ERP: RESIST

What does Resisting OCD Compulsions mean?

In short, it means <u>not doing the actions that OCD says</u> will keep us safe, reduce our distress, or prevent something bad from happening.

Resisting compulsions feels wrong in the moment, but it's the most effective step; tough in the moment, but the quickest path to long-term progress.

Instead of…

- Checking: Checking the door 10 times to ensure that it was locked "right"

- Avoiding: Not using a friend's bathroom

- Ruminating: Replaying memory to ensure that I didn't miss something important.

- Reassurance Seeking: Asking others *"are you sure I didn't offend them?"*

We can learn to…

- Leave after checking once, even though the urge to keep checking or return is strong. Walk away with the feeling of *"maybe, I did it wrong"*

- Use the bathroom! Allow the experience of feeling contaminated without compulsions.

- Instead of replaying the memory, bring your attention to the present moment. Allow the thought *"I might have missed something"*

- Not asking others. Allow the thought *"maybe I did do something wrong"*

We don't have to start with the biggest or oldest compulsions.

A powerful place to begin is with resisting any new compulsions that show up, or any moment where OCD tries to *extend* a compulsion (e.g., "I know you normally check 3 times, but let's check 4 times today just in case" .

This can be an easier place to break the cycle early and build your skills and confidence to tackle the harder compulsions.

What if I can't resist?

It is common that we can feel unable to resist the demands of OCD. Fortunately, there are many other ways that we can do successful ERP:

Delay – Do the compulsion, but not straight away

Reduce – Do the compulsion, but finish before it is "complete"

Refocus – Turn your attention away from OCD and onto something else.

These are explained in detail in other information sheets.