RD ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Sunday, October 20, 2002

10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

Marriott Hotel, Somerset, NJ

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

Dr. Tamar Chansky

Dr. Chansky has written the book “FREEING YOUR CHILD”
and will be speaking on that subject and more

CEU credits pending for social workers and teachers

WIN A FREE VACATION TO FLORIDA!

(OK, REALLY A CALL FOR VOLUNTEERS!)

Ok, now that we've got your attention, we'd like to make our quarterly pitch for volunteers. Since we get so little response to these requests, we thought that maybe we would ask to see if people might help us out with very specific things.

We need people to deliver our quarterly newsletters to specific facilities in your area. Counseling centers and mental health clinics would be the first choice, of course, but also hospitals, libraries, multi-physician practices, etc. The idea is for you to make yourself known to an individual or individuals at these facilities, speak to them for a minute about NJ-OCF, and ask them to make the newsletters available to the professionals who work there, and/or to the public who frequent their facility. Just contact Ina, and we will send you a bunch of newsletters, then just let us know the names, addresses and telephone numbers of the facilities where you left the newsletters. Even if you go to just 2-3 facilities, it would help us get the news out about NJ-OCF. Thanks!

DON'T MISS THE NINTH ANNUAL OCF CONFERENCE

August 9 - 11, 2002

WYNDHAM FRANKLIN PLAZA

PHILADELPHIA, PA

HIGHLIGHTS

Dr. Michael Jenike “Q & A on Medication and Treatments”

Dr. Pierre Blier, Keynote Speaker, “A Step Towards More Effective Pharmacotherapies”

Drs. Edna Foa and Martin Franklin, CBT training seminars for Treatment Providers

Centerpiece seminar on “Pure Obsessions”

Centerpiece seminar on “Body Dismorphic Disorder”

Town Meeting on “Recovery”

Support Groups

G.O.A.L. Groups

Virtual Camping Trip

Film Festival

Art Contest

Seminars, Workshops, and Activity Suite with supervised programs for kids/adolescents

Reception

More than 60 workshops, seminars, presentations and support groups

**For more information and a Registration Brochure, call
The Obsessive Compulsive Foundation at
203-315-2190**

This conference is for people with OCD
(adults, teenagers, and children), their families and friends and the
mental health professionals who treat them
(CEUs Available)

ALLI'S COLUMN

Sometimes in mid panic attack I feel alone. No matter where you are you always need someone by your side to help you through it. Here's a known fact: parents don't understand. My parents tell me "you brought it on yourself" (the panic attack). Sometimes you feel like you can't control your panic attacks. The denial of those closest to you can hurt the most.

Outlets. Something you can take your anger and panic out on. Write something. Your parents don't have to understand but you need to understand yourself. Talk to someone. Hey, I am not saying I am an expert at all, but you can talk to me. Allioop8@aol.com

This week I was surprised to see that someone did come to me for support. I was comforted to know that there was someone to talk to. I asked him the big parent question and he stated: "Because when you have OCD you feel so alone in the world, that no one understands, but having someone there for you whenever you feel down will help you cope with that. So now that I have told you a little about me, how were your parents with your OCD?"

To answer your question: My parents still don't understand. It takes a lot of getting used to. Granted, I have been patient, but sometimes I wish I could put them in my shoes.

Till next time

~Alli
Allioop8@aol.com

WANT TO GO TO THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND HAVE A TIGHT BUDGET?

THERE MAY BE A SOLUTION.... KEEP READING!

The Ninth Annual OCD Conference is being held in Philadelphia, PA, this summer from August 9 to 11, 2002. The registration fee for the conference is \$150.00 for the entire weekend, but even though that is for three days, it is still very expensive and may be a financial burden for some. But, keep reading, because there may be a simple solution to the problem, if you are willing to volunteer some time.

There is a need for Room Monitors throughout the weekend. A Room Monitor is one who would be in attendance of a workshop, introduce the speaker, assist with giving out handouts during the presentation, make sure the speaker has a full glass of water on hand, and maybe give directions to attendees trying to find their way to different workshops. The conference coordinator is looking for people from NJ to assist as Room Monitors. It is a first come, first serve basis!! You will be required to attend an orientation meeting/training session to learn of your responsibilities for the weekend, and to receive your ID badge and train. In exchange for working as a Room Monitor, the \$150.00 registration fee is waived!

For more details on how to apply to be a Room Monitor, call Ina at 732-828-0099.

Website Update

The website name has changed- it is now www.NJOCF.org (we dropped the "A"). Most of this newsletter will be posted at the site, as is the previous newsletter. You can also find information about the upcoming NJ Affiliate annual conference, videos for sale, and general information about the organization. A chat room is now operational, and you can email us from the website.

TRUST

by Allen H. Weg, EdD

Another is a series of metaphorical stories that illustrate issues related to the disorder of OCD and its treatment, by Allen H. Weg, EdD

It's funny how the tiniest moments in time can stay with you decades after the moment has passed. When I was 8 years old, I had my appendix taken out. About three weeks after my discharge from the hospital, my mother took me to our family physician to have the stitches removed, as this was before the time surgeons regularly used those operative stitches that just melt away on their own.

I wasn't particularly nervous about going to the doctor, because I hadn't really thought much about it, but then I found myself sitting alone with the doctor in his office, with him holding a pair of tweezers, headed for my abdomen. He had said, "Don't worry, it won't hurt," but as he approached me, I pushed his hand away and said I was afraid. He reiterated, "Don't worry, Allen, it really won't hurt at all." As he approached again, I recoiled with what I imagine must have been terror on my face.

My doctor, who was our family physician since before I was born, slid back his chair, which was on rollers, about a foot or so from me. He took a slow breath, and then, looking directly into my eyes, said in a slow, calm voice, "Allen, have I ever told you that something wasn't going to hurt when it ended up hurting? Have I ever lied to you about something hurting you?" My mind started to search.

I thought of several times when he had told me in advance that a needle was going to pinch, or that removing a bandage would cause some burning. I even remembered once, when I needed to get a particularly large injection (I can't now remember what it was for), that he very clearly warned me that it would probably hurt more than a little bit, and that if I wanted to, I could yell out my favorite song while he gave me the

shot because he thought it might help. It did hurt, and he was right, the singing helped (the Beatles' "Do you want to know a secret," in case you were wondering.). As I searched my mind, I also realized that there were times when he had performed a procedure of one kind or another on me, and had told me that it wouldn't hurt, and I could not remember even one instance when it did.

In these same moments, I remember wondering why I didn't trust what he was saying given his history of his being so honest with me. It was then that I realized that my mother, who was from an older school of thought, would often tell me that something would not hurt when in fact it ended up being quite painful. There was the time she put this spray on one of my scrapes, and her promise of no pain was followed by this intense burning sensation. On another occasion, she told me that I would feel only the slightest tug as she pulled out a splinter. It ended up hurting like hell. It was then that I made the cognitive jump to the realization that not ALL grownups misrepresented the truth about the prospect of pain. My mom didn't often tell the truth, but my doctor always did.

In that moment of realization, in that second of recognition that this was my doctor, and not my mother, and that therefore I could trust him completely when he said it would not hurt when he would pull out my stitches, in that tiny slice of time so many decades ago, I remember clearly the feeling of the fear leaving my body, as if I were a beach ball deflating. In completely turning myself over into his hands, the struggle ended. I remember feeling my muscles loosen up, my breathing becoming more calm and regular, and my heart slowing down.

Trust was the prescription I received from my doctor that day. It was trust that allowed me to give up a defensive, protective stance, submitting myself to what lie before me with the calming thought that it would all be ok. This is

the challenge that OCD sufferers face in their quest for dominance over their disorder.

When an OCD sufferer is faced with a behavioral exposure exercise, trust plays an important role in determining the intensity and duration of his or her anxiety response. So often clients talk to me about their thoughts and feelings in those moments before facing an exposure experience. "This will be more than I can bear...I will be overwhelmed at a later time because of what I will do here, and then it will be too late or difficult to fix or undo." What they lack is trust. Trust that their own bodies and minds are betraying them. Trust that the therapist knows the OCD inside of them even better than they do, at least with regards to how it will respond to treatment.

If I can learn to trust that "it's just the OCD," what is generally called "labeling the OCD," then I greatly influence the speed of my habituation and desensitization. If I can believe that what I am thinking, and the fear that I am feeling, are merely symptoms of my disorder, symptoms that will decrease even more quickly than it feels possible, then I will more easily move forward into the exposure experience, with less conflict and reservation. If I can give up the perceived control that my defensive stance is somehow protecting me from some imminent danger, then I can relax. If I can give myself completely over to trust, then I can let go of the fear, and move through my recovery in less time, and with less emotional pain.

Oh, and by the way, it didn't hurt a bit.

Dr. Weg, Vice President of the OCF New Jersey Affiliate, runs an independent practice called Stress and Anxiety Services of New Jersey in the East Brunswick area. He can be reached at 732-329-1378, or see his website at www.StressAndAnxiety.com.

WANT TO HAVE A SUPPORT GROUP IN YOUR AREA? WE CAN HELP!

If you look at the back of this Newsletter, you will see that there is only a small handful of support groups for OCD around the state. It is one of the goals of NJAOCF to help create more of these groups. We at NJAOCF receive at least a couple of phone calls every month asking for support groups in areas of New Jersey where there are none. Northern counties and southern counties are especially devoid of groups.

If you are interested in having a group in your area, we can help. Here's how:

1) If you want to have a group, you need to find a place to meet. Local churches, synagogues, libraries, high schools, hospitals, and community mental health centers are good places to find free rooms. If you say you will be working with the NJ Affiliate of the OC Foundation, it might also give you some "clout."

2) Determine the day and time- this will in part be determined by room space availability- no more than twice a month is needed, and once a month is often a good place to start. An hour and 15 minutes or an hour and a half is usually the length.

3) Contact us. Call Ina Spero at 732- 828-0099. We can put your name and contact number on our website and in our Newsletter. We will announce the formation of your group at our quarterly meetings. We will help to put out the word. You can also do your part by letting local mental health professionals and facilities know about the group (sometimes this means going door to door with a flyer). Decide whether this is a group only for adults, only for sufferers, or open to everybody- we recommend the latter- friends, family, and children with OCD.

4) Once you have a minimum number of people- 5 is enough to get started, let us know. We will give you some guidelines about how to run the group, provide you with handouts that you can give to members of the group, and answer questions that you may have regarding the mechanics of how to facilitate group discussion.- Don't worry if you've never done anything like this before. We will "hold your hand" in the early phases of the group until you feel more comfortable. WE ARE HERE TO HELP!

5) If you have any questions of a clinical nature regarding running or forming a group, you can phone Dr. Allen Weg at 732-329-1378.

OCD SUPPORT GROUP ATLANTIC COUNTY AREA

To all who suffer from Obsessive Compulsive Disorder, you are invited to attend a meeting once per month on the last Thursday night at 7:30 p.m. We will meet at the Bacharach Institute for Rehabilitation Conference Room in Pomona, NJ. The Institute is located in the same building as the Atlantic City Medical Center, Mainland Division, which is at 61 W. Jimmie Leeds Road and can easily be found by following the blue "H" signs (Hospital) on the White Horse Pike, which is also Route 30. Use the main entrance to the hospital and take the right corridor to the end. Make a right and then the 2nd left. The Conference Room is about 50 feet ahead on the right. We expect to have guest speakers from time to time, but mostly it will be a gathering of people who, like you, suffer from OCD. The dress is casual, the format is informal,

and no one is expected to share if they choose not to do so. You may come and just listen to others, if you wish, and you may bring a relative, if desired. Please contact Wayne at (609) 266-3666 with any questions.

LIVE NEAR ASBURY PARK? READ BELOW!

A woman in Asbury Park is interested in starting a new OCD support group. Her name is Amy and she is trying to gather enough interested OCD sufferers to start having regular meetings. If you are interested in joining Amy in establishing a support group in the Asbury Park area, please call (732) 897-9114 any day between 6:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.

NEW OCA (OBSESSIVE COMPULSIVE ANONYMOUS) GROUP STARTING UP

A new OCA support group is trying to get enough interested OCD sufferers to start having regular meetings. These meetings would take place on Wednesday evenings at the Educational Hall of Prince of Peace Church on Aldrich Road in Howell, New Jersey. The contact person is Ron Lorenzo, and he can be reached at 732-942-6584. He says that he needs only five people interested, and then the group is on, so if you live in the area and want to help make this happen, please contact Ron at your earliest convenience!

WAYS TO SUPPORT NJAOCF

NJAOCF VIDEOTAPES

We videotape our annual conferences and the speakers from our quarterly meetings, and provide copies of them to anyone interested. All moneys charged are pumped back into NJAOCF to help defray the costs of the organization. The following are videotapes now available for purchase and pickup, or delivery:

"Red Flags, Relapse, and Recovery," Jonathan Grayson, PhD 9-11-00	\$15.00_____
"Families and OCD: How to Coexist," Elna Yadin, PhD 12-11-00	\$15.00_____
"Flying Towards the Darkness", NJAOCF First Annual Conference: Parts 1 & 2 discount (add shipping costs for 2 tapes)	\$25.00_____
"Flying Towards the Darkness"- Part 1 only, Allen H. Weg, EdD NJAOCF 1st Annual Conference, 9-17-00	\$15.00_____
"Flying Towards the Darkness"- Part 2 only: The OCD Panel NJAOCF 1st Annual Conference, 9-17-00	\$15.00_____
"Generalized Anxiety Disorder and OCD", David Raush, PhD, 6-11-01	\$15.00_____
"OCD Spectrum Disorders", Nancy Soleymani, PhD, 9-10-01	\$15.00_____
"Living With Someone With OCD...", Fred Penzel, PhD Part I- NJAOCF 2nd Annual Conference, 9-23-01	\$15.00_____
"The OCD Kids Panel" Part II- NJAOCF 2nd Annual Conference, 9-23-01	\$15.00_____
NJAOCF- 2nd Annual Conference, 9-23-01 Parts I and II (add shipping costs for 2 tapes)	\$25.00_____
"Panic and OCD", Allen H. Weg, EdD, 12-10-01	\$15.00_____
"Medications and OCD", Dr. Rita Newman, 3-11-02	\$15.00_____

Add \$3.95 each for S & H: _____ @\$3.95 ea_____

Your Total cost: _____

Send check or money order (sorry, no credit cards accepted yet!) made out CNJAOCF and mail to:

CNJAOCF
60 Mac Afee Rd
Somerset, New Jersey 08873-2951

Questions? Call Ina Spero at 732-828-0099

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____

Phone number _____

DIRECTIONS AND MAP

DR. NEWMAN

continued from front page

map

NEW LOCATION FOR NEXT QUARTERLY MEETING!!!

Our next quarterly meeting, which will take place on ***Monday evening, June 10, at 7:00 p.m., will take place at a new location.*** The location is: **University Behavioral Healthcare Center (UBHC), Room D205 on the Rutgers University Busch Campus in Piscataway, New Jersey.** The actual address is **671 Hoes Lane.**

From the South Via the New Jersey Turnpike:

Take exit 9- New Brunswick/Rutgers University to Route 18 North. Follow past New Brunswick, and across the Raritan River. As you cross the bridge, stay in the left lane to make a left onto River Road. Go ½ mile to second light, and turn right onto Hoes Lane. Follow directions from Hoes Lane below.

From Route 1, traveling North or South: Take Route 1 to Route 18 North, follow directions above.

From Route 130, traveling from the South: Take Route 130 North to Route 1 North- follow directions above.

From the Garden State Parkway North and South, and from the north taking the NJ Turnpike:

Take the GSP North to exit 127, or GSP South to exit 129, and get off for I-287 North. Or, take the New Jersey

Turnpike, traveling South to exit 10 and get off for I-287 North. Take I-287 North to the Bound Brook/Highland Park Exit, turn left at the end of the exit onto River Road. At the third traffic light (about 3 miles), turn left onto Hoes Lane. Follow Hoes Lane directions below.

From 287 Northbound:

From the Bound Brook/Highland Park Exit, turn left at the end of the exit onto River Road. At the third traffic light (about 3 miles), turn left onto Hoes Lane. Follow Hoes Lane directions below.

From 287 Southbound:

From exit 9, Bound Brook/Highland Park exit, turn right onto River Road. At the third traffic light (about 3 miles) turn left onto Hoes Lane. Follow directions for Hoes Lane below.

From Hoes Lane:

Go about a mile to a sign for UMDNJ: a short distance later is a sign for Robert Wood Johnson Medical School. Continue about 500 feet more. UBHC will be on your right, but turn left and enter Parking Lot B. Walk back across the street to UBHC, pass the small glass door entrances, and proceed to the main double glass door entrance; ask the receptionist how to get to Room D205.

above, Dr. Newman went over many other medications and how they might be used to help treat OCD. She discussed how Atypical Antipsychotics (named so because, compared to more traditional antipsychotics like Thorazine, Mellaril, and Trilafon, atypical antipsychotics have less side effects), such as Zyprexa, Seroquil, and Risperdol, may often be prescribed as part of the medication regime for OCD treatment. She also spoke at length about Mood Stabilizer medications, such as Lithium, Tergratol, Trilaptow, Topomax, Limictol, and Valproic Acid, which are sometimes used to help potentiate, or increase the effectiveness, of the SSRI medications. Dr. Newman wrapped up her presentation reviewing most of the other classes of psychiatric medications, and explaining what role, if any they play in the treatment of OCD. She emphasized the idea that if a patient doesn't respond to one medication, the doctor will often switch to another once enough time has passed, or may add on an additional medication. She stressed not to become discouraged, as there are many medication options available, and very often, if someone is refractory to certain medications or medication combinations, they may be responsive to others. Dr. Newman also went out of her way to emphasize that medication is only part of the treatment for OCD, and any responsible OCD sufferer should likewise make sure that they are receiving proper behavior therapy when they are taking medication for their OCD.

Dr. Newman's presentation was videotaped, and copies of this videotape may be purchased from NJ OCF. All monies generated by sales of these videotapes go directly to recover the costs entailed in operating our non-profit organization. See the purchase form in this newsletter, or contact Ina Spero at 732-828-0099 for more information.

*Ask your psychiatrist about a more selectively active form of Celexa coming out this summer- *Editor*

