



## What is OCD?

OCD is a mental health disorder of obsessions and compulsions that can affect people of all ages. Those suffering from OCD experience unwanted and intrusive thoughts that cause intensely distressing feelings. They then engage in compulsive behaviors in an attempt to decrease or get rid of the distressing, obsessive thoughts.

Common obsessions include: contamination, losing control, unwanted sexual thoughts, harm, religious obsessions and perfectionism.

Common compulsions include: washing/cleaning, checking, repeating, mental compulsions

AMHA proudly offers individual, family and marriage counseling for individuals of all ages, as well as neuropsychological testing. Please call our intake coordinator to schedule an appointment.

Phone: 412-967-5660  
Fax: 412-968-0527

### **Fox Chapel**

1326 Freeport Road, Suite 250  
Pittsburgh PA 15238

### **North Hills**

9800A McKnight Road,  
Suite 203  
Pittsburgh PA 15237

### **Monroeville**

Commerce Building, Suite 304  
4232 Northern Pike  
Monroeville PA 15146

### **Oakland**

Sherwood Towers, Suite C  
230 N. Craig Street Pittsburgh  
PA 15213

Schenley House Offices  
155 N. Craig Street  
Pittsburgh PA 15213



[www.amha4u.com](http://www.amha4u.com)

# AMHA

Child & Adolescent  
Obsessive Compulsive  
Disorder (OCD)  
Group Services



**North Hills Office**  
9800A McKnight Road  
Suite 203  
Pittsburgh PA 15237



## A Parent's Guide to Group

**What is the purpose of this group?** To aid in the treatment of your child's OCD in a supportive group setting. Group participants will learn more about their OCD, create individualized treatment goals and develop the skills needed to become more confident and overcome OCD symptoms.

**Will my child get the attention needed for successful treatment in a group setting?** Your child will be part of a group of 10-12 individuals living with OCD. Though he/she will be working on their own specific goals, the support offered by the group members will help to validate your child's fears and encourage you child to fight against OCD. Two clinicians, both Liz and Jessica, will be leading groups.

**Will our family be involved in treatment?** Families will be required to meet with Amy DeMario once per month and encouraged to engage in additional meetings as desired. Family involvement is crucial to success in group.

### **What type of treatment will the group utilize?**

The group will utilize Exposure and Response Prevention (ERP), a type of cognitive behavior therapy that refers to exposing someone to the thoughts, images, objects and situations that cause anxiety and obsessions and then making the choice to not engage in compulsive behaviors. Overtime preventing rituals following exposure leads to habituation, a natural drop in anxiety.

**When and where will group take place?** Group sessions will take place in our North Hills office every Tuesday from 6-7:30pm. Group will last anywhere from 10-16 weeks depending on symptom severity of each individual participant.

**Will my insurance pay for group?** Most insurances will cover the cost of group. Payment can be discussed on an individual basis prior to starting group.

**How do we get started?** Please call 412-967-5660 to schedule an intake appointment. All intakes are 1 hour long. During the intake we will discuss your child's OCD in depth and determine his/her appropriateness for group.

## Meet the Clinicians

### **Liz Vecenie, LCSW**

Liz holds a B.S. from Allegheny College & a Masters of Social Work from the University of Pittsburgh. As a graduate student, Liz completed her training at Western Psychiatric Institute and Clinic's (WPIC) Pediatric OCD Clinic and she continued her work at the clinic and at WPIC's Acute Adolescent Partial Hospitalization Program post graduation. Liz has been working at AMHA for the last 5 years with a special interest in helping those with OCD and other anxiety disorders, as well as depressive and adjustment issues. Liz is certified by the OCD Foundation Behavioral Therapy Institute to utilize exposure with response prevention therapy.

### **Amy DeMario, LCSW**

Amy earned her B.S. from Duquesne University and her graduate degree in clinical social work from the University of Pittsburgh. She completed her internships at the Family Therapy Training Center at WPIC and at the University of Michigan Medical Center. Amy worked at WPIC's child and adolescent intensive outpatient OCD program and conducted staff development trainings related to family therapy and OCD. She is certified in exposure with response prevention therapy from the OCD Foundation Behavioral Therapy Institute. She has worked at AMHA for 7 years specializing in OCD and other anxiety disorders, PTSD, depressive disorders and adjustment to chronic medical conditions.

### **Jessica Weister, PsyD**

Jessica earned a Master's of Psychology from Chatham University and a Doctor of Psychology from Duquesne University. She is also a Nationally Certified School Psychologist. Jessica's professional experiences include WPIC's intensive outpatient OCD program, WPIC's Early Childhood Mental Health Trauma Treatment Center and a number of school districts. She has been with AMHA for 4 years serving as the Intake Coordinator and now as a Postdoctoral Fellow. Jessica's focuses include neuropsychological assessment, OCD and other anxiety disorders, trauma and the impact of mental health issues on achievement and school related difficulties.