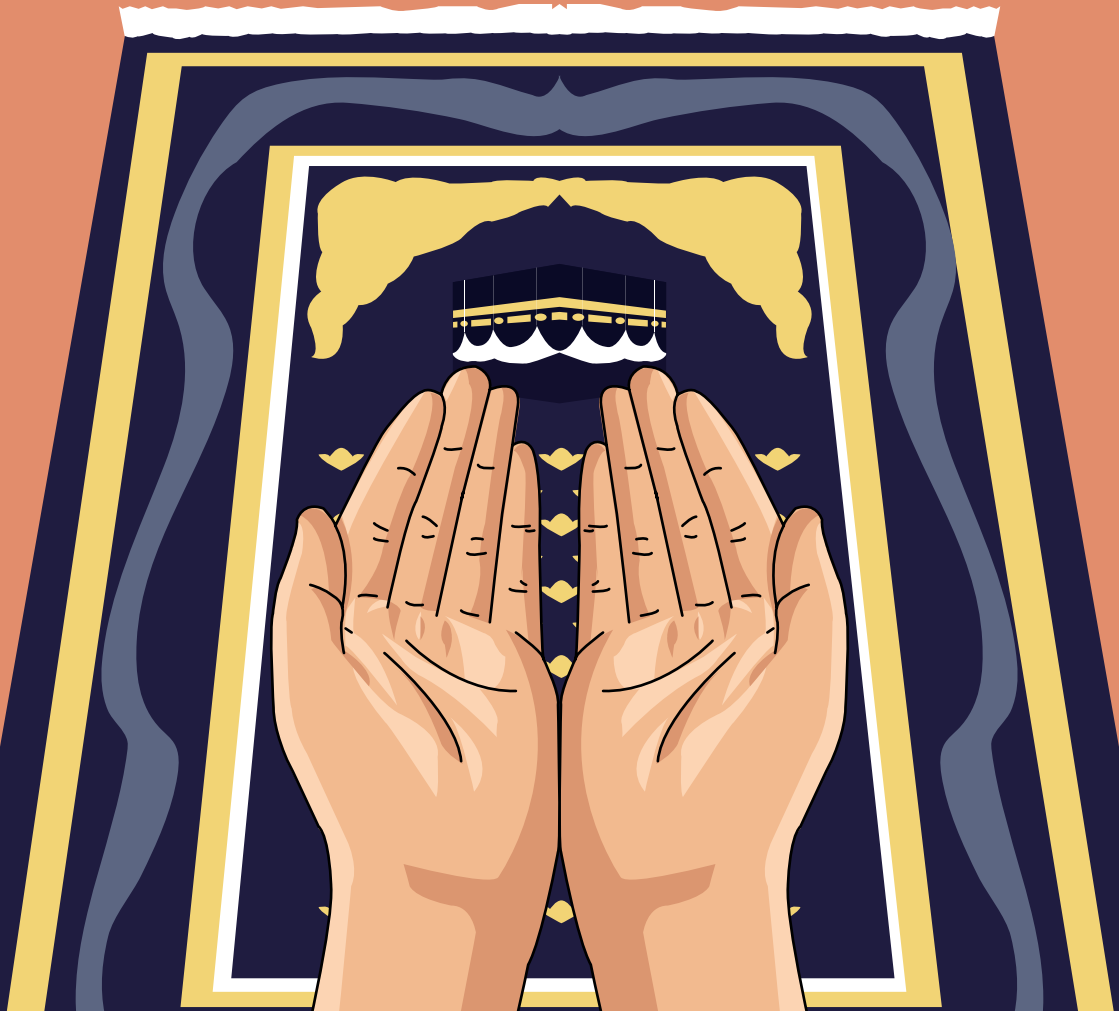




A Muslim's Factsheet on Religious OCD

Part 1



This guide is brought to you by



Written by Nadia Hawa

Edited by Humaira Kola, Meanha Begum

& Sarah Gulamhusein

Designed by Salwa Khan

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www.inspiredminds.org.uk

What is Religious OCD?

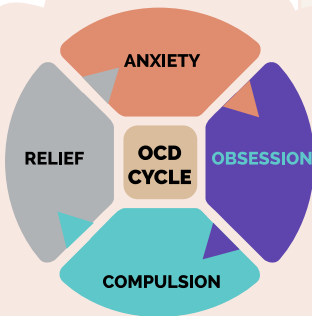


Religious OCD (ROCD) has been a growing area of concern according to our data. Therefore, we decided to tackle this area comprehensively in 2023.

Facts about OCD and Religious OCD (ROCD)

- OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder) is a mental health condition comprising of:
 - fixations on thoughts that cause distress
 - urges to engage in compulsive behaviour that is linked to them
- OCD is often mistaken for *Waswasa* (whispers of Shaytan)
- Religious OCD (ROCD), or 'Scrupulosity' is a type of OCD that involves distress and guilt over moral/religious issues

Symptoms of ROCD



- Feelings of guilt, shame, or spiritual failure
- Exaggerated fears of committing sin
- Excessive fears of going to hell
- Excessive ruminating on past experiences
- Excessive fears that Allah is angry

Did you know that 1 in 6 of our counselling clients present with ROCD and related issues?

ROCD commonly manifests in the following main areas:



Thoughts about Allah and Islam

- Intrusive thoughts about committing **shirk** (polytheism) or of profanities
- Sexual thoughts about Allah/Prophet ﷺ
- Excessive fears of going to hell or that Allah is angry



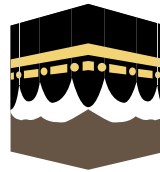
Menstruation

- Uncertainty about **menstruation** ending and remaining impurities
- Other concerns on being impure
- Constant checking for bleeding and/or repetition of Ghusl



Wudu/Ghusl (ablution)

- Self-doubt about the validity of **wudu** or **ghusl**
- Uncertainty of purity states
- Repetition of purification rituals



Hajj

- Self-doubt about the validity of **Hajj**
- Worries about accuracy of rituals such as Tawaaf
- Concerns about hair or nails falling off
- Fear of committing sins during Hajj
- Repetition of Hajj rituals or over-reviewing rituals performed

Caring For Your Mental Health and Imaan with ROCD

A Holistic Approach:

- Therapy such as **CBT** (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy), **ERP** (Exposure Response Prevention), or **TIIP** (Traditionally Islamically Integrated Psychotherapy)
- Use **medication** - if needed and only if prescribed
- Practice **relaxation** techniques
- Engage in **mindful** eating
- Implement **intentional positive activities** such as yoga, walking, and exercise to release positive hormones and emotions
- A **trusted religious scholar** (aware of mental health conditions) can provide Islamically accepted options for rituals that are more lenient
- **Physical issues** such as urinary incontinence, IBS, or Istihadah, require unique and specific approaches

Self-Care:

- Engage in **self-soothing** and **relaxation** exercises such as box or belly breathing
- Try yoga and meditation to nurture your **self-compassion**
- Learn to **be kinder** and **more accepting** of yourself

Mental Checkpoints:

- Suppressing intrusive thoughts will have the **opposite result**
- Thoughts **do not** equal reality
- Studies suggest that around **90%** of people have intrusive thoughts at times - **you are not alone!**
- **Identify** your triggers and thought patterns by journaling to gain mastery over your struggles
- Doubt **does not** require action

"Ignore what is uncertain and proceed on the basis of what is certain."

[Sahih Muslim]

"Most of them follow nothing but assumptions, but assumptions can be of no value at all against the Truth: Allah is well aware of what they do."

[Qur'an 10:36]

Spiritual Connection:

- For specific physical conditions such as **urinary incontinence**, **IBS**, or **Istihadah** that would normally invalidate wudu, Ibn Taymiyyah and a consensus of Imams (Majmu' al-Fatawa) advise to simply do wudu prior to each prayer unless there are periods when there is no flatulence or incontinence, in which case one would wait for those periods to do wudu and pray.
- Learn **Duas'** (supplications), **dhikr** (remembrance of Allah), and **Ism** (names) of Allah (SWT) that can help with worries and anxiety:

لَرْبَّنَا ءَاتِنَا مِنْ لَدُنْكَ رَحْمَةً وَهَيِّئْ لَنَا مِنْ أَمْرِنَا رَشَدًا

"Our Lord, grant us from Yourself mercy and prepare for us from our affair right guidance..."

[Qur'an 18:10]

أَعُوذُ بِاللَّهِ مِنَ الشَّيْطَانِ الرَّجِيمِ

"I seek refuge in Allah from Shaytān, the cursed".

أَسْتَغْفِرُ اللَّهَ

"I seek forgiveness from Allah."

رَبَّنَا لَا تُؤَاخِذْنَا إِنْ نَسِينَا أَوْ أَخْطَأْنَا

"Our Lord, do not take us to account if we forget or make a mistake."

[Qur'an 2:286]

لَا حَوْلَ وَلَا قُوَّةَ إِلَّا بِاللَّهِ

"Shall I tell you a word which is one of the treasures of Paradise? (There is no Power or Might except with Allah)."

[Bukhari]

- Remind yourself of His mercy by practising gratitude daily

"When Allah created the creatures, He wrote in the Book, which is with Him over His Throne:

"Verily, My Mercy prevails over My Wrath"

[Bukhari]

- Know that if you feel you are being tested, it's a sign Allah loves you!

"When Allah loves a servant, He tests him,"

[Tirmidhi]

- Be led by your love of Allah rather than fears and anxieties - this can help you to develop a healthy balance of fear and hope in Allah, with hope being greater than fear

Remember that struggles are a natural part of life:

خَلَقْنَا الْإِنْسَانَ فِي كَبَدٍ

"We have created humankind in 'constant' struggle."

[Qur'an 90:4]

But we must remember that we can handle these struggles because Allah has also said:

لَا يُكَلِّفُ اللَّهُ نَفْسًا إِلَّا وُسْعَهَا

"Allah does not burden any soul with more than it can bear..."

[Qur'an 2:286]

Take Time to Reflect, Know Your Lord, Strengthen Your Hope and Extinguish Your Guilt...

When reading the below verses and ahadith one by one, try the following reflection exercise:

- How does each make you feel?
- What can you do to implement the lesson shared in this verse/ahadith?
- How can you make things easier for yourself, in light of these reflections?

"O My servants who have transgressed against themselves [by sinning] do not despair of the mercy of Allah. Indeed, Allah forgives all sins. Indeed, it is He who is the most Forgiving "the most Merciful."

[Qur'an 39:53]

"O Mankind! You will not be able to do all that you are ordered to do. But follow moderate means and give good news."

[Ahmad]

"Leave that which makes you doubt for that which does not make you doubt, for truth leads to reassurance, and lies lead to uncertainty."

[Tirmidhi]

"Some of the companions of the Prophet of Allah ﷺ said to him 'We find in ourselves thoughts that are too terrible to speak of,' he responded 'Are you really having such thoughts?'. They said 'Yes, to which he replied 'That is a clear sign of faith.'"

[Sahih Muslim]

"Allah desires ease for you; He does not desire for you hardship..."

[Qur'an 2:185]

"I am as my servant thinks I am..."

[Bukhari]

Help & Resources



Inspired Minds

for everyone

Website: inspiredminds.org.uk

Email: info@inspiredminds.org.uk

- [Religious OCD Hybrid Masterclass](#)
- [Request Counselling with IM](#)
- [IM Religious OCD Series](#)
- [Mindful Muslim Podcast - Living With ROCD with Zainab Ahmed](#)
- [Mindful Muslim Podcast - Unpacking Religious OCD with Dr. Hooman Keshavarzi](#)

Sakoon UK

for everyone

Website: sakoon.co.uk

Call: 07943 561 561

Muslim Community Helpline

for youth Muslims

Website: muslimcommunityhelpline.org.uk

Call: 0208 904 8193 / 0208 908 6715

Monday to Friday from 10am - 1pm

Muslim Youth Helpline

for youth Muslims

Website: myh.org.uk

Email: info@myh.org.uk

Call: 0808 808 2008

Every day from 4pm - 10pm

Samaritans

for everyone

Website: samaritans.org

Email: jo@samaritans.org

Call: 116 123

Every day 24 hours

Khalil Center

for everyone

Website: khalilcenter.com

Email: info@khalilcenter.com

- [Khalil Center](#)
- [The Islamic Workbook for Religious OCD \(Waswasa\): A Guide for Overcoming Intrusive Thoughts and Compulsions](#), by Dr. Hooman Keshavarzi

Beyond OCD

for everyone

Website: <https://beyondocd.org/>

Call: 0300 123 3393

Rethink Mental Illness

for everyone

Website: rethink.org

Email: info@rethink.org

Call: 0121 522 7007 / 0300 5000 927

General enquiries & advice

Papyrus/Hopeline

for people under 35

Website: papyrus-uk.org/hopelineuk

Email: pat@papyrus-uk.org

Text: 07786 209697

Call: 0800 068 41 41

Monday to Friday 10am - 10pm

weekends 2pm - 10pm

bank holidays 2pm - 5pm



We are an Islamic grassroots charity that raises awareness and provides support, from a faith-based and culturally-sensitive perspective, to those affected by mental health challenges.

Anchored to our organisation is our vision of a society where people experiencing mental health challenges are validated and empowered to live fulfilling lives.

To bridge the gap in the understanding of mental health within and between our communities, we:

- Provide critical support and counselling services for both Muslim and non-Muslim clientele alike; recognising cultural, spiritual and Islamic needs
- Actively raise awareness on a variety of issues experienced within our communities, which is informed by the field-based research that we conduct to further our understanding

You can find out more about us via our website and social media.

We hope that together we can make a change and start **Prioritising Mental Health and Wellbeing.**