

## How to Use Our Services

Our services are *free* and anyone living in Canterbury can benefit from them. This includes professionals and people supporting friends or family. Just pick up the phone, email us, visit our website or come and see us. You can discuss your, or another's, anxiety with one of our Peer Support Workers and reveal only as much about yourself as you choose to.

If you want to start using our mainstream services we ask you to make a time to talk with a worker, either in person or by phone. During this meeting we discuss our range of services with you and explain how they may be relevant to your circumstances. Sometimes we may suggest other agencies that can provide you with assistance in specific areas.

***“I was so relieved when my doctor put a name to my problem. To discover that there are other people like me. To learn that there is hope.”***

You are not alone.  
Talk to someone – a friend, loved one or doctor. Don't let anxiety continue to compromise your life, it's treatable and we're here to help.



## Obsessive Compulsive Disorder



### MHAPS

826 Colombo Street (cnr Peterborough St)  
Christchurch 8013, New Zealand

PO Box 33-332 Barrington, Christchurch 8244

Phone: (03) 365 9479  
Text: 022 370 8055  
Rural Free Phone: 0800 437 324

Email: [reception@mhaps.org.nz](mailto:reception@mhaps.org.nz)

Website: [www.mhaps.org.nz](http://www.mhaps.org.nz)

***“ Once I get into the shower I can't seem to get out. Sometimes it takes over an hour. I use a whole bar of soap. What's wrong with me? ”***

## About Anxiety

Anxiety is a *normal* part of living. It's the body's way of telling us something isn't right. It keeps us from harm and prepares us to act quickly in the face of danger. However, for some people, anxiety is persistent, irrational and overwhelming. It may get in the way of day-to-day activities and even make them impossible. This may be the sign of an anxiety disorder.

## What Is Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)?

We all have habits, patterns and routines that help us stay clean, healthy and safe. We wash our hands before eating. We lock the doors and turn off the oven before leaving the house. Humming a favourite song while working, reading before bedtime or laying out clothes for the next day, may be comforting rituals.

But individuals suffering from obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) become hung up or stuck on seemingly senseless, irrational thoughts (obsessions), patterns and routines (compulsions). They recognize their thoughts and behaviours as irrational and senseless, but feel unable to stop them. Some spend hours at a time performing complicated rituals involving hand-washing, counting or checking in order to ward off persistent, unwelcome thoughts, feelings or images. Others live in terror that they will accidentally do something wrong, such as harm someone, blurt out an improper statement or throw something out by mistake.

## How Can OCD Affect Your Life?

Obsessions and rituals can interfere substantially with a person's normal routine, schoolwork, job, family or social activities. Several hours each day may be spent focusing on obsessive thoughts and performing seemingly senseless rituals.

Trying to concentrate on normal daily activities can be difficult.

People with OCD will often go to extreme lengths to hide their behaviour, even from friends and loved ones. If left untreated, OCD can take over one's life.

## What Causes OCD?

No one really knows what causes OCD. Researchers used to think it resulted from family attitudes or childhood experiences. Today, we know that's not the case. Growing evidence suggests that OCD results from abnormalities in the brain. Environmental factors could also play a role. OCD appears to run in families and may have a genetic link.

## Can Children Have OCD?

OCD seems to run in families, so it is not surprising when a child with one or both parents who have OCD begins showing symptoms. OCD can make it difficult for a child to complete tasks like homework and household chores. Relationships with peers, siblings and parents can become strained or problematic. In addition, children with OCD are prone to headaches, stomach aches and other stress-related ailments.



## How Can We Help You?

Anxiety Support Canterbury can give you *free* resources and information that will help you and your loved ones better understand your situation. We can also assist you to find help with any issues in your life that either create or fuel your anxiety.

Each month we have speakers on topics of relevance to people with anxiety and we run forums where qualified clinicians come in to talk about anxiety, its impact and its treatment.

Each of our staff has their own experience of anxiety and, together with our clients, we are a community of people who know what you are experiencing.

## What Treatments are Available?

Fortunately, most individuals who seek treatment see significant improvement and enjoy a better quality of life. A variety of treatment options are available including, cognitive-behavioural therapies, anxiety management, relaxation techniques and medications. One, or a combination, of these may be recommended. It is important to remember that there is no single 'right' treatment and what works for one person may not be the best choice for someone else. A course of treatment should be tailored to your individual needs. Ask your doctor to explain why a particular type of treatment is being recommended, what other options are available and what you need to do to fully participate in your recovery.