

## Karen Robinson shares her experience of Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Cognitive Behaviour Therapy



Hello. My name's Karen Robinson and I'm a PhD Student in the Department of Psychology. I'm happy to share my story.

I'm 54 now and had obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) for most of my adult life. Although it was hugely frightening and disabling I was even more scared of the mental health system / the stigma of having a mental health record. I delayed 24 years before seeking help. I went on to have cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) at a specialist NHS clinic. This proved completely life-changing.

As a result of my experience I decided to train as a mental health researcher. I am now conducting a research programme on 'Seeking help and receiving appropriate treatment for OCD'. This includes exploring the factors which encourage people to seek help for their OCD, the barriers to seeking treatment, and whether people are offered evidence-based treatment when they do seek help.

Before seeking help I kept my OCD totally secret at work. Now, thankfully, I am in the very fortunate position that I no longer feel I have to keep my mental health history hidden, and my personal experience is able to inform my work. I am open about my experience of OCD and CBT with people who kindly offer to participate in the research, with my colleagues, and in the wider world.

I described my story in more detail at an OCD-UK conference in 2012. You can find a link to a video of the presentation on my blog, 'With personal experience of OCD & CBT'

<http://karenjaynerobinson.wordpress.com>

I have gradually been developing this blog to share different aspects of my story, to describe the research I am doing, and to reflect on how the two interrelate.

If you, or someone you know, is struggling with OCD I would warmly recommend OCD-UK. It is a very special organisation; a national charity led by people with personal experience of OCD. Its website has a wealth of information about OCD and its treatment, and very supportive forums, details of support groups etc. <http://www.ocduk.org/>