

Online Relapse Prevention Group Discussion Questions

June 2026 | River City OCD Clinic

An excerpt from *Mind and Emotions* by McKay, Fanning, & Ona:

"Ruminating about the future or the past intensifies painful emotions. Staying in the present moment is an antidote to future- and past-oriented thoughts that can get you in trouble emotionally. Mindfulness of the present moment reduces ruminative thinking. It's hard to be consumed with what-ifs and judgmental thoughts if you're focused on what your senses tell you in the here and now."

- Sometimes people treat rumination as if it's helping them solve problems or prevent mistakes. In your experience, when does reflection become unhelpful rumination?
 - If recovery involves spending less time mentally revisiting the past or rehearsing the future, what do you want to be more present for in your actual life right now?
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An excerpt from Russ Harris' book, *The Confidence Gap*:

"The golden rule of the confidence game is this: *The actions of confidence come first; the feelings of confidence come later.* But it is almost impossible to do something well if we are not engaged in what we are doing. So how do we engage more fully in our experiences? Simple. *We pay attention.* We notice what is happening, here and now. Paying attention is at the very core of mindfulness. But it's not just paying attention in any old way. Mindfulness means paying attention with openness, curiosity, and flexibility."

- Have there been times when you waited to feel confident before taking action?
 - What happened when you instead chose to act despite uncertainty, anxiety, or self-doubt?
 - The quote suggests that confidence grows after engagement, not before it. In your recovery, what actions have helped build trust in yourself over time?
 - Were there exposures, conversations, decisions, or risks that initially felt uncomfortable but later increased your sense of capability?
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From *Choice* by Dr. Steve Phillipson:

"Discipline [in OCD recovery] replaces the intangible emotional state of 'motivation' with a commitment to pursue goals independent of how inspired the patient feels. Exposure exercises are aversive by nature, and relying on motivation would lead to failure. Progress in treatment is measured by the degree to which patients remain committed to their goals, not by immediate mood elevation."

- The quote suggests that progress is measured more by commitment than by immediate emotional relief. How has your understanding of "success" in recovery changed over time?
 - Are there examples where you made meaningful progress even though you still felt anxious, uncertain, or discouraged?
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For group discussion only. Please review at your own pace—there's no need to prepare "perfect" answers.